Employee Performance Appraisal: A Process Perspective of Institutional Logics and Routine Dynamics

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Abstract

This research aims to contribute to the understanding of international Performance Appraisal (PA) adoption and replication failure in the Middle Eastern context. Research on the adoption of international PA in the Middle East and non-western contexts in general has been receiving increasing attention over the past decade. The empirical results of the literature on international PA adoption success are inconclusive and researchers remain in constant debate over its effectiveness with much of its studies conducted in western empirical settings. While the results of some studies cast a positive impact from adopting the process on employees and organisations, the majority of studies conducted in non-western contexts demonstrate the difficulty of adopting PA. To this extent, the effective adoption of international PA in general remains largely debated. Crucially, extant studies majorly focus on country-by-country comparisons and predominantly cite the large institutional and cultural distances between western and non-western contexts as the main reason for failure. However, beyond differences in national cultures, our understanding to how international PA fails to be adopted as intended remains largely unexplored.

This thesis adopts a qualitative methodology to provide an in-depth micro-level exploration and explanation to international PA adoption and replication failure in Global Professional Service Firms (GPSFs) operating in the Middle East. The thesis is composed of three studies, a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies and two empirical studies. The qualitative meta-synthesis is grounded in the theories of roles and institutional logics and investigates PA adoption failure in non-western contexts. It uncovers explanations and mechanisms for failure beyond those addressed in previously published case studies. The empirical studies are conducted in the Middle Eastern context. They contribute to our understanding on PA adoption and replication failure at the micro-level by (1) cross fertilising between institutional logics and routine dynamics theories to investigate the influence of multiple and contradictory institutional logics on PA failure, and (2) coupling routine dynamics and emotions theories to examine how negative feelings and emotions result in PA failure. The abductive empirical analysis of multiple case studies follows a practice and process perspective and is informed by theories from sociology, organisations and psychology.

In depth micro-level analysis of the data in each study shows that actors negotiate different meanings to PA and demonstrate how they incorporate their self-interest during the replication of multiple PA processes. In particular, they show how professionals translate multiple and

contradictory institutional logics and take advantage of them to replicate corrupt PA processes, and shed light on the creation of covert, varied, and idiosyncratic PA processes while actors are actively regulating their negative emotions throughout PA replication. Moreover, the studies tap into issues of universal application to PA in the Middle East, dysfunctional institutional complementarities, and the incorporation of self-interest and self-seeking behaviours in processes and organisations. The thesis provides the following key contributions: the results contribute to the existing international PA literature on the workings of its failure in the Middle East by revealing PA multiplicity at the micro-level. Additionally, the thesis contributes to the micro-institutional literature in the institutional logics framework and to the embedded agency in institutions by uncovering the effects of logics on everyday organisational activities through roles and routines. Finally, the thesis contributes to the routine dynamics theory a nuanced understanding on the influence of power and politics on routine change. Several more contributions to theory and practice, as well as methodological implications are delineated in more detail in the thesis.

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Dedication

To my beloved parents, spouse, son, and siblings

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Author's Declaration

I, Muntaser Jamal Melhem, declare that the ideas, research work, analyses, findings and conclusions reported in my PhD thesis are entirely my own efforts, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that this thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Chapter One: Thesis overview

In this thesis, a practice and process perspective is applied to study international performance appraisal (PA hereafter) adoption and replication failure in global professional service firms (GPSFs hereafter) operating in the Middle East. This is because the literature on international PA stops short of studying how the international practice fails to be adopted and replicated in the Arab Middle Eastern region (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Mellahi et al., 2011) and in particular, when it is being adopted in the proximal context of GPSFs (Alvehus, 2018).

The process of PA has been thoroughly examined from several perspectives (DeNisi et al., 2021; DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006). International PA is a formal organisational process that is widely adopted by global organisations to assess, improve, and control the performance of employees and subsidiaries (Kang and Shen, 2016). Ideally, it is one of the central practices in organisations and its effective implementation plays a significant role in their success. However, in reality, international PA is a social process and one of the trickiest to implement in organisations because it involves social interactions between subordinates and supervisors, subjective assessments and rating bias to employee, and multiple interpretations and reactions from employees and managers (Jentjens and Yang, 2021; Murphy, 2020; Moers, 2005) . In this regard, DeNisi et al., (2021), Murphy (2020), and DeNisi and Pritchard (2006) emphasise that the evidence in the existing literature of discontent with the PA process is abound among researchers, organisations, practitioners, and employees.

Crucially, key authors in the field suggest that main reason for this discontent stems from failure and ineffectiveness to adopt and implement the PA process as intended, i.e., a process that motivates, develops, and improves employees' performance. For instance, a significant body of research in the PA literature uncovered negative aspects and outcomes for the practice that include intentional and unintentional rater bias (Spence and Keeping, 2011; Kingstrom and Mainstone, 1985); favouritism and preferential treatment (Harbi et al., 2017; Moers, 2005); politics in the process (Poon, 2004); breach in expectations (Robinson and Morrison, 2000); unfair treatment (Harbi et al., 2017); retaliation from employees (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997); the emergence of negative emotions (Cook and Crossman, 2004); and more contemporary social issues that relate to supervisory abuse (Oh and Farh, 2017), bullying (Samnani and Singh, 2014); and discrimination between employees (Rubin and Edwards, 2020; Bento et al., 2012). The plentiful evidence in the existing literature suggests that PA adoption and implementation failure is the norm rather than the exception. In this regard, studies in the existing literature predominantly investigate the PA process by examining it within its

immediate context -that is, the social context of PA (Levy and Williams, 2004). Within this approach, PA researchers mainly focus on proximate qualitative aspects of the process, such as employees' reactions and subordinate-supervisor's social exchanges as, to an extent, this proved to be more successful in bringing us a step closer to improving the process and thus improving the likelihood of successful adoption.

This approach has resulted in a 'one-size fit all' process with an assumption of universal application (DeNisi et al., 2021). However, this approach neglected one of the main reasons that advances our understanding for PA adoption success or failure, which is the national culture of the broader (or distal) context where the process is embedded (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). Organisations do not operate in a vacuum, they operate in countries which are characterised by having unique national cultures that impact the PA process, appraisal criteria, and appraisal outcomes. Beer et al. (1984: 35) maintain that PA policies and practices "must reflect the governmental and societal context in which they are embedded… [what] work[s] in the United States will not necessarily work in Europe or Japan." In this regard, Mayrhofer et al. (2019) state that research has not paid sufficient attention to the impact of national cultures on employee management activities (where PA is at its core) and call for expanding existing research beyond western countries. Similarly, Giangreco et al. (2010: 155) assert, "the situation is dramatically different when we shift focus from the western to the eastern world." To this end, the lack of examining the influence of national cultures, particularly those of non-western contexts, on the adoption of PA is a weakness in the literature as Mayrhofer et al. (2019) strongly argue that focusing only on the immediate social and structural contexts is simplistic and misses important factors in our explanations to PA adoption.

One important factor that led to this neglect is because the practice of PA has originated in the United States and swiftly spread to Europe, leading to a significant focus on researching the practice within single western and developed national contexts (Mayrhofer et al., 2019; Gooderham et al., 2019; Harbi et al., 2017; Peretz and Fried, 2012; Narcisse and Harcourt, 2008). Crucially, this focus is the main reason for conceptualising a universalistic application and a deterministic impact for the international PA process where its adoption and implementation "will have direct and intended consequences regardless of context" (Mayrhofer et al., 2019: 357). Therefore, the majority of studies that investigated PA adoption have been conducted in western contexts and this resulted in a deterministic, western-centric, and one-size fit all conceptualisation to the influence of adopting the practice in many other contexts (DeNisi et al., 2021; Mayrhofer et al., 2019).

This means that the influence of local cultural norms and values in non-western contexts such as the Middle East and the Arab region are overlooked in the existing PA literature and our understanding of its international application in the region is still lacking (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021). In this respect, Yahiaoui et al. (2021: 3) state that "across the Middle East and North Africa, the [PA] function, although developing, is still in its infancy." PA practices in the Middle East are underpinned by local norms and conventions that focus "on strong notions of clan and community" where loyalty to the group is a priority (Darwish et al., 2016: 5) and there exists high-power distance and superiority of managers over employees (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). Importantly, this contrast significantly with the cultural norms underpinning many western countries that inform the international PA process.

Many empirical studies in the Middle Eastern region have found that local cultural factors and religion have a significant impact in shaping management practices (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2016; Branine and Pollard, 2010; Mellahi and Budhwar, 2006). The PA practice, like any other management practices, is highly shaped and affected by its embeddedness in the Middle Eastern culture. More precisely, the few empirical inquiries regarding PA have shown that the local cultural norms of the Middle East highly influence adoption failure and ineffectiveness of the practice (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011). This failure needs to be explained further beyond simplistically drawing on the local cultural norms of the Middle East and non-western contexts in general as barriers for successful adoption. Consequently, in addition to advancing our understanding of international PA adoption failure in the Middle East, the region provides fertile ground for informing the western perspective and uncovering the underlying mechanisms for how PA fails to be adopted and replicated as intended. Therefore, this thesis asks the following overarching question: *how and why does international performance appraisal fail to be adopted and replicated as intended in the Middle East?*

Aim and objectives of the thesis

As previously stated, the primary aim of this thesis is to investigate international PA adoption failure in GPSFs operating in the Middle East at the micro-level through a practice and process approach, and in the process uncover the underlying performative mechanisms that influence PA adoption and replication failure and explain it. The thesis objectives can be stated as follows:

1. The first objective of this thesis is to contribute to the general understanding of the PA adoption failure literature in the Middle East, and to offer some important theoretical and practical implications and recommendations that can be useful for understanding PA adoption failure, and more specifically for multinational companies operating in the region. Since the literature of international PA is western-centric, there is a need to further extend the empirical studies into different cultures. Therefore, this thesis further aims to fill these obvious gaps by conducting an inductive in-depth contextualised analysis at the micro-level of adoption failure in the context of the Middle East.
2. By adopting the theoretical and methodological perspectives of the practice and process approach, the thesis seeks to uncover the underlying mechanisms that explain the '*how'* of PA adoption failure in the Middle East rather than the '*what'* as currently uncovered in the existing literature. Uncovering mechanisms through a practice and process approach provides explanations that could be helpful and useful in understanding PA adoption and replication failure in other similar research sites (i.e., global companies) and distal (i.e., non-western) contexts.
3. The third objective of the thesis is to provide a new perspective for PA by departing from the social context approach that focuses on employees' reactions and perceptions to a more performative approach that conceptualises actors' agency as mindful and focuses on their actions in the analysis of adoption failure. Therefore, the thesis aims to offers novel insights to the literature by examining actors' embedded agency in the process.
4. The thesis intends to provide a more refined and finely grained understanding on the organisational, sociological, and psychological factors that are expected to influence PA adoption failure. It employs multiple theoretical perspectives to enhance the explanatory power of PA adoption failure from different dimensions, taking into consideration actors' translation efforts, self-interest, and self-seeking behaviours to cover the multiple aspects that could lead to its failure in addition to the national culture.

The practice and process approach that is followed in this thesis has gained increasing interest among organisation and management scholars during the past two decades (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016; Schatzki et al., 2001). The increasing interest in this approach partly stems from the aim to reconciliate the dualisms between agency and structure, which remain a debatable topic in studies of organisations and their processes (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). The practice and process perspectives are closely interrelated, and both aim to understand how social phenomena, such as the process of organising or appraising employees' performance,

change over time by paying attention to everyday activities that involve a wide range of practices, processes, and materials (Schatzki, 2006). The logic behind this is that organisations are considered to be a collection of practices (Schatzki, 2006), and that the practices themselves are composed of ongoing processes that are susceptible to change over time (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016).

Schatzki (1996) argues that the term 'practice' can be used in three different ways. First, in everyday language, it can refer to repeated efforts to master a skill, such as practising how to drive a car. Second, in philosophical terms, it is used to distinguish the actual doing (i.e. the performance of the practice) from theory. Third, from a theoretical practice perspective, it refers to the established routinised tasks and patterns that guide actors' actions. Practice theory is more aligned to the actual performance of practices and how these change over time; as such, theoretical practice and process perspectives are more concerned with Schatzki's second and third definitions described above.

Within this perspective, practices and processes are examined at the micro-level. This means that analysis is carried out at the level of the process (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016; Nicolini, 2012). This perspective views practices and processes as an "ongoing production [that] emerges through people's recurrent actions" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011: 1240) it mainly pays empirical attention to individuals' understandings and actions to examine phenomenon. Furthermore, both practice and process perspectives are processual and relational. They largely reject dualisms (such as mind versus body) and embrace dualities in their theorising modes (e.g., see Sonenshein, 2016 Routines and creativity: From dualism to dualities), emphasising the dialogical relationship between dualities (e.g., structure and agency; structure guides agency and agency updates structure) and their mutual constitution in events and situations (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). In other words, one cannot exist without the other. Consequently, through this dialogical relationship between structure and agency, practices and processes change as they are (re)produced and replicated over time (Orlikowski, 2010).

As a result, the practice and process perspective allows us to reconceptualise central organisational phenomena from existing as static and stable entities to 'becoming' and 'dynamic'. For example, instead of strategy, practice scholars refer to strategising (Whittington, 2006); instead of organisation, to organising (Weick, 1995); instead of institutions to institutional work or the microfoundations of institutions (Powell and Rerup, 2017; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006); and instead of the Carnegie school's assumption that

organisational routines are stable, inert, and mindless entities, to being flexible, emergent, and effortful accomplishments (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Langley and Tsoukas (2016: 2) maintain that the shift to process vocabularies and "the growing use of the gerund (-ing) indicates a desire to move towards more dynamic ways of understanding organisational phenomena, incorporating fluidity, emergence, flow, and temporal and spatial interconnections." However, it should be noted that the practice and process perspectives are not unified theories (see Schatzki et al., 2001; Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). To this end, Nicolini (2012: 1) states that practice and process theories "constitute [...] a broad family of theoretical approaches connected by a web of historical and conceptual similarities" (e.g., actor-network theory, sensemaking, and routine dynamics).

Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) and Orlikowski (2010) summarise three modes of studying practices and their related processes. The first recognises practice as an empirical approach and emphasises actors' actions as being central to organisational outcomes. In this mode, researchers aim to study practices and processes closely by immersing themselves in the field in order to understand how actors perform and experience their work. This mode "answers the "what" of a practice lens—a focus on the everyday activity of organizing in both its routine and improvised forms" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011: 1240). The second mode recognises practice as a perspective (Orlikowski, 2010) and focuses on generating explanations of the dynamics of the everyday activities in which actors engage by examining the theoretical relationships that provide explanations for these. This mode "answers the "how" of a practice lens—the articulation of particular theoretical relationships that explain the dynamics of everyday activity, how these are generated, and how they operate within different contexts and over time." (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011: 1241). The final mode recognises practice as a philosophy and emphasises the primacy of practices in social reality. It "sees the social world as brought into being through everyday activity…[and] answers the "why" of a practice lens" (Ibid) and balances objective and social constructionist ontologies; social reality is thought to be external to human actors or constructed by them by acknowledging that these ontologies overlap.

This thesis adopts the first and second modes in order to harness the analytical power of the practice and process perspective by adopting routine dynamics theory in its empirical studies to primarily explain the underlying mechanisms of the *how* (the second mode) for appraising performance, in addition to considering particular phenomena as objects for investigation (the first mode). To achieve this, both practice and process perspectives are combined (e.g.,

D'Adderio, 2014) to understand how the enactment of the multiple temporal micro-processes that constitute the performance appraising process contributes to its change; i.e., a finely grained and processual understanding that will enable us to explain such underlying mechanisms (Langley, 1999). The process perspective is concerned with how phenomena emerge, evolve, and/or end over time (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Langley et al., 2013). As such, temporal ordering the process/routine is central to actors' experiences and the unfolding of phenomena (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016).

Against this backdrop, the studies of the thesis depart from the traditional approach to examining international PA that relies on the assumptions of neo-institutional theory (Brewster and Haak-Saheem, 2020; Mayrhofer et al., 2019; Gooderham et al., 2019) which compares between the cultural norms of western and non-western contexts besides exploring employees' interpretations of the process, to examining their actions throughout replicating it at the micro-level, i.e., the level of the practice and its processes . Each empirical study of this thesis employs multiple disciplinary and theoretical lenses including sociology, organisational theory, and psychology, namely: routine dynamics (Feldman and Pentland, 2003), institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012), roles theory (Biddle, 1979), and the theory of emotions (Gross, 2008) to increase the explanatory power and provide new insights to the international PA literature and the employed theories from examining its failed adoption and replication in the Middle Eastern context.

It does so mainly by reconceptualising the assumptions that underlie its transfer and adoption between western and non-western context and examining it accordingly. By reconceptualising these assumptions, the studies contribute novel insights to the literature by addressing the *how* of PA adoption and uncovering mechanisms that lead to its adoption failure. The studies in this thesis emphasise on the constructed multiple meanings of the process and how actors bring these meanings to life through their actions. Crucially, these are uncovered by considering actors knowledgeable about the PA process and their agency as mindful (Feldman et al., 2016). Consequently, actors self-interest and self-seeking behaviours are also reflected upon in how the process is replicated and therefore, the studies in this thesis move away from the assumption that actors (i.e., appraisers and appraisees) are passive receptors and replicators of organisational process (Lounsbury, 2008).

This thesis is composed of three studies, a systematic literature review that employs a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies and two qualitative empirical studies, and all of

which investigate PA adoption and replication failure from different theoretical perspectives. The systematic literature review employs the theoretical lenses of roles and institutional logics and aims to uncover a micro-level mechanism that explains how PA fails to be adopted as intended in non-western contexts. The second study cross-fertilises the perspectives of institutional logics and routines to uncover the mechanisms for how professional actors take advantage of local Middle Eastern cultural norms and incorporate them into the PA process, resulting in its adoption and replication failure in GPSFs operating in the region. The third study couples the perspectives of routines and emotions to advance our understanding on how negative emotions and feelings contribute to PA adoption and replication failure within the same proximal and distant contexts.

The studies in this thesis illuminate the dark side of PA adoption in organisations. They focus on contemporary unfavourable social issues that are highly intertwined with its application and implementation, particularly discrimination in the workplace and the regulation of negative feelings and emotions. Crucially, much of these negative aspects are not publicly displayed and are kept hidden from both the public and researchers (Goffman, 1959), making them difficult to study and leaving their influence on PA and how PA contributes to them largely unexamined. Moreover, the traditional dominant approach to examine PA (DeNisi et al., 2021) that is dedicated to understanding the perceived effectiveness of the process and the success of adopting it internationally limits our capabilities to address such issues. If we keep empirically focusing only on employees' reactions and interpretations without taking into consideration actors' embedded agency in the process and the influence of national cultures on their agency, then we are actively black-boxing the process and overlooking how we could prevent such contemporary issues from being brought into actors' social reality throughout replicating PA. Therefore, it becomes a pressing need to examine PA at the micro-level from inside the black-box (i.e., the level of the practice and its processes), what actors understand about it, how this understanding changes, and what actions employees take to reinforce the new understanding. By doing so, we would be able to uncover mechanisms of change that enable us to address such contemporary social issues and provide more useable practical recommendations to prevent them.

To conclude, the empirical studies in this thesis examine international PA adoption and replication failure in GPSFs operating in the Middle East. They target contemporary but hidden social phenomenon and uncover micro-level mechanisms that contribute to understanding on how they are brought into organisational social exchanges in addition to how PA fails. In

particular, the empirical studies in this thesis focus on powerful actors' ability to perpetuate discrimination in the workplace and subjugate less powerful actors to these discriminatory acts as well as the influence of negative feelings and emotions that actors experience during the PA process on replicating a failed version of it. It does so by following a qualitative methodology that aims to delve deeply into the understandings and actions of actors that are both meant for or hidden from public consumption (Goffman, 1959) and investigate how these are brought into the process and how they are made dominant, recognisable, and repetitive patterns of action for enacting PA, which are discussed next in the summary of the thesis studies. Since the studies adopt multiple disciplinary and theoretical lenses to address the phenomena of PA replication failure, a brief contribution for each theory is also highlighted in the summary.

1.1 Summary of the three studies in this thesis

First in Chapter Four, a qualitative meta-synthesis (QMS) of case studies is conducted to investigate how PA fails to be adopted as intended in non-western contexts. QMS is a type of systematic literature reviews that aims to assimilate the findings of case studies conducted using qualitative inquiry with the aim of contributing insights and explanations to the literature beyond those achieved in the original previously published cases (Hoon, 2013) that mainly revolve around pointing out differences between global and non-western local cultures and contexts. The QMS is grounded in the theoretical lenses of roles theory (Biddle, 1979) and institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012), and synthesises the underlying mechanisms of how the interplay between societal, organisational, and personal expectations contribute to PA adoption failure at the micro-level.

By synthesising knowledge from 11 cases of PA adoption failure that are published in seven studies across the human resource management and management accounting disciplines, the QMS illustrate how societal, organisational, and personal expectations in non-western contexts feed into the role of the appraiser and how in turn these multiple expectations contribute to the selective adoption and replication of two competing PA processes at the micro-level. The findings of this QMS answer how the adoption and exact replication of international PA fail in non-western contexts by highlighting and uncovering the underlying mechanisms that leads to the replication of two competing processes based on the type of expectations that binds appraisers and appraisees. This study contributes to the PA literature a more dynamic and differentiated nature of PA adoption and replication at the micro-level beyond the singular adoption behaviours (i.e., localisation, divergence, or ceremonial adoption) that are frequently

drawn upon in current international PA literature (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Kang and Shen, 2016).

The second study in Chapter Five is an empirical qualitative one that investigates in-depth how professionals at GPSFs operating in the Middle East replicate a failing PA process. Through the design of multiple case studies (Yin, 2009), this study cross-fertilises between the institutional logics' perspective (Thronton et al., 2012) and routine dynamics theory (Feldman and Pentland, 2003) in order to examine how multiple frames of reference or macro-level structures (i.e., logics) are translated into actions at the micro-level (i.e., the level of PA practice and processes) and how this in turn influences international PA replication failure in the Middle Eastern context. Routine dynamics is a practice and process action-oriented theory that aims to explain how organisational activities evolve and change at the micro-level by unpacking the "repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions [that are] carried out by multiple actors" (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 95). To do so, this study examines the influence of three dominant institutional logics and frames of reference for actors' actions in GPSFs operating in the Middle Eastern region, namely: professional, HRM bureaucracy, and the regional community logic of *wasta*, on replicating and changing international PA process at the micro-level.

The organisational form of GPSFs is multi-institutional and predominantly informed by a hybrid of conflicting professional and bureaucracy logics that professional must navigate and balance between while they are replicating organisational PA activities (Alvehus, 2018; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). The professional logic emphasises on professional autonomy, informal control systems, and individual discretion. Whereas the logic of bureaucracy is more restrictive as it involves following procedures, formal control systems and hierarchical authority (Alvehus, 2018). Additionally, since these organisations are operating in the Middle Eastern context, they are further susceptible to the informal soft institution that encompass their culture. This study further operationalises the dominant cultural norm of *wasta* (i.e., mobilising informal connections) in the Middle East as a regional community logic (Al Jawali et al., 2022) since research on this cultural norm has demonstrated it as an important frame of reference that shapes the rules of PA practices in the region (e.g., Alsarhan et al. 2021; Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021), therefore, as opposed to how non-western dominant cultural norms are traditionally conceptualised in the literature, it recognises local cultural norms as an important part of replicating the process rather than merely as a reason for why the process might fail. Moreover, by examining the influence of three institutional logics on PA replication, this study

brings us closer to understanding the complexity that PA must go through while it is being adopted and replicated and reflects a more realistic picture for the complex and fluid institutional configurations in the Middle East that must be navigated by professionals at the micro-level (Cloutier and Langley, 2013).

By drawing from 30 interviews from non-managerial employees in GPSFs and documentary data, this study finds that the institutional configurations are dynamic and changing as employees progress in their relationship with the company. Over time, two groups of employees were formed, and two PA processes emerged. Each group replicates a process that is invoked by different institutional logics than those informing it originally as the power dynamics between them shift based on the informal connections (i.e., *wasta*) that they possess. One group, who are well connected informally, use *wasta* regional community and professional logics as cultural tools to replicate a process that advances their professional and self-interested goals on account of less powerful ones, who are weakly connected informally and are left to navigate a replicated corrupt version of PA that is invoked by *wasta* regional community and HRM bureaucratic logics. Importantly, the findings uncover the underlying mechanisms of foregrounding and backgrounding specific institutional logics based on employees' power (informal connections in this case) which explain how different processual versions for the same practice can be replicated at the micro-level and provides a performative explanation to discrimination in the workplace.

This study yields several contributions to the international PA literature (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Kang and Shen, 2016), institutional logics (Thornton et al. 2012), and routine dynamics (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). First, it provides a micro-level understanding on the adoption and replication failure of PA for global companies operating in the Middle Eastern context through devising and replicating multiple processes by different groups of employees. The findings specifically speak to the PA global divergence literature by uncovering the multiplicity of process adoption and replication in global companies. Furthermore, the study provides empirical evidence for the theoretical claims of international PA embeddedness in the Middle Eastern cultural norm of *wasta*. Moreover, the findings contribute to the dark side of PA adoption in organisational by uncovering a performative mechanism that explains powerful actors manipulatively replicate PA to perpetuate discrimination in the workplace, advance their self-interested goals, and project a new status quo for less powerful employees. Second, the findings contribute to the institutional logics framework a more dynamic nature to institutional change than currently conceptualised in the

existing literature. Furthermore, the study contributes to the macro-micro link between multiple institutional logics and practice replication by providing evidence for the theoretical claims about the effects of institutional logics on everyday organisational activities.

Additionally, by showing how logics are translated into action at the micro-level and how logics are disrupted, reconfigured, manipulated, and used as a tool by powerful actors as well as navigated as taken-for-granted social prescriptions by less powerful ones, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the embeddedness of agency in institutions. Third, the study findings extend the literature on routine as truce in the routine dynamics theory by uncovering inflexible and unbreakable truces between organisational actors. These findings provide evidence for the theoretical claims on how powerful actors can turn their expectations "into rules and, thus, to enact the organization in ways they think appropriate" (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 110).

The third study in Chapter Six is also an empirical qualitative one that investigates how negative emotions that employees experience throughout enacting the PA process lead to its adoption and replication failure (Baldessarelli, 2021). In general, including emotions in the study of both organisations and PA has majorly evaded the attention of scholars (Baldessarelli, 2021; Cohen, 2007; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). The enactment of PA is highly coupled with diverging understandings and interpretations by both appraisers and appraisees, individual evaluations of fairness, and breeches of expectations, which are highly generative of negative emotions (Murphy, 2020). However, the influence of these emotions on PA process adoption and replication failure from with has been largely backgrounded and abstracted to employees' reactions about the process. This study adopts routine dynamics theory (Feldman and Pentland, 2003) and the theory of emotions (Gross, 2008) to examine how the dynamics of emotions contribute change to the dynamics of PA routine and vice versa.

By adopting a multiple case study design and by collecting 30 interviews from non-managerial employees in GPSFs operating in the Middle East as well as documentary data, this study uncovers the following findings. First, it mainly reveals emotion regulation to be the mechanism that drives change in the organisational PA routine over time. In particular, the findings illuminate downregulating negative emotions to be the underlying mechanism that influences covert and backstage unfavourable change to PA. The findings show that employees are constantly regulating their negative emotions, cognitively and physically, using different strategies in order to avoid the emergence of negative feelings in their current and future

understandings and enactments of the PA routine as well as to restore equilibrium to their disturbed emotional state. The study further identifies different sets of actions that actors take to downregulate their negative emotions, namely distancing, working around, and buffering and it further delineates the outcomes of each action on replicating PA.

With these findings, first, this study extends the existing PA adoption failure literature to the micro-level on multiplicity of PA in global organisations by providing in-depth understanding to the replication of multiple PA processes both at the frontstage (i.e., process meant for public consumption) and the backstage (i.e., process kept hidden). It unpacks actors' embedded agency in the PA process from an emotional perspective at the individual level and uncovers strategies and a range of actions that contribute to performance measurement, development and control failure (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). Second, the study contributes to the emotional framework in routine dynamics a nuanced understanding of how negative feelings and emotions influence the replication of organisational routines (Baldessarelli, 2021) and in particular, rule enforcing and employee controlling routines. It advances our understanding of how emotion regulation mechanisms contribute to more persistent change and increased idiosyncrasy in replicating organisational activities. Furthermore, the findings of this study further extend the routine dynamics theory on the ability of less powerful actors to change organisational routines covertly in the backstage.

In conclusion, the empirical studies in this thesis depart from the traditional social context approach to examining PA, that mainly focuses on employee's reactions, and focus on what makes international PA fails by investigating its replication in international settings at the micro-level. By adopting multiple theoretical perspectives, unpacking the black box of PA (Nishii and Wright, 2008), and by examining actors' embedded agency in the process, the insights provided by the thesis are novel as they do not stop short from highlighting adoption behaviour at the organisational level, but further uncover the underlying mechanisms for adoption failure in the region. Furthermore, the studies uncover performative mechanisms to contemporary phenomenon such as discrimination and the experience of negative emotions that are highly associated with performing this social practice and explain how they are brought into the practice as well as their influence on it. Considering their findings, the studies in general addresses the dark side of PA and tap into the multiplicity of PA in global companies as well as unfavourable changes and applications to the process, particularly in high values organisations (i.e., GPSFs) and cultures (i.e., the Middle East) (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Mellahi et al., 2011)

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters, the first of which is this overview. The following are the remaining chapters:

Chapter two: this chapter provides a multidisciplinary literature review of performance appraisal by mainly drawing from the fields of human resource management and management accounting. This chapter is predominantly informed by the thesis overarching question and reviews studies that reflect on failure within the proximal and distal social contexts of PA. The chapter is divided into two interrelated sections, the first one provides a brief historical background on the evolution of PA literature, then it ventures to review studies that reflect on PA failure within the proximal social context (i.e., PA structure and social exchanges) of PA from the fields of human resource management and management accounting. Afterwards, the chapter proceeds into the scholarship of international PA in non-western contexts and discusses the influence of national cultures and local cultural norms as distal social contexts on PA adoption failure. While doing so, the chapter highlights the main theoretical assumptions that are followed in the existing literature and relates how adopting a practice a process perspective is able to advance our knowledge of international PA adoption failure.

Chapter three: this chapter explains the research philosophy that underpins the practice and process perspective, which is shared among the empirical studies of this thesis. It reflects on the ontological and epistemological assumptions in relation to other research paradigms. Furthermore, it details the methodological choices, research strategy, research context, research interest, data collection methods, and research ethics.

Chapter four presents a systematic literature review that investigates the *how* of adoption failure of international performance appraisal in non-western contexts using a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies research design.

Chapter five presents an empirical study that investigates how professionals replicate performance appraisal at the micro-level in GPSFs operating in the Middle East.

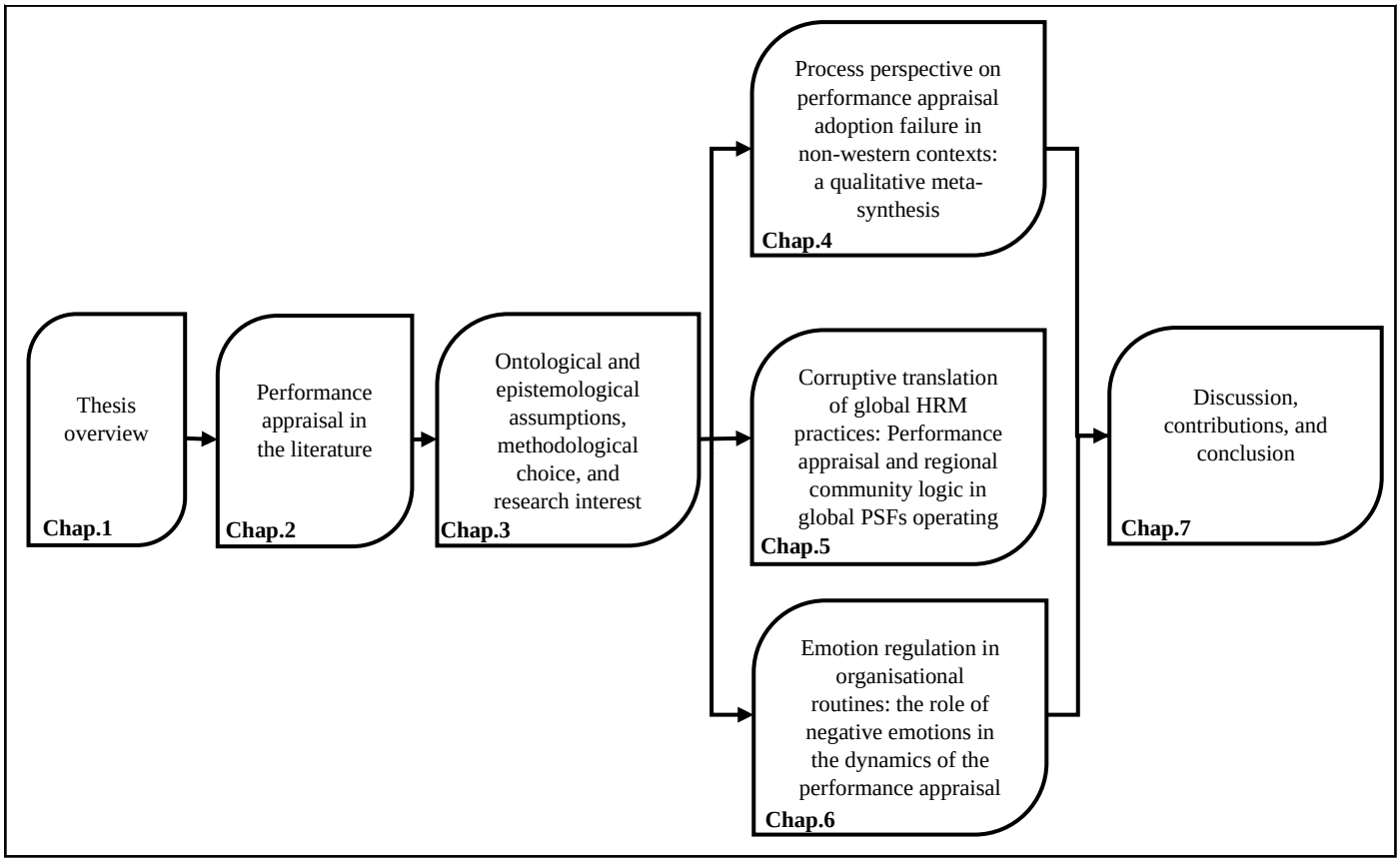
Chapter six presents an empirical study that investigates the role of negative feelings and emotions on replicating the performance appraising routine.

Chapter seven contains a discussion of the findings across the thesis studies and presents it in relation to the adopted theories, it cuts across the findings of the systematic literature review and both empirical studies to provide a more comprehensive and general discussion to suggest

several meaningful contributions to knowledge for the whole thesis. It starts by discussing international PA adoption failure in the Middle Eastern contexts, then the complexity of institutional configurations in the region at the micro-level and following that, it discusses the regulation of negative emotions and maintaining inflexible truces in organisational routines. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the thesis contributions and implications to theory and practice and ends with a conclusion for the whole thesis.

The following figure illustrates a roadmap for the thesis.

Figure 1: A roadmap of the chapters in the thesis

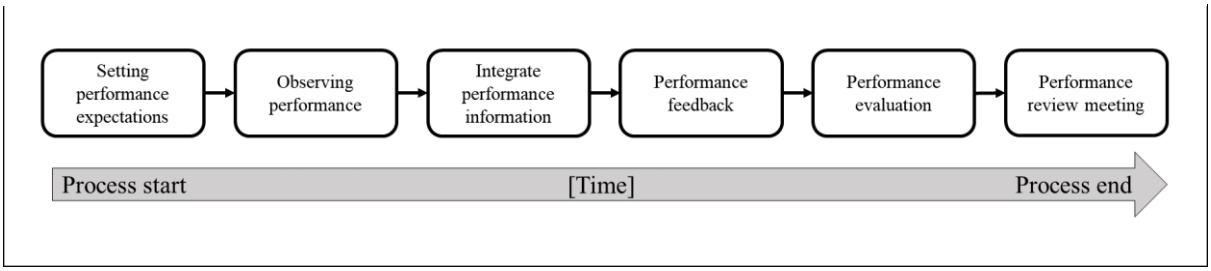


Chapter Two: Performance appraisal failure in the literature: a multidisciplinary perspective

This chapter first looks at PA as an HRM and a management accounting function. The literature reviews the empirical studies that indicated PA failure and ineffectiveness, i.e., not being operationalised as intended. This literature review is guided by the thesis overarching question and lists factors that were uncovered in the existing literature that led to PA adoption and implementation failure in organisations. Afterwards, the chapter ventures to explain the main theory used to examine international PA adoption failure in non-western contexts and reviews the relevant literature in PA international scholarship. By the end, a critique and a remedy to the existing literature and theory is presented.

The PA process, defined as "a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization" (Schleicher et al., 2018: 2210), enables organisations worldwide to exert some extent of control over employees' and to align their behaviours with organisational goals and interests; moreover, the process generates information about such behaviours that enables organisations to manage and improve employee performance (DeNisi et al., 2021; Schleicher et al., 2018; Murphy, 2020).

Figure 2: A Process-based model of performance appraisal



Adapted from Schleicher et al. (2018)

The PA process is at the core of the performance management function in organisations (DeNisi et al., 2021; Murphy, 2020) and it is composed of temporally ordered micro-processes and the accomplishment of these micro-processes accomplishes the ultimate goal of appraising performance. As shown in Figure (2) above, the process starts with the micro-process of setting employees' performance expectations as employees identify goals and performance targets aligned with organisational strategy and overall objectives. Then supervisors observe and document employees' performance in relation to the goals employees identified, following that, supervisors and employees meet frequently to discuss performance feedback where supervisors aim to coach and develop employees' performance by building on their strengths and pointing out areas for improvement. As the process progresses, and nears its end, supervisors meet to

evaluate employees' performance, they do so by discussing their performance and assigning ratings that reflect employees' performance levels. Finally, both supervisors and subordinates meet for an annual PA interview to discuss the annual rating and rewards (or loss of rewards or sanctions) that subordinates are going to receive based on the annual performance they provided and the ratings that were assigned to them when supervisors evaluated their performance.

As such, accomplishing this temporal process generates information about employees' behaviours that helps organisations to overcome the shortcomings of incomplete information about how well their employees performed. With this information, organisations become better equipped to detect behaviours that accomplish organisational goals and those that are against organisational interests (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Such information serves two main purposes; first, it can be used in allocating organisational incentives effectively (i.e., rewards, bonuses, and promotions) to employees who exhibit aligned behaviours and help to accomplish organisational goals, but also to sanction and punish employees who display self-seeking behaviours and pursue their self-interest (Murphy, 2020; Merchant and Van der Stede, 2007). Second, the information provided by the process can be used to develop employees; supervisors can use it to improve employee performance by capitalising on their strengths and identifying areas for further development (Aguinis et al., 2012). Together, these purposes serve the organisational goal of improving employee performance, which eventually leads to enhanced organisational performance (DeNisi and Murphy, 2017).

Here, it is important to underscore the multiple disciplinary nature of PA as it is a central management practice that crosses the multiple fields of HRM, management accounting and organisational studies. Although PA is frequently drawn upon by HRM scholars because of its centrality to HRM and effective employee management practices, examining it beyond the HRM field is highly underrepresented. Much of this bias is derived from the conventional definition that grounds PA as a process that involves employee-related activities. Moreover, the concept suffers from an ambiguity in which some scholars reflect on PA as a sanctioned event that occurs in a specific time of the year (DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006), whereas others reflect on it by using process vocabularies and consider its components temporally and overlapping (Schleicher et al., 2018). At the same time, PA is examined by using different labels, such as performance evaluation and performance measurement and reward systems while some scholars also reflect on it partly as a core process in performance management (DeNisi et al., 2021). Therefore, in order to understand how organisations manage the

performance of their employees, one must take into consideration the different conceptualisations and labels that scholars use to examine such a complex process.

2.1 PA as an HRM function: the social context of PA

For almost a century, the PA literature almost exclusively examined what leads to the successful implementation of the process in organisations. The majority of PA research that has been examined within the field of HRM was dedicated to the process psychometrics and structure such as eliminating rating errors and increasing rating accuracy by considering the design of PA rating scales and investing in raters' training (see reviews by Landy and Farr, 1980; Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). However, by the end of the 20th century, scholars started to acknowledge the infeasibility of the psychometric approach on process effective implementation and necessitated a move in a different direction because the PA literature became saturated with research about its format and structure. The destination of this shift landed in examining the qualitative aspects of PA process that mostly relied on the social exchanges that take place within the process, i.e., the embeddedness of PA in a social context (Levy and Williams, 2004; Murphy and Cleveland, 1991). The social context approach to PA was first coined in the seminal work of Levy and Williams (2004) and has since dominated the empirical inquiries in the literature in addition to transforming the way we think about PA. The authors state that "performance appraisal takes place in a social context and that context plays a major role in the effectiveness of the appraisal process and how participants react to that process" (p. 883). To this end, a different conversation was initiated in the literature as employees' perceptions and reactions became regarded as the main indicator of the success and failure of the process (DeNisi et al., 2021; Pichler, 2012; Levy and Williams, 2004; Cawley et al., 1998).

Levy and Williams (2004) developed a model by synthesising the variables from the literature that played a key role in the social context of PA, and they categorised them into four groups: distal variables, process proximal variables, structure proximal variables, and rater and ratee behaviours. Distal variables are generally understood to be context-related elements that influence the PA process, although not directly, and they include country's culture, organisational cultural, organisational goals, context economic factors, and HR strategies. Process proximal variables are those that directly affect the way PA is carried out, including aspects like trust, ratee commitment and affect, and subordinate-supervisor relationship. Structure proximal variables are those addressing the composition and structure of the process including performance standards, goals, dimensions, and generated documentation. Finally,

rater and ratee behaviours are those constructs that are related to "individual-level attitudinal evaluations of and responses to the performance appraisal process" (Pichler, 2012: 710), such as employee satisfaction with the system or the session, perceived utility, perceived accuracy, acceptability of the process, perceptions of justice, and motivation to use feedback (Levy and Williams, 2004; Keeping and Levy, 2000). The shift to employees' perceptions and reactions showed us that PA effectiveness lies in the eye of the employees and that they are the key to improving the process and its outcomes (Pichler, 2012).To this end, appraisal reactions are very important when studying PA and are now widely used in related studies. For instance, justice (Harbi et al., 2017; Narcisse and Harcourt, 2008); satisfaction (Kampkötter, 2017); resistance and acceptance (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2017); and trust (Jentjens and Yang, 2021) are among the widely used reactions to examine perceived effectiveness of PA. Out of these types of reaction, perceptions of organisational justice and fairness have become to be regarded as cornerstones of an effective PA (DeNisi et al., 2021; Murphy, 2020; Murphy et al., 2018; Colquitt, 2001, Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Their importance derives from the premise that however perfectly the process is designed, if employees do not perceive it as fair, they are unlikely to accept related communication (i.e., performance feedback) or outcomes (i.e., rewards and incentives), and as a result the process will become ineffective (Greenberg, 1990). Additionally, perceptions of fairness trickle down a positive impact for PA, as they influence other favourable appraisal reactions, such as acceptability and satisfaction (see the review by Colquitt, 2001). On the other hand, negative experiences and unfairness trigger counterproductive and retaliatory behaviours (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997), or what Murphy et al. (2018) labelled as the "death spiral" of the PA process, describing the way "in which disappointing experiences with performance evaluation lead to higher levels of cynicism and disengagement, and show how these negative experiences feed upon themselves" (Murphy, 2020: 9) which eventually lead to its failure.

PA is frequently described as a process that organisational actors "love to hate" (Pettijohn et al., 2001: 754). Both employees and managers fear PA (Adler et al., 2016) and the vast majority of appraisal processes in organisations are viewed as failure (Murphy, 2020; Pulakos et al., 2015; Smith et al., 1996). For instance, while examining PA in a Saudi Arabian company, Harbi et al. (2017) find that PA is perceived as ineffective because employees' performance is being appraised using informal and subjective criteria and therefore employees do not accept it. Murphy et al. (2018) find that there is a substantial gap between the performance feedback employees believe they should get versus the one they do actually get, which results in PA

failure as employees dismiss the process communications and outcomes and perceive them as inaccurate and distorted. Other evidence finds PA to be a politicised process and posit that their influence is less positive on employees attitudes, reactions, and development (Poon, 2005; Hochwarter et al., 2000; Tziner, 1999). Kluger and DeNisi (1996) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on the effects of performance feedback, and they found that feedback in the majority of the reviewed studies were unaccepted by employees and actually led to decreased performance. These studies, and several similar others, reflect that the adoption of PA has generally failed because it did not reap the benefits that were intended from adopting and implementing it in the first place -that is, accepting it by employees and improving their performance.

Researching PA has demonstrated that it is one of the most difficult practices to adopt by organisations; it is highly sensitive to personal dispositions and local cultural norms to the point that its enactment almost always varies between appraisers, appraisees, organisations, and contexts (DeNisi et al., 2021; Jentjens and Yang, 2021). To this end, unfortunately, after almost a century of research insights, the effectiveness and successful implementation of PA in organisations remains highly debatable among key scholars in the field and its failure has become regarded as a norm than an anomaly. DeNisi and Pritchard (2006: 253) state that "practitioners continue to complain about how academic research in this area has been of limited usefulness, and academics continue to bemoan the state of affairs on the practice front." Murphy (2020) brought back this debate to the forefront of the literature with a paper titled 'Performance evaluation will not die, but it should' and argues that "regardless of how they are designed or configured, PA and performance management systems are almost always rated as failures by both employees and management" (p. 2). More recently, DeNisi et al. (2021) argue in relation to managing employees' performance where PA is at its core that "there are reasons to question, or at least to be unsure about the entire premise of performance management. It is disappointing and somewhat shocking to realize that we simply do not know whether performance can be managed". Clearly, these criticisms are worrying for both the PA process in particular and organisations in general. Next, the chapter will discuss PA from perspective of management accounting.

2.2 PA as a management accounting and organisations function: performance measurement and control

The PA process intersects with the management accounting field through its employee performance measurement and control dimensions with little attention to performance

feedback and employee development. However, examining PA within the context where it is being adopted is lacking in the management accounting field, unlike how the process is examined as an HRM function. Nonetheless, much of PA research in management accounting complements that within the HRM field and provides more explanations to why PA is regarded as failure by employees and organisations.

In management accounting, the process is an integral part of management control systems that is rooted in the pioneering work of Robert Anthony (1965) to the management accounting field. Management control is an organisational process that ensures resources, such as employees and extrinsic rewards, "are obtained and used effectively and efficiently in the accomplishment of the organisation's objectives" (Anthony, 1965: 17). The main aim of management control systems is to persuade and motivate employees to act in ways that will increase the probability of achieving organisational goals (Drury, 2008) by making sure that the goals of employees are aligned with the goals of their organisations, in other words, goal congruence (Anthony and Govindarajan, 1998). Merchant and Van der Stede (2003: 7) explain that a central objective for management controls in organisations is "to help ensure that the employees do what is best for the organisation." In agreement with Merchant and Van der Stede, Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018 and Emmanuel et al. (1990) propose that the primary goal of MCS is to encourage employees to act in ways that enhance the performance of the entire organisation.

Management controls were categorised into three groups by Merchant (1998): action, personal and cultural, and results. According to Merchant and Van der Stede (2007), action controls make sure "that employees perform (do not perform) certain actions known to be beneficial (harmful) to the organization" (p. 86). There are four basic forms of action controls, and they are: action accountability, behavioural constraints, pre-action reviews, and redundancy. This type of control is more restrictive in nature as it concerns the level of employees' actions, such as requiring computer passwords to maintain segregation of work between employees or installing fingerprint readers to control employees' attendance. Personnel controls are implemented to "build on employees' natural tendencies to control or motivate themselves" (p.95). This includes a variety of actions taken by managers to increase the likelihood that employees will complete the desired task satisfactorily on their own based on the assumption that employees who perform their tasks are honest, hardworking, and experienced. Cultural controls refer to those that "are designed to encourage mutual monitoring; a powerful form of group pressure on individuals who deviate from group norms and values" (p. 97) by building an environment with shared values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and ideologies. In other words,

they are both written and unwritten rules that dictate employees' behaviours. Finally, results controls are preventative kind of controls that entail gathering and disclosing information concerning the outcomes of job effort and are targeted to the accomplishment of organisational tasks.

The PA process examined in this thesis falls within the area of results controls as they are dominantly adopted by decentralised organisations such as GPSFs because they are particularly used "as a means of controlling the behaviour of professional employees…who are responsible for achieving rather than [for] performing a task" (Merchant and Van der Stede, 2007: 35). According to the authors, the process of international PA forms a fundamental part of results control because the implementation of these controls necessitates the following four temporal steps: (1) defining performance dimensions, (2) measuring employee performance, (3) establishing performance targets that employees must achieve, and (4) rewarding and sanctioning employees. Defining performance dimension is crucial because they influence how employees perceive what matters to their organisation and these dimensions are related to organisational strategy and objectives. These dimensions are then translated into specific financial and non-financial performance targets that individual employees must achieve. Crucially, performance targets must be assigned with a weight that is understandable by employees, precise, measurable, objective, and timely. If performance dimensions were not accompanied by targets, employees will not be aware what to aim for. To this end, performance targets give employees explicit formal goals to work toward, which increases their motivation and stimulates aligned actions. Additionally, they enable employees to assess their own performance. Lastly, rewards and punishments are needed to motivate employees and encourage them to achieve their targets which are assessed when managers calibrate employees ratings and are communicated in the annual PA meeting.

The majority of performance management and appraisal research in the management accounting literature has focused on the organisational level to examine their influence on organisational decision making and strategic control (Berry et al., 2009; Jazayeri and Scapens, 2008; Sandstrom and Toivanen, 2002; Otley, 1999) and less research has been conducted at the level of employees. At this level, however, there are two streams for examining the process of PA in the management accounting literature, a soft and a rigid management accounting stream.

Similar to PA studies within the HRM field, the soft approach majorly relies on the social exchange theory to address issues of employee perceptions of fairness toward objective and subjective (or financial and non-financial) performance appraisal. It examines the influence of process structure on employees reactions (Levy and Williams, 2004) and provides somewhat intuitive descriptions and acknowledgement of these relationships. For instance, Lau and Moser (2008) and Lau and Sholihin (2005) examined the influence of financial and non-financial performance measures on employees procedural fairness perceptions and contended that subordinates view the PA process to be fairer when using both measures than by using only one of them. Burney et al. (2009) findings are also consistent with Lau and colleagues ones, but they further show a positive link between fair measures and organisational performance.

Lau (2015) examined the effects of non-financial performance measures on procedural fairness, role clarity and managerial performance and he found a positive relationship between non-financial measures and role clarity, whereas, surprisingly, no such relationship was found for procedural justice. More recently, Nuhu et al. (2022) investigated the interactive and diagnostic dimensions of both financial and non-financial measures on managers creativity and their results show a positive relationship that is mediated by justice perceptions. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the influence of implementing subjective and objective performance measurements and appraisal in general is indeterminant on organisational actors and majorly results in unintended consequences that would lead to implementation failure. In fact, similar to research in the HRM field, the empirical studies within the management accounting field show that failure to effectively implement the PA process is more of a norm than an anomaly as will be evidenced next in the rigid stream.

The rigid stream, on the other hand, examines the relationship between objective and subjective measures, as structure proximal variables (Levy and Williams, 2004), on process proximal variables such as ratings, rewards, and subordinate-supervisor relationship. This stream is more concerned in investigating the varying forms of intentional and unintentional biases to employee ratings from implementing objective and subjective performance measures that lead to unrealistic employee evaluation and process failure. These biases include favouritism bias, bonus allocation bias, spill over bias, and centrality and leniency bias. For example, Prendergast and Topel (1993) and Moers (2005) found a positive relationship between close subordinate-supervisor relationship and intentional rating bias. These studies maintained that favouritism from such close relationship have a direct impact on manipulating objective and

subjective measures to benefit particular employees. Studies that examined spill over bias show that the subjective measures of employee performance appraisal are highly influenced by objective measures. Bol and Smith (2011) examined the influence of objective measures on the subjective ones and found that supervisors subjective evaluations are highly influenced by the objective measures that were previously achieved by employees. Consistent with Bol and Smith (2011) findings, Fehrenbacher et al. (2018) also found that subjective performance measures are influenced by unrelated objective ones that are used to appraise employees' performance.

Moreover, implementing objective and subjective performance measures might result in leniency and centrality biases. Centrality bias refers to compressing ratings to arrive at similar ratings across all employees, which will result in having somewhat similar ratings assigned for varying performances. On the other hand, leniency bias refers to supervisors' tendency to inflate the ratings that employees receive in comparison to the actual performance they provide (Bol, 2011; Saal et al., 1980). In this regard, Milkovich and Newman (1993) argue that supervisors tend to insufficiently differentiate among employees and therefore tend to compress and inflate ratings. Several studies in the field documented the existence of these biases in the PA process (Fehrenbacher et al., 2018; Bol, 2011; Moers, 2005; Jawahar and Williams, 1997). For instance, Bol (2011) indicates that supervisors bias PA ratings to achieve self-interested goals and preferences. Moers (2005) find evidence that the diversity of objective and subjective measures influenced supervisors to both compress and inflate ratings. Moreover, the author indicated that such bias is problematic in terms of controlling employees and allocating organisational rewards. Jawahar and Williams (1997), on the other hand, found that supervisors tend to inflate ratings for administrative purposes such as financial rewards and promotion decisions.

Furthermore, beside intentional and unintentional biases, PA studies within the management accounting field have uncovered five unintended consequences that are highly associated with employees self-seeking behaviours. First, gaming performance appraisal where organisational members alter their behaviours to achieve performance expectations and targets, sometime to the extent of violating ethical norms (Graf et al., 2019; Hood, 2006; Jensen, 2003). Second, organisational members can deliberately manipulate different forms of performance information to meet their own performance requirements by misrepresenting them, misinterpreting them, or reclassifying them (Kalgin, 2016; Cardinaels and Yin, 2015; Hood, 2006). Third, the implementation of performance measures is likely to result in selective

attention in terms of focusing on short term goals and neglect long term ones that are not presently measured (Kerpershoek et al., 2016; Mannion and Braithwaite, 2012). Fourth, performance measures and appraisal frequently produce the false impression or the illusion of control as "the use of these controls leads managers to believe their assumptions about performance, its measurement and accountability are applicable to their organisation" (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018: 718). Finally, Conrad and Guven (2012), Segal and Lehrer (2012), and Chwastiak (2006) empirical studies show that the implementation of performance measures and appraisal processes are likely to alter the social relationships between actors in organisations by diminishing trust, producing inequalities between employees, and promoting transactional relationships.

Although researching the measuring and controlling aspects of PA has proliferated in the management accounting field, research in this area has only acknowledged and described their existence by focusing on middle and lower-level managers. Beyond that, these aspects are highly under researched and whether performance can actually be measured or controlled remains beyond our understanding (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). Therefore, we still do not understand whether these unintended consequences are generated from process design or employees' behaviours. Therefore, we have yet to uncover the influence of adopting such processes on employees in order to understand and curtail these consequences from occurring in organisations. By examining the performative replication of performance appraisal at the micro-level (i.e., the level of the process), the thesis could shed light on how these unintended consequences materialise in organisations because part of its investigation relates to explaining the underlying mechanisms for how the achievement of these measurable performance targets are accomplished and translated into actions by employees. To this end, these underlying mechanisms could be valuable in informing the management control literature with theoretical understanding of the relationship between implementing results controls, through PA, and their unintended consequences.

With regard to organisational theory, it is similar to the management accounting literature as it conceptualises PA is a rule-enforcing mechanism that maintains truces and reduces the conflicts between actors for being highly coupled with supervisory monitoring, and rewards and sanctions (Nelson and Winter, 1982). It enables employees who might have divergent understandings, interests, and self-seeking behaviours to put these aside and carry on the accomplishment of organisational activities by following nominal behaviours and do what is best for the organisation, as at the back of their minds, employees know that if such nominal

behaviours were breached, they will be detected by supervisors and sanctioned. PA in this sense serves a deeper purpose of controlling all the behavioural deviations that could emerge from conflicts between actors or their self-seeking behaviours that could contribute to unfavourable changes to organisational processes and activities (ibid). As such, the process plays an important role in maintaining a healthy course of stability and change in organisations (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). This is an important aspect of PA, as such it is crucial to organisations' survivability.

To this end, as illustrated, the PA process is not exclusive to one field, it is the same process that is examined differently to speak to different audiences who are interested by, either, its developing dimension, controlling dimension, or rule-enforcing dimension. Crucially, one important reason for having the practice mainly split between two fields is because the developing and controlling purposes of the process are contradictory and investigating them simultaneously is complicated. This explains the absence of examining employee development in the management accounting literature and the absence of examining control in the HRM literature. It is important to reflect on the multiple disciplinary nature of PA to underline its complexity as a management and organisational practice, consequently, reflect further on the repercussions that it might have if its adoption fails. This has become a worrying issue, since after many years of research in multiple fields, the process is rated as a failure by notable scholars and practitioners. This failure does not simply concern organisational performance and the activities of developing and managing employees, but also makes us question that without effective controls and rule-enforcing mechanisms, how do organisations maintain a healthy combination of stability and change, and consequently survivability as well as the moral compass of their survivability.

The reviewed literature above demonstrates PA adoption and implementation failure through Levy and Williams' (2004) social context framework to PA. As illustrated, these studies investigate the influence of the immediate and proximal social context that led to PA adoption failure without taking into consideration factors that relate to the distal context or the wider cultural context where the process is embedded, and therefore, they do not consider the multiple levels of social complexity. Since the wider context where the process is embedded has not been included in the analysis, these studies fall within the dominant simplistic strand of management practices that focuses on PA policies, structure, and employees' perceptions (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). Crucially, these studies chiefly assume that organisations are free to choose and implement any form of performance measurements and appraisal they see fit and

that, to an extent, will reap the intended consequences regardless of the context culture (Delbridge et al., 2011). The next section will discuss the influence of the local cultural norms of non-western contexts, as a distal variable, on PA adoption failure.

Consequently, it becomes a pressing need to investigate PA through the practice and process theoretical lens and methodological approach at the micro-level (i.e., the level of the process) because the practice and process perspective (1) can remedy the disjointedness between the multiple fields as it takes into consideration the multiple purposes and goals that it serves while examining how the process is replicated. (2) it recognises the temporal interdependency of the micro-processes of PA process in achieving these multiple purposes by looking at how the micro-processes' patterns of actions can balance and achieve between the contradicting PA goals of development and control. Finally, (3) by recognising the embeddedness of PA in mutually constituent social and material structures, it takes distal, proximal (process and structure) and ratee behaviours constructs into consideration in its empirical attention. Crucially, employees behaviours are not investigated through their reactions, interpretations or perceptions of the process, but through the recursive relationship between their understandings and actions. To this end, the practice and process perspective offers a unique and a strong explanatory lens to understand PA within the context as it looks at multiple levels of analysis while examining process replication.

2.3 International PA adoption failure in non-western context: an institutional theory perspective

In this section, the thesis will critically discuss the dominant approach and the underlying theoretical assumptions to examining the adoption of international PA that is grounded in institutional theory, then this section will review studies that considered the influence of non-western contexts local cultural norms as a distal factor on international PA adoption failure in MNCs, as is the focus of this thesis. There has been a considerable increase in the examination of international PA diffusion in MNCs and their subsidiaries (DeNisi et al., 2021). PA facilitates distant surveillance and monitoring of subsidiaries and overall corporate performance for MNCs (Festing et al., 2012; Vo and Stanton, 2011). As Kang and Shen (2016: 291) explain it, MNCs adopt PA "to evaluate and continuously improve individual, subsidiary and corporate performance against clearly defined, pre-set objectives that are directly linked to international strategies." Therefore, because of its strategic importance and despite being perceived as failure by employees and organisations, it is not surprising that the vast majority

of organisations worldwide are actively adopting some sort of formal PA process in their efforts to accomplish the above purposes (Murphy, 2020).

The international application of PA and HRM and management accounting practices in general has received very little attention from scholars (DeNisi et al., 2021; Uddin et al., 2021; Endenich et al., 2020; Kang and Shen, 2016) and even less attention has been paid to the topic at the micro-level, i.e., the level of the practice and its processes, and in the Middle Eastern context (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Mellahi et al., 2011). These bodies of knowledge have, overwhelmingly, paid more attention to individualistic cultures such as the North American and European contexts. In fact, extending the research beyond North America and Europe is needed given the western-centric nature of research in these fields (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). Therefore, much of international PA research ignores non-western actors' everyday experiences who are constantly aware of their context to satisfy the needs of a broad range of external and internal stakeholders whose interests are not always necessarily aligned or compatible. This highly western-centric approach in the field "is one reason why [non-western] practitioners are not "listening" to the researchers" (Ibid: 357).

The main focus in the examination of international PA has been to establish whether associated practices are converging or diverging on a global scale (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2018). To date, there has been serious debate on this issue. On the one hand, global organisations have a centralised global strategy that pressurises subsidiaries to exactly adopt PA policies and practices from headquarters (DeNisi et al., 2021), while on the other, depending on the institutional distance, the cultural norms and values of the host contexts challenge adoption and encourage resistance at the individual level (Harbi et al., 2017; Vo and Stanton, 2011). To this end, the findings concerning convergence and divergence, and therefore the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of international PA, remain inconclusive (DeNisi et al., 2021; Brewster and Haak-Saheem, 2019; Mayrhofer et al., 2019). Additionally, some scholars have moved beyond this debate and have considered the importance of hybridising practices which involve adapting western or global PA practices to the needs of local cultures, while maintaining the essential aspects of the practice (Mellahi et al., 2016; Ansari et al., 2014).

At the heart of international PA research, research on adopting western and globally designed PA in non-western contexts has gained momentum over the past decade (DeNisi et al., 2021; Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Harbi et al., 2017; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Mellahi et al., 2016; Vo and Stanton, 2011). In this regard, it is important to note that the norms and

values that underlie non-western contexts are completely different to those internalised in western and global PA processes. As opposed to the individualistic culture and low power distance which constitute a culture that values treating everyone equally in western and developed contexts' organisations, the majority of non-western cultures are collectivist, and the power distance between organisational hierarchal levels is high (Harbi et al., 2017; Hofstede, 2001). The cultural and institutional distances between western and non-western contexts are too large, making it difficult for organisations and actors to reconcile the differences between the cultural norms of home and host countries (Mellahi et al., 2016).

Consequently, non-western contexts pose a competing cultural environment that can diminish the value of the international PA practice (Kostova and Roth, 2002), and hence, contributing to its failure. For instance, the majority of studies emphasise the difficulty associated with the success of adopting the process locally in non-western contexts, such as underscoring the influence of informal relationships on PA outcomes (Vo and Stanton, 2011); the influence of culture on rating bias (Horak and Yang, 2019); the importance of affect and 'liking' on PA outcomes (Meinecke et al., 2017); and the imbalanced power dynamics between the rater and the ratee (Harbi et al., 2017; Vo and Stanton, 2011).

PA is often transferred from one context to another through normative or coercive pressures. This has attracted the interest of some of PA scholars pursuing understanding of the extent to which the adopted or diffused practice resembles the transferred one (Mellahi et el., 2016; Gu and Nolan, 2017, Brewster et al., 2008). To a large extent, studies examining the adoption of PA in non-western contexts traditionally rely on the global-local dialogue. That is, comparing between the cultural norms and values between (western or) global and local non-western contexts (Mayrhofer et al., 2019) to shed light on global integration and local responsiveness (Brewster et al., 2016) and understand their influence on the diffusion of PA. In other words, if the ideal transferred and adopted practices resemble each other then it indicates evidence of convergence and standardisation, otherwise it is divergence and localisation.

One of the main theories that researchers have relied on to examine the resemblance phenomenon is institutional theory. Scott (2014: 56) defines institutions as "regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life." Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991) were amongst the pioneering contributors to the institutional field, with the latter proposing the concept of isomorphism to be central to

institutional analysis, since it explains how organisations, practices, and processes start to resemble one another in similar institutional fields over time. Isomorphism is defined as "a contrasting process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (Thornton et al., 2012: 25). Within this theory, organisations in similar fields are constantly responding to external institutional demands that put pressure on them to structure themselves in a similar fashion. The idea is that organisations in similar fields (e.g., healthcare, accountancy, or construction) are likely to be structurally similar as they "observe each other, have relations with each other, and compete and cooperate with each other" (Thornton et al., 2012: 45).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) theorised three forms of institutional isomorphism that provide the basis for organisational rationality, coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphism, which are considered to be sources of legitimacy for organisations, with each corresponding to certain cornerstone institutions in society, such as the state, professions, or the market respectively. Coercive isomorphism implies a structure imposed on organisations from a more powerful party, such as the adoption of policies imposed by the state or that of practices imposed by the headquarters of MNCs. Normative isomorphism implies the adoption of structures that are normatively known to be best in the professional field. Finally, memetic isomorphism implies the adoption of structures when uncertainty in the market is high; for example, when an organisation models itself on another more successful one by adopting its practices. In brief, the theory of isomorphism places more emphasis on structural similarities between organisations in similar institutional fields (Thornton et al., 2012; Scott, 2014); these underpinning assumptions to institutional theory were brought into the realm of international PA research.

As research proliferated in management fields, some researchers noticed that variations in cultures, political environments, and technological advances meant that adopted practices varied from those being transferred and adapted to local contexts (Ansari et al., 2014). Traditionally, the adoption of practices, including international PA, can be classified into three macro-level (i.e., the level of organisations) behaviours and they are: faithful, hybridised and ceremonial (Ansari et al., 2014). Faithful adoption to practices refers to those that resemble in essence the implemented ones and are performed as originally intended. In this type, the adopted practice maintains the essential features of the transferred practice as a whole without changing its meaning. Hybridised practices refer to the ones that adopters slightly reinvent and change their meaning for its enactment to become applicable in the local context. In this type,

cultural norms and values from home and host contexts are combined but the essential features of the practice are maintained. Finally, ceremonial adoption refers to adopting the practice superficially by name only, without actively enacting it or believing that it provides real value for the adopting company (Kostova and Roth, 2002), i.e., a failed adoption to the practice. Since the thesis investigates international PA adoption and replication failure, it is concerned with ceremonial adoption.

In regard to ceremonial adoption, Kostova and Roth (2002) studied the adoption of practices in multinational subsidiaries in ten, mostly western, countries and developed a distinction between "the actual implementation of the practice and the internalized belief in the value of the practice," (p. 216); that is, whether PA materialises as intended in different contexts. If internalisation is not achieved within the adopting party, then it is concluded that PA is adopted ceremonially to achieve external legitimacy (i.e., in the eyes of internal stakeholders). Therefore, contextual differences between organisations influence the adoption of different versions of the practice, which is sometimes merely done as window-dressing or ceremonial for external legitimacy purposes (Townley, 1997) which signals adoption failure. In brief, if the adopted practice was valued in the host context and not resisted at the individual level (i.e., was considered legitimate), then adoption is more likely to be faithful to the original. Otherwise, it would be more likely to take on a hybridised or a ceremonial form (Ansari et al., 2014; Kostova and Roth, 2002). To this end, institutional theory mainly aims to explain how organisations are likely to respond to practice adoption (faithful, hybridised, ceremonial) in relation to the institutional forms of rationalisation (regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive) (Thornton et al., 2012).

There are two shortcomings to examining the adoption of international PA through the neo-institutional lens, the first concerns the assumption of passive actors' agency and the second concerns how the adoption process is conceptualised. Current studies take-for-granted the assumption of actors' agency as mindless and interest-free (Mayrhofer et al., 2019) instead of acknowledging it as mindful and actors as knowledgeable (Feldman et al., 2016). Thornton et al. (2012) explicitly indicate that institutional theory does not "equate agency with interests, or self-seeking behavior" (p. 79). This is somehow problematic to the examination of the complexity of PA since several studies' findings show that actors are bringing their self-seeking behaviours to the practice such as those reflecting on favouritism (Harbi et al., 2017; Moers, 2005), rating bias (Spence and Keeping, 2011), abusive behaviour (Oh and Farh, 2017; Samnani and Singh, 2014), and discrimination (Rubin and Edwards, 2020; Bento et al., 2012)

in the process. In fact, DiMaggio and Powell's (1983, 1991) development of institutional theory was overly focused on how similarity between organisations is *formed* structurally rather than how it is *achieved* through actors' agency. They applied a concept to actors' cognition which is primarily mindless and based on the psychology of schemas, scripts, and habits.

In this regard, Thornton et al. (2012) argue that DiMaggio and Powell's theorising presumes actors' cognition and agency to be mindless and interest-free through which the behaviours of organisations and its individuals are predominantly affected and informed by institutions. However, efforts to include mindful agency in institutional theorising was called for by DiMaggio (1988) himself, by recognising the importance of actors' agency (via institutional entrepreneurs) in creating institutions, reproducing institutions by means of socialising with new actors, and delegitimising institutions with power and dominance. This overfocused view on structures and mindless agency attracted criticism from notable scholars in the field since it conceptualises actors as passive replicators of practices. For instance, Thornton et al. (2012) and Friedland and Alford (1991) criticised DiMaggio and Powell's (1991) theory for overlooking interest and mindfulness in actors' agency, arguing that such focus on structural isomorphism limits our efforts to understand the co-constituency of structure and agency in the process of institutionalisation (Lounsbury, 2008). To this end, we know a great deal about structural isomorphism in the international PA literature and less about how this structure is achieved through actors' mindful and self-interested agency.

Moreover, studies in the existing literature take-for-granted the assumption of exact adoption and implementation of international PA. Such a concept for exact replication is oftentimes likened to the multinational fast-food chain as the 'McDonalds approach' to illustrate "the creation and operation of a large number of similar outlets that deliver a product or perform a service" (Winter and Szulanski, 2001: 730). That is, documenting the action pattern of the practice that was developed in home countries (where MNCs headquarters are located) in templates such as performance programs or standard operating procedures (D'Adderio, 2014), this template is then transferred to subsidiaries in host countries, and assume that, to an extent, actors will exactly, and passively, replicate the action pattern as intended. However, empirical international PA studies largely show that this is not the case as actors actions and behaviours follow local cultural norms (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Harbi et al., 2017). This exact replication assumption for the adoption of PA in international settings is what, inadvertently, pushes scholars to take a western-centric approach to examine the practice (Vo and Stanton, 2011). Within this approach, the cultural norms and values of western and

global contexts are considered superior to those that underlie non-western ones. Therefore, it is common for researchers to imply failure in adoption if PA in non-western contexts was guided by their national cultural norms and values (Yahiaoui et al., 2021).

Although, theoretically, management scholars recognise that global convergence of practices is improbable (Brewster and Haak-Saheem, 2020; Gooderham et al., 2019), however this is not reflected in the empirical studies of PA. The exact adoption and replication assumption as well as the implemented-internalised perspective on practice adoption are frequently employed in existing international PA literature to address global practice convergence and standardisation. This indicates that researchers are "constrained by having to grapple with the convergence-divergence issue on the basis of sequential country-by-country descriptions" (Mayrhofer et al., 2019: 360) and this is highly reflected in the literature examining PA adoption in non-western contexts. For instance, Yahiaoui et al. (2021) aimed to uncover the viability of global standardisation by investigating how the Middle Eastern culture affected the implementation and internalisation of international PA. They identified four socio-cultural values that led to adoption failure in relation to employee-manager relationships. These values resulted in the precedence of localised subjective PA criteria, evaluations, and feedback over the international ones, and they are: (1) emotional relationships between rater-ratee, (2) fear of losing face, (3) high-power distance, and (4) avoiding confrontation.

Uddin et al. (2021) examined the influence of lingering communist values and the new regime on the adoption of international-oriented performance targets in a manufacturing firm in the Czech Republic and showed that their implementation has failed as they are largely seen as inconsistent, inconsequential, unachievable, and unrealistic. This failure was primarily promoted by contradictions between the old (communist) and the new regime which encouraged organisational members to follow a more subjective performance evaluation approach that is built on common sense, manipulation, and superficial compliance. Horak and Yang (2019) examined the influence of the informal institution of South Korean seniority on the adoption of international PA in multiple local and multinational organisations. their study shows that the international practice is hardly effective in these organisations as seniority is persistent and deeply rooted in performance evaluation criteria, career progression, and promotion decisions which resulted in implementing a more indigenous version of the practice. Therefore, and consistent with the results of previous studies, the international PA in their study failed to be adopted as intended in multiple organisations.

Harbi et al. (2017) investigated the influence of implementing international PA on employees perceptions of fairness in Saudi Arabia. Although their investigation is not grounded in institutional theory, their study reveals valuable insights as they show that the local cultural norm of *wasta* led to failure in adopting the international practice and the operationalisation of an informal localised version. Gu and Nolan (2017) researched the adoption of international PA in local state-owned banks in China. Consistent with Yahiaoui et al. (2021) results above, they show that the socio-cultural values such as the subordinates gift-giving to supervisors, supervisor-subordinate emotional relationship, and saving face influenced resistance to the international practice and the active adoption of the traditional local one. Vo and Stanton (2011), on the other hand, examined the transfer and adoption of international PA between home and host countries with relatively similar cultures, Japan and Vietnam. They showed that the diffusion of Japanese cultural values dominated the adoption process as their approach "was characterised by a more informal form of regular performance review, within a strictly top-down process and which suffered from accusations of bias and lack of transparency by Vietnamese respondents" (p. 3513).

As shown from reviewing the handful of studies that discusses international PA adoption failure in non-western contexts above that the local cultural norms (as a distal factor) in these contexts are deeply rooted in subordinates' and supervisors' social exchanges (process proximal factor) and internalised in the localised version of the practice (structure proximal factor). These cultural norms are deeply rooted and seemingly overlapping in proximal (structure and process) and behavioural factors in the immediate and distant social context of PA to the point that the boundaries between them are hardly distinguishable. To this end, it is clear that the local cultural norms are barriers to standardisation and global convergence, making the successful adoption of PA a remote possibility.

Although these insights are very important for understanding the challenges and difficulties associated with adopting the international PA practice in non-western contexts as well as illuminate variances between home and host contexts, they mainly offer oversimplified descriptive explanations that mostly answer the '*what'* aspect of adoption failure. They are insufficient to explain the underlying mechanisms that are associated with the complexity of failure to adopt the process which are mainly explained by the '*how'*. Additionally, the cultural norms in non-western contexts that portray the dominance of informal social relationships in organisations (e.g., *guanxi* in China, *yongo* in Korea, and *wasta* in the Middle East) are almost always cited as a reason for adoption failure without further investigation to how these cultural

norms are brought into the practice (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Vo and Stanton, 2011). As such, preventing us from ever understanding adoption success or failure for this complex practice beyond drawing on differences in cultures or reducing the uniqueness of non-western cultural norms to barriers for successful adoption.

2.4 A critique and a remedy to existing PA literature and the underlying theoretical assumptions

Crucially, there are several reasons for these shortcomings in the literature that lie beneath the foundation of the empirical inquiry. First, and most importantly as mentioned earlier, scholars mainly draw on the mechanism of exact adoption and replication of the practice (Winter and Szulanski, 2001). In this regard, a working, or a superior template of a practice established in the home country is transferred across borders to organisations that are forced to exactly adopt it (through coercive, normative, or mimetic forces) in order to maintain a near-isomorphic form within the same organisation (e.g., headquarter and subsidiaries of MNCs) or other organisations in similar fields (e.g., between sectors of GPSFs). This ongoing focus on exact replication grounded the PA process in a 'one-size fit all' conceptualisation that clearly decontextualised it from its embeddedness in different cultures and social contexts (DeNisi et al., 2021).

Second, and although scholars have recognised PA as a social process and shifted their empirical focus to actors' reactions and social interactions, inadvertently they remain at the periphery of the process, with actors' agency mostly assumed in terms of mindless cognition, in which behaviours are more passive than mindful or effortful. This view assumes "that actors are subject to isomorphic pressures to follow the successful Western model of rationalisation" (Gooderham et al., 2019: 8) and is rooted in early Carnegie school insights (see March and Simon, 1958), which considers cognition to be mindless and that actors' actions follow the "psychology of habits, scripts, and schemas" (Thornton et al., 2012: 31). However, scholars from different fields challenged this assumption about actors' agency (e.g., Nelson and Winter, 1982; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Thornton et al., 2012). They rejected the consideration of actions in binary terms (e.g., mindful or mindless, rational or non-rational) and argued that actors are more mindful, "knowledgeable and often reflective" (Feldman et al., 2016: 507) when performing practices and processes than conceived by early Carnegie school insights. Such a view recognised the embeddedness of social processes, such as PA, in social interactions and material structures, and that all are mutually constituent in situations (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). This view revolutionised how actors' agency is

analysed by allowing scholars to focus on how their actions and behaviours shape practices and, at the same time, are shaped by the practices within which they are embedded.

Third, as the studies above show, scholars seem to abstract the adoption of international PA with two, or often three aspects of the process (i.e., performance criteria, feedback, career progression) and use them to theorise about the whole process. Evidently, this view overlooks the interrelatedness and interdependency of the micro-processes that make up the PA process (DeNisi et al., 2021; Schleicher et al., 2018). Therefore, despite their efforts to assimilate the findings about the different aspects of the process into a temporal interrelated web of processes (see review by Schleicher et al., 2018), the varying disparate research results make it difficult to have a clearer picture of how distal (cultural norms) and proximal (social) contexts influence the temporal accomplishment of the process, its structure, and actors' behaviours. To this end, instead of understanding the process from inside the black box and capturing its complexity, our understanding of it relates more to a series of still pictures and snapshots at specific times. Significantly, the traditional view shows PA to be a black box that could either be influenced by actors' perceptions and reactions or be influenced by them.

Fourth, and most importantly, the majority of the empirical studies and what we know about PA in the literature subscribe to the variance mode of theorising (see Mohr, 1982). The variance mode "refers to conceptual constructions that relate variables to one another" by examining causal relationships between the variables and mainly deriving explanations from existing studies or process models (Cloutier and Langley, 2020: 3). Pfeffer (1983: 321) maintains that "in variance theory, the precursor is both a necessary and sufficient condition to explain the result, variables are dealt with, and the time ordering among the independent variables is immaterial." The variance mode of theorising dominates the PA literature. A recent review by Schleicher et al. (2018), who comprehensively and systematically reviewed PA research from the 1980s, shows that over 75 per cent of the empirical studies included in their analysis for the PA literature and its international scholarship were either survey based, experimental, or archival while sourcing data qualitatively was less evident in the literature besides that most their insights are within the spirit of variance theorising. At first glance, the mention of dependent and independent variables and causal relationships makes one think that variance theorising is limited to research conducted quantitatively. However, the spirit of variance theory also extends to qualitative research in PA, as scholars mainly think of PA and actors' reactions and interpretations in terms of causal relationships (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi

et al., 2017). Therefore, variance theorising is not just a methodological choice, but is more of a mindset for conducting research.

These challenges can be overcome by adopting a practice and process perspective which takes a performative view on replication and unpacks processes from within (D'Adderio and Pollock, 2020; Boe-Lillegraven, 2019; D'Adderio, 2014). This perspective rejects the notion of exact replication that is passively enacted by actors and views it as trivial. It argues that replication is performative, effortful, and requires translation from actors and organisations in host contexts (D'Adderio, 2014). This means that when practices are adopted, they become embedded in material and social contexts with different institutional configurations and different webs of coordinating relationships between processes, actors, and contexts (Howard-Grenville et al., 2015). In this regard, Latour (1986: 267) explains that "the spread in time and space of anything – claims, orders, artefacts, goods – is in the hands of people; each of these people may act in many different ways, letting the token [process] drop, or modifying it, or deflecting it, or betraying it, or adding to it, or appropriating it." Consequently, replicating processes is not merely about recreating an abstract structure for PA or achieving structural similarity (e.g., standard operating procedures, PA software, PA rules and regulations), but concern "the creation of another [process] that is similar to the original [process] in significant respects" (Szulanski and Jensen, 2004: 349). This process is always tensioned between "the need to reproduce the [process] exactly…and the need to change the [process]" (D'Adderio, 2014: 1).

Central to the performative replications of practices and processes is the mutual constitution of structure and agency (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013). As opposed to the exact replication approach, it recognises that PA processes and actors' agency co-constitute simultaneously and interact recursively throughout replicating PA in different contexts, and this recursive relationship influences processes to change over time (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). Therefore, this perspective does not focus on what happens to PA after being *transferred* and *implemented* by organisations in non-western contexts, but rather changes these vocabularies to the *adoption* and *replication* of the PA process from within, i.e., at the micro-level; the level of practices and processes. This is important, because it shows the adoption and replication to be more dynamic than conceptualised in the existing international PA literature in general and offers a competing, yet complementary, way of understanding PA failure that is able to generate new insights beyond those that are reduced to cultural comparisons.

To sum up, due to the large cultural and institutional distance, failure to adopt international PA in non-western contexts, the Middle Eastern region in particular, is more of a norm than the exception that needs to be explained beyond drawing on mere simplified acknowledgements and attributed to sequential country-by-country descriptions. To advance knowledge, we need a micro-level theoretical understanding. The perspective of practice and process is a powerful micro-level explanatory lens to investigate PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts as it provides a more deeply contextualised understanding that recognises the embeddedness of social processes in contexts and individuals' social interactions, and that they exist together in situations and influence one another. This means that PA and contexts can influence individuals' behaviours, but at the same time individuals also influence the process through their mindful agency (D'Adderio, 2014).

Moreover, this perspective recognises processes as dynamic, fluid, and aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms of change that explains the *how* of PA adoption failure (Cloutier and Langley, 2020) by recognising that, over time, the recursive relationship between processes and individuals generates change and influences how the process is replicated. Finally, it recognises the central role of actors' agency in the adoption and replication of PA as mindful since it strongly assumes that "behind all the apparently durable features of our world there is always the work and effort of someone" (Nicolini, 2009: 3). Therefore, adopting a practice and a process approach will enrich the PA literature with novel insights that would be difficult to capture using traditional variance theory.

Chapter Three: Ontological and epistemological assumptions, methodological choices and research interest

The work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) which delineates the philosophical approaches researchers follow to investigate organisational phenomena is considered important and needs reflection in order to underpin the ontological, epistemological and methodological choices that guide this thesis and position it in relation to other philosophical approaches. Since practice and process approaches are not unified theories (Schatzki et al., 2001; Langley and Tsoukas, 2016), this reflection on the assumptions of the nature of social sciences is not exhaustive, but rather a general orientation.

The framework that Burrell and Morgan (1979) developed about the nature of social sciences and the interests of social researchers is well suited for positioning the practice and process perspectives. The framework consists of four research paradigms that enable one to classify the different approaches to social sciences: the functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist (mainly represented as critical theory), and radical structuralist. These paradigms offer "a convenient means of identifying the basic similarities and differences between the work of various theorists and, in particular, the underlying frame of reference which they adopt" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 24). These similarities and differences can be illustrated in terms of the research ontology (i.e., the nature of reality), research epistemology (i.e., how we know what we know) and research methodology (i.e., the actual process of research) (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Practice and process theories have branched out from the interpretive paradigm (Rasche and Chia, 2009; Langley and Tsoukas, 2016) and over time they have developed characteristics that differentiate them from other approaches within the interpretive paradigm, as is discussed in more detail below.

3.1 Nature of social sciences

3.1.1 Ontological assumptions

Regarding the ontological assumptions (i.e., what we know about knowledge), the practice and process approaches revolutionised different aspects of the interpretive approach. This approach assumes that social reality is the product of actors and therefore it recognises it as subjectively constructed in the mind of individuals (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). On the other hand, the functionalist approach assumes that social reality exists independently of human actors (Creswell and Cresswell, 2017). These approaches represent two contrasting poles on the objective-subjective continuum (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Pointing out the mutual constituency between material and social structures, that is, the interplay between social practices and material structures, is central to the production of social reality (Rasche and Chia,

2009). The practice and process approaches reject the claims that social reality either exists externally to the human mind or is constructed within it, but that it is produced by practices and processes (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). Considering the world to be in a continuous state of becoming and as constituted by the perpetual flow of ongoing processes (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). By giving primacy to these, the approaches posit that social reality is composed of them and that understanding social phenomena, including social institutions, is rooted in these practices and processes.

The practice and process perspective mainly subscribes to process theory that is mainly positioned against variance theory and refers to "conceptual constructions that focus on the way in which phenomena emerge, evolve or terminate over time through activities and events" (Cloutier and Langley, 2020: 3). By subscribing to the process mode to theorising, scholars start seeking mechanisms that explain how events and activities unfold with respect to temporality and time ordering (Cornelissen, 2017), rather than looking for causal explanations between different variables, therefore enabling them to unpack the process from within. Moreover, process theory recognises the embeddedness of phenomena in social interactions and that both are mutually constituent (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). This ontological view shows that actors' actions are central to understanding how phenomena unfold, change, and/or end over time, as well as being important in shaping practices, rather than actors' actions and reactions being conceived simply as antecedents or outcomes of phenomena, as they are portrayed in the majority of PA studies.

Process theorising originated in organisational theory, in relation, for example, to organisational routines (Feldman and Pentland, 2003); organisational sensemaking (Weick, 1995); identity work (Wright et al., 2012); organisational change (Langley et al., 2013); and organisational learning (Tsang and Zahra, 2008). However, the adoption of a process mode to theorising extended to other fields, such as strategy (e.g., strategising, Whittington, 2006); institutional theory (e.g., see institutional work by Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006); and management accounting (Uddin et al., 2021; Lounsbury, 2008). This shows an increasing interest from scholars in the management and organisational fields to understand phenomena from within (i.e., unpack the black box) by looking at the micro-processes that make up practices, and centring actors' actions inside the phenomenon, rather than on the periphery.

Both practice and process studies differ in the degree to which they operationalise their ontologies. For example, in practice theory, some scholars consider the world to be composed

of practices and believe everything else to be a by-product of these (e.g., Chia and Holt, 2006). On the other hand, others adopt a softer practice ontology by assuming that organisational actors' agency is shaped by practices (e.g., Dittrich et al., 2016; Jarzabkowski, 2004). The empirical studies in this thesis combine practice and process approaches. Therefore, it is important to reflect on the ontological assumptions of both approaches.

Beginning with processes, there are two process ontologies, strong and weak. In this regard, Langley and Tsoukas (2016) maintain that a strong process approach views the world ontologically as always 'becoming'. In this sense, entities (e.g., actors and institutions), practices, and processes are in motion and constantly changing over time. This approach views an organisation as an emergent phenomenon, i.e., "it emerges from the coherent and constrained interaction of several individuals" (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016: 3). Among the first scholars to adopt such process vocabulary was Weick (1979), who reconceptualised the term *organisations* to *organising*, which led to a shift in the process ontology from 'being' to 'becoming' (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). This approach recognises processes as a source of simultaneous stability and change for organisations (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). In contrast, a weak process perspective views processes to be relatively stable and that they do not "change the substance" of the entity. This view can be found in traditional PA studies that consider actors' agency as mindless and processes as unchanging (March and Simon, 1958).

In addition to the ontology of becoming, a strong practice and process ontology further emphasises three closely interrelated characteristics: "*experience, heterogeneity, and temporality*" (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016: 4 italics in original). Since agency plays a central role in (re)producing organisational phenomena, actors' actions and their consequences are associated with experiences that eventually influence change in the practices and processes they co-create. These different experiences foreground both heterogeneity and temporality. In relation to heterogeneity, Langley and Tsoukas (2016) maintain that although language may imply that experiences are similar and recurrent, "one does not experience the same feeling twice" (p. 5). For example, frustration might be a regular feeling experienced in meetings; however, its level is different from one meeting to another and from one actor to another. Finally, in relation to temporality, human experiences are temporally structured. In other words, "[r]eality is seen as a process of creative advance, in which the past is brought forward to the present" (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016: 6). The chapters in this thesis follow a soft approach to practice and processes since their focus does not give primacy to them over individuals' agency, but considers that both influence the shaping of each other. Furthermore,

the chapters adopt the spirit of a strong ontological practice and process perspective that gives primacy to the 'becomingness' over the 'being' of processes that make up organisational practices.

Moreover, there are differences in the ontological assumptions in both practice and process approaches that distinguish them from other interpretive approaches; these relate to the level of reality. For example, in the functionalist paradigm, there exists a distinction between macro and micro-levels. The macro-level refers to institutions and social structures, whereas the micro typically refers to individuals (Neuman and Kreuger, 2003). Scherer (2003) explains two approaches within the functionalist paradigm; one assumes that macro social phenomena can be explained by studying individual behaviours (i.e., individualism), whereas the other assumes that such macro-level social phenomena cannot be derived from individuals and their actions (i.e., holism). On the other hand, in interpretivism the distinction between them is not clearly delineated, since interpretivists mainly pay attention to one level; for example, actors' perceptions or interpretations or social/institutional norms and values.

In contrast, some practice and process approaches (e.g., actor-network and routine dynamics theories) assume that only one level of reality exists, which is the level of social practices (Schatzki et al., 2011) and processes (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). At the core of this assumption is that all social phenomena expand on one level, horizontally rather than vertically, by what is known as a 'flat ontology.' (Sckatzki et al., 2011). To put it differently, both individual behaviours and greater organisational social phenomena take place within, and are part of, social practices and processes. However, similar to the functionalist approach, there is a branch in practice and process theories that focuses on explaining higher-level organisational phenomena. Contrary to flat ontologies, scholars refer to these as tall ontologies (Seidl and Whittington, 2014). This approach tends to explain micro-level phenomena, i.e., everyday activities, by reference to macro-level structures (e.g., Foucault and Giddens) (ibid). All the chapters in this thesis are oriented towards a flat ontology and consider micro and macro-level phenomena to exist at the same level. Therefore, both can be used to explain each other.

3.1.2 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology, i.e., how we know what we know (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009), mainly refers to "the relationship between the research and that being researched" (Creswell, 2007: 17). Functionalist epistemological assumptions rest on examining phenomena from a distance in order to maintain objectivity in relation to the observed knowledge, whereas

interpretivists maintain that we need to minimise this distance and stay closer to phenomena by understanding how they are constructed in the minds of the individuals being studied (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009). The epistemological assumptions of practice and process theoretical perspectives are similar to other interpretive approaches. Since interpretive approaches assume that social phenomena are (re)produced through actors' cognition and action, practice and process researchers cannot observe such phenomena objectively, but rather need to take a closer position to gain understanding of the situated meanings of actors (Scherer, 2003). This assumption further entails a double hermeneutics of studying a phenomenon (Giddens, 1993); that is, recognising that researchers interpret the interpretations of the study participants. As such, the knowledge derived offers a contextualised understanding that is not as durable (replicable and predictive) as that derived from following the functionalist paradigm.

However, practice and process approaches are differentiated from other interpretive approaches as they assume that the derived knowledge can to an extent be generalisable (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). In this sense, they work to identify similarities, regularities, and causal relationships (Hedström and Swedberg, 1998), not through statistical generalisations by examining variables (as in the functionalist paradigm), but through uncovering the *underlying processes/mechanisms* that link different organisational phenomena. To this end, Feldman and Orlikowski (2011: 1249) state that "the dynamics and relations that have been identified and theorized [in practice and process studies] can be useful in understanding other contexts."

Furthermore, another important assumption highlighted by Burrell and Morgan (1979) about the nature of social sciences is that actors either have free will when acting (i.e., voluntarism), or that their actions are "completely determined by the situation of the 'environment' in which he [or she] is located" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 6). Practice and process approaches reconcile these contrasting views by assuming that actors are the carriers of social practices and processes (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). This assumes that organisational actors are influenced by the organisational practices within which they are embedded and at the same time can stretch the boundaries of these practices (Nicolini, 2009). This view aligns with the central tenets of practice and process approaches, which emphasise their emergent and changing nature (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). It should be noted that some branches of the practice theoretical perspective (e.g., Giddens and Bourdieu) align with the assumptions of critical theory, which suggest that the results of practice studies can find their way back to the actors' world and reshape it instead of simply describing it.

Since the derived knowledge from practice and process approaches is detailed and contextualised, then the abovementioned ontological and epistemological assumptions will have implications for the methodological choices that scholars adopt (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016; Nicolini, 2012). In this sense, and similar to other interpretive approaches, scholars need to acquire first-hand understanding by immersing themselves in the experiences of actors. Although practice and process theoretical approaches have no standard method (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016), ethnography seems to be the preferred one adopted (Dittrich, 2021). This work is reflected in both classic (e.g., Goffman, 1989) and contemporary scholars who subscribe to process theories (e.g., Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Feldman, 2000). More recently, other methods, such as case studies, and reliance on interviews and documentary data such as that used in the empirical studies of this thesis, have been observed in practice and process studies, in particular in the routine dynamics field (e.g., see van Mierlo et al., 2019; Sonenshein, 2016).

Moreover, the functionalist approaches follow hypothetico-deductive logic (i.e., testing propositions that are generated from theory) that are purely deductive (Habersang and Reihlen, 2018; Creswell, 2009). In contrast, the interpretive approach primarily follows the logic of discovery (i.e., researchers start by gathering data) and is purely inductive (Creswell, 2009). The logic of the interpretivist approach posits that scholars should investigate social phenomena without having preconceived frameworks and be open to challenges and surprises experienced in the field (Cunliffe, 2015). This thesis follows the logic of discovery: when the researcher started work on it, the general interest was pertaining the influence of organisational justice on the accomplishment of international PA practice. Throughout and following the interviews used in the empirical studies, the researcher noticed that participants expressed a broad array of conflicting institutional norms and a variety of negative emotions that influenced their understandings and actions for the PA process.

Consequently, the researcher became interested in how competing institutional logics and emotions influence the replication of PA at the micro-level and over time. Similarly, the qualitative meta-synthesis started with a broad interest in understanding the institutionalisation of PA in different contexts; throughout the analysis, the researcher noticed that actors constantly break role expectations in cases of PA adoption failure. Therefore, how roles, as institutional carriers, influence adoption failure at the micro-level became the point of interest. Typically, the logic of discovery in practice and process approaches is known as an abductive logic (e.g., Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Smets et al., 2015; D'Adderio, 2014), which implies that researchers iterate between emergent findings and theory to generate new knowledge and

insights about the phenomenon under study (Cunliffe, 2015). Abductive logic takes a middle position in reasoning between deductive and inductive ones (Habersang and Reihlen, 2018); for this reason, the empirical analysis in the thesis studies was conducted abductively.

Moreover, as opposed to traditional interpretive analysis, that of practice and process approaches involves multiple levels of analysis (see table 2) and several analytical techniques in examining phenomena. These multiple levels and methods help researchers deal with the complexity of the process and its associated data.

Finally, it is important to reflect on how practice and process studies marry up in terms of ontology and epistemology. Langley and Tsoukas (2016) highlight four types of process research that differ in "the *approach* they undertake to process" (p. 7, italics in original) and the "the *focus* of research projects" (p. 8, italics in original). Regarding the approach, Langley and Tsoukas argue that processes can be studied from 'within' or 'from outside.' Examining them from within requires first-hand experience (e.g., interviews and/or participant observation) "to capture the evolving meaningful experience" (p. 7). On the other hand, examining the process from the outside captures it by emphasising phenomena that develop over time. They further argue that studying a process from within "would fit, for example, with a practice theory [perspective]" (p. 7), since it aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms that explain relationships between organisational phenomena.

Studying processes from within is further divided into two camps that differ based on the focus of the process under study, in terms of whether it is being studied 'in the flow' or 'after the fact.' Processes that are analysed 'in the flow' (termed 'prehensive research') are considered strong practice and process studies as they indicate that researchers derive their knowledge by immersing themselves and partaking in the experience through first-person observations (e.g., Feldman, 2000; Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Langley and Tsoukas (2016: 9) argue that researchers do this "by highlighting how present events, at any time, draw on (prehend) previous ones, how meanings and experiences evolve over time and in context, and how contingencies shape the paths taken or not taken."

On the other hand, processes that are studied 'after the fact' (termed 'reconstructive studies') vary in the weak-strong process spectrum. Researchers in reconstructive studies "tend to focus on a particular outcome and they seek to account for the process that led to it from within, namely highlighting the evolving meanings, experiences, and the contingencies present at particular points in time, as well as the possible alternative paths the processes could have

taken." (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016: p. 9). This inside and after-the-fact approach is suitable for studies that are mainly informed by interviews (e.g., Howard-Grenville et al. 2013). Therefore, this thesis subscribes to the reconstructive process study approach since it aims to study the PA process after the fact and from within by capturing the meaningful experience of how professionals replicate PA to navigate competing logics in such contexts; and how the negative emotions influence the replication of the PA routine over time.

The following table summarises the philosophical assumptions for practice and process theories.

Table 1: Assumptions about the nature of social sciences in practice and process theories

Assumptions about the nature of social sciences	**Practice theory**	**Process theory**
Ontology	-Social reality is made up of practices and social phenomena are analysed with reference to these. -Variants: Strong practice ontology (i.e., practices are everything and actors are the product of practices) versus light process ontology (actors are shaped by organisational practices). -Levels of reality: Flat ontology (one level of reality that stretches sideways) versus tall ontology (hierarchal levels of reality that stretch vertically)	-Social reality is made up of processes and social phenomena and analysed with reference to these. -Variants: strong process ontology (i.e., processes change entities and vice versa, with emphasis on experience, heterogeneity, and temporality) versus weak process ontology (i.e., practices do not change entities). -Levels of reality: Flat ontology (one level of reality that stretches sideways) versus tall ontology (hierarchal levels of reality that stretch vertically)
Epistemology	-Derived knowledge is contextual but can be generalised by uncovering explanatory mechanisms.	
Nature of human actors	-Human actors are the carriers of practices and processes; both are influenced and can influence change. Practices and processes can influence actors' agency and vice versa.	
Methodology	-In depth understanding of actors' experiences (e.g., interviews/ethnography). -Employs the logic of discovery: open to surprises in the field. -Employs an abductive logic and relies on one or few case studies.	

In summary, to examine the related phenomena, the thesis adopts practice and process perspectives. Overall, these are distinct branches of the interpretive paradigm that gives primacy to social practices and processes in social reality and aims to uncover mechanisms to explain relationships between phenomena by using abduction as a logic of discovery. Practice and process theoretical perspectives differ in terms of being 'strong' or 'weak' or 'flat' or 'tall' ontologies and this thesis adopts a strong and flat ontology.

Table 2 below summarises the key assumptions that underlie the routine dynamics perspective

Table 2: Key assumptions about routine dynamics in relation to the process and practice perspective (for chapters five and six)

	Routine perspective
Main interests	−How routines operate; internal dynamics.
Focal level of Analysis	−Routine itself.
Unit of Analysis	−Routines as "parts" (internal structure of routine; what is inside the "black box").
Empirical attention to	– Actors' influence on routine performance. – Artifacts' influence on routine performance. – How routines change and remain stable over time; role of agency and artefacts in this. – How routines are created or changed. −When and how routines break down.
Behavioural Assumptions	– Human action is "effortful" (not mindless). – Human agency/everyday activity constitutes social life. −Agents are not replaceable; they have different intentions, motivations, and understandings.
Stability and change	– Change and stability always possible. −Same mechanisms (agency, artefacts) underlie change or stability.

adapted from Parmigiani and Howard-Grenville (2011: 418)

3.1.3 Research strategy

Research strategy is important for any research because it gives a structure to the study and glues all its parts together (Yin, 2009). For qualitative research, researchers can choose from several strategies to study the phenomenon in question. Creswell (2009) and Robson and McCartan (2016) list several strategies that qualitative researchers can take, such as case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry, amongst others. Table (3) below provides an overview of case studies, ethnography, and grounded theory. Creswell (2009) argues that several points help in determining the choice of research strategy, the most important being its appropriateness to the research purposes (i.e., the type of questions the study aims to answer), the underpinning philosophical assumptions, and the time available for the researcher.

Table 3: Overview of the main approaches to qualitative research

Qualitative approach	Summary overview
1. Case study	A well-established research strategy in which the focus is on a case (interpreted very widely to include the study of an individual person, a group, a setting, an organisation, etc.) in its own right, and taking its context into account. It typically involves multiple methods of data collection and can include quantitative data, though qualitative data are almost invariably collected.
2. Ethnographic studies	Another well-established strategy, in which the focus is on the description and interpretation of the culture and social structure of a social group. It typically involves participant observation over an extended period of time, but other methods (including those generating quantitative data) can also be used.
3. Grounded theory studies	A more recently developed strategy whose main concern is to develop a theory of the particular social situation forming the basis of the study. The theory is 'grounded' in the sense of being derived from the study itself. It is popular in research on many applied settings, particularly health-related ones. Interviews are commonly used, but other methods (including those generating quantitative data) are not excluded.

Adapted from Robson and McCartan (2016: 149-150)

Out of the research strategies listed above, the most appropriate one to fit the research aim and purpose is case study. Case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." (Yin, 2009: 17). Cases can be organisations, individuals, institutions, or events (Yin, 2014; Eisenhardt, 1989b). There are three purposes to using case study research design: to test theory, provide a description of a phenomenon, or generate theory (Eisenhardt, 1989b). This thesis is interested in the last two purposes, as it aims to provide a description for the existing PA literature on how international PA fails to be replicated as intended in the Middle Eastern region as well as generate theory from evidence and contribute to key theoretical strands. Yin (2014) and Eisenhardt (1989b) highlight two types of case study research designs: single and multiple case studies.

In relation to theory building, single case studies are considered by some researchers to be overly complex and more idiosyncratic to the case, and hence, theory building from cases is considered weaker (Gehman et al., 2017). Other researchers, in contrast, posit that single case studies provide in-depth insights that can result in high-quality and better theory (Siggelkow, 2007; Dyer and Wilkins, 1991). On the other hand, researchers agree that theory building by using multiple case study research design "is more likely to be parsimonious, accurate, and generalizable" (Gehman et al., 2017: 4; see also Eisenhardt, 1989b). Moreover, having multiple cases can allow researchers to juxtapose between cases during analysis to force comparison which in turn prevents investigators' bias and preconceptions by unfreezing thinking and thus, result in less researchers' bias in the emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989b).

In this respect, to fill the knowledge gap and respond to the research questions, Chapters Five and Six in this thesis employ an embedded multiple case study research design (Eisenhardt, 1989b) to examine international PA adoption and replication failure in four GPSFs subsidiaries operating in a single country in the Middle Eastern region and in particular, the Arabian Peninsula. The thesis focuses on non-managerial professionals from one subunit/department (being the primary unit of analysis). Chapter Four, on the other hand, is a knowledge integration study and employs a meta-synthesis of case studies research methodology (Habersang et al., 2019). Choosing a multiple case study research design can make substantial contribution to theory building and knowledge in general besides its suitability to explore phenomenon in depth in natural settings by using multiple sources of data such as interviews and archival sources (Gehman et al., 2017). In selecting the cases, the researcher followed a purposeful sampling strategy with the aim to "gather the most relevant data about the phenomenon under investigation" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 181). The criteria used to select the cases were: (1) companies that have global nationality and are headquartered in western contexts; (2) provide professional services; (3) have high global reputation, (4) adopt international PA process, and (5) maintain contradictory environment for managing and appraising employee performance that is likely to result in PA adoption and replication failure. This sampling was appropriate for the thesis inductive studies as it would enable the researcher to explore and explain the underlying mechanisms for PA adoption and replication failure, thus enhancing theoretical accuracy (Zeng, 2022).

The choice of GPSFs for the studies is suitable since organisations in this sector are highly similar in size, organisational form, and management and professional practices (Alvehus, 2018; Alvesson et al., 2015; Muzio and Faulconbridge, 2013; Suddaby et al., 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Therefore, the cases are comparable (Yin, 2014) and the environmental variations between them are insignificant. To this end, the choice of these cases from a single industry in a single Middle Eastern country makes them highly comparable to focus on the impact of the same national culture and similar actors' agency on process adoption and replication failure.

There are several reasons for adopting multiple case studies research strategy. First, case studies design in general is an appropriate approach when researchers aim to explore and explain phenomena inductively (Yin, 2009; Stake, 2006; Eisenhardt, 1989b); in particular, when relatively few studies have investigated the topic of interest, such as the role of emotions on replicating international PA or navigating multiple logics in PA throughout replicating PA.

Second, case studies strategy is a recommended research strategy for studies attempting to answer 'how' and 'why' research questions (Yin, 2009). Third, Patton (2002: 447) argues that case studies can "gather comprehensive, systematic and in-depth information about a phenomenon", which is suitable to understand adoption and replication of PA at the micro-level through the practice and process perspective. Fourth, multiple case studies provide stronger theory building (Gehman et al., 2017). Stronger theory building is made possible from the notion of the replication logic across multiple cases as theory building emerges within-case examination and then it is cross examined among all cases (Gehman et al., 2017; Yin, 2014; Eisenhardt, 1989b). In this regard, Yin (2014) explains that there are two types of replications: literal and theoretical. Literal replication is suitable when the selected cases aim to predict similar results and the cases are few (two or three), whereas theoretical replication is more suitable when larger number of cases are involved (four and above) and is used when researchers expect contrasting outcomes but for predictable reasons. In this regard, Chapters Five and Six followed the logic of literal replication.

Fifth, case studies research design in general is highly suitable to the practice and process perspective as it enables researchers to examine phenomenon progression through "temporal pattern matching or process tracing" (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999: 389) as well as enabling researchers to uncover the underlying mechanisms, i.e., the *how*, that can explain general phenomena (Gehman et al., 2017). Therefore, multiple case studies strategy is appropriate for this research, which seeks to advance the key theoretical strands adopted in this thesis, answer "how" and "why" PA fails to be adopted as intended in the Middle Eastern context as well as uncover mechanisms to explain this contemporary under researched phenomenon in GPSFs and the Middle Eastern context. Moreover, the studies employ an embedded case studies design that focuses on multiple levels of analysis to examine PA adoption and replication failure.

Background on case companies

This background is kept vague because if further details were provided, the identity of the companies and the interviewees might be compromised (Boussebaa, 2009). Therefore, the background is restricted by the inability to reveal the sector or the names of the companies. All four companies are headquartered in Europe. They were founded over a century ago individually and along the years they were merged into partnerships to arrive at their current brands. In 2019, these companies, combinedly, employed a little over a million professionals across the world and earned several billion pounds in income fee. Their services are highly

sought after by fortune global 500 companies, large national and international companies, and government institutions. These four companies describe themselves as 'global' and 'leading' organisations, they dominate their industry, and are considered to be the largest of GPSFs in the world.

All four companies offer a wide range of the same multidisciplinary services to their clients, including management and IT consulting, outsourcing services, and financial advisory services. There are virtually no differences between these firms as they are usually grouped together because of their similar size, workforce and revenues compared to the rest in the industry. They are highly regulated, have the same codes of professional and ethical conducts and follow the same institutional norms. These companies adopt a standardised Anglo-Saxon one-firm model that aims to uniformly conduct management and professional practices around their worldwide subsidiaries to cultivate a unified professional culture. Research involving these companies have shown a strong level of uniformity and consistency in their environment globally (Kalaitzake, 2019; Tara, 2014; Dambrin and Lambert, 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Inter-firm differences were not found in previous studies as these companies have high levels of similarity in relation to their employee management practices, their organisational structure, formal and informal control systems, professional conduct, and pressures to simultaneously follow traditional bureaucracy and maintain professional standards (Alvehus, 2018; Boussebaa, 2009; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Sweeny and Pierce, 2004). This is also corroborated by the interviewed professionals in this thesis as because of this high similarity some of the interviews that were collected were from employees who rotated between the case companies and who indicated seamless transition between these firms (see the notes column in Appendix A). Consequently, the collected data are obtained about a uniform PA process.

Most importantly, these companies are considered to be exporters of "best" management practices across the globe, therefore they play a crucial role in the expansion of global management practices and setting global management standards (Mellahi et al., 2016; Boussebaa, 2015). This is an interesting feature in these companies as some studies indicated that employees are more likely to accept PA if it was designed by these types of companies (Mellahi et al., 2016). Additionally, the four companies promise their employees with the best professional and inclusive environment, career advancing opportunities, networking with giants, and fair equitable compensation and rewards. These claims are advertised in ideal

slogans such as ‘the best working environment,’ ‘diverse and inclusive culture,’ ‘our main asset is our employees,’ ‘personally tailored career development,’ and ‘fair benefits.’

However, and crucially, professionals in these companies are subjected to difficult working conditions that are characterised by achieving deadlines, high workload and long working hours, adaptation to first-mover global standards (Alvehus, 2018; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), anxiety, navigating formal and informal controls, and ‘up or out’ or a tournament style career type (Alvesson et al., 2015). Moreover, these companies operate through a contradictory hybrid organisational form that combines between professionalism and traditional bureaucracy which confuses employees’ enactment of formal organisational and management practices, particularly international PA (Alvehus, 2018; Alvesson et al., 2015; Muzio and Faulconbridge, 2013; Suddaby et al., 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). These factors push professionals to reject the practice of PA (Alvehus, 2018), and therefore, examining these companies will enrich existing PA literature with knowledge on the sectoral and individual levels and will shed light on international PA adoption failure from companies that set global management standards.

In the single country of focus in this thesis, these branches staff nearly 200 non-managerial professionals in all their departments who have varied levels of experience to fulfil the needs of their clients. Furthermore, although they are global companies, they only hire local employees which is another reason that strengthen PA adoption failure in these firms. The thesis focuses on non-managerial professionals from one subunit/department (being the primary unit of analysis) in the four companies (with a total of 160 professionals) that provides the core service and generates the largest portion of their revenues. The Middle Eastern subsidiaries adopt a global PA process, which is important for maintaining the quality of the services they provide, since these companies have a reputation to uphold and they are financially sensitive and often include third parties (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2013). Their formal PA process emphasises the assessment and development of individual performance. It is embedded in a global software; includes both objective and subjective performance criteria; promises to reward employees’ efforts fairly; and further promises employees continued development throughout their careers. At the same time, the PA process is also embedded in a national context that has a unique culture, emphasising on the collective rather than the individual, together with the primacy of informal relationships over formal organisational ones that results in bypassing formal procedures (described more in detail in the next section). More details on the case companies are presented in the following table.

Table 4: Background characteristics for cases

Company alias	GPSF1	GPSF2	GPSF3	GPSF4
HQ location at the time of interviews	Europe	Europe	Europe	Europe
Ownership structure	Private partnership	Private partnership	Private partnership	Private partnership
Global reputation	High	High	High	High
Year established in host context as per company registration certificate	2004	2010	2002	2009
Number of years in operation in host country (up to interviews date)	15	9	17	10
Number of professional departments in host country	8	8	8	8
Total Number of employees in host context	120	70	47	35
Number of non-managerial (managerial) employees in the focal department	60(9)	40(7)	30(6)	30(6)
Number of interviewed non-managerial employees in the focal department	14	9	5	2
Percentage of interviewed non-managerial employees in the focal department	23%	23%	17%	7%

3.1.4 Background to the study context: the Middle East

As indicated earlier, the context for the case conducted in the empirical studies is a country in the Middle East. The Middle East refers to the geographical area located around the eastern Mediterranean basin (Mellahi et al., 2011). It includes countries in the Fertile Crescent (e.g., Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq); the gulf region (e.g., the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar); and North Africa (e.g., Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco) (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006). In the region, Islam is the dominant religion, with around 95 per cent of the population following its teachings. The main language spoken is Arabic (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006). This thesis only refers to those countries in the Middle East whose nationals are of Arabic descent (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021). Middle Eastern countries are mainly categorised in three groups: high income countries that possess significant reserves of natural resources, such as the United Arab

Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia; medium-income ones such as Turkey; with the remainder categorised as low-income countries (Mellahi et al., 2011). Therefore, the wealth distribution in the region is highly asymmetrical. Nonetheless, Apaydin (2009) maintains that the whole Middle Eastern region is clearly underperforming in comparison to other regions.

Since the region is known for its wealth in global oil reserves, it has been of interest to western countries and companies before and after the Second World War. Historically, most of the Middle East was colonised by powerful European countries in the 1930s, mainly Great Britain and France, (Mellahi et al., 2011). Western companies took part in the colonisation, with the aim of exploiting the natural resources found in the region, and western values were widely diffused (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006). Nonetheless, these moves were faced with resistance and the majority of Middle Eastern countries regained power over their natural resources and imposed constraints on foreign companies in order to curb their impact on the region (Stevens, 2008). However, by the 1990s Arab countries were pressured to join the World Trade Organisation and had no choice but to ease the constraints and the restrictions they had imposed on foreign companies. Consequently, the region became "home to many of the world's largest MNEs, most of which enjoy a sustained profitability from their operations in the region" (Mellahi et al., 2011: 406).

However, the cultural and socio-political environment in the Middle East is very challenging for foreign organisations. First, the Middle East "has been dominated by military and other autocratic regimes claiming allegiance to socialist, Arab nationalist or Islamist ideologies" (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006: 3). In this respect, the region is in a constant political turmoil and conflict, with informal political forces shaping countries and consequently creating economic uncertainty (Mellahi et al., 2011). For instance, the Arab spring (Khondker, 2011), the Lebanese economic crisis (World Bank, 2021), the Qatari diplomatic crisis with gulf countries (Albasoos et al., 2021), and the Egyptian 2011 uprising (Venkatesan et al., 2021) are all events that have occurred only during the past decade. Second, there is strong resistance to accepting organisations and adopting practices that are mostly labelled as western because "the exporting [western] nation has engaged in military, political, or economic acts that [Middle Easterners] find both grievous and difficult to forgive" (Klein et al., 1998: 90). Therefore, in order for western companies to survive in the Middle Eastern environment, it is vital for them to adapt to the local context (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006).

Although countries in the Middle East are very different from one another, they share very similar norms that are mainly rooted in Islamic and cultural values. One of the most salient norms shared is that of *wasta* (Hutching and Weir, 2006), which broadly refers to connections, pulling strings, and nepotism (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). It is defined as "a type of interpersonal relationship which is exploited in order to get things done" (Branine and Pollard, 2010: 16). In organisations, *wasta* is defined as "the use of power, relationships and networking to hire people for high position, resolve conflicts or obtain benefits" (Yahiaoui, 2015, p. 1674). It is often considered to be parallel to the western notion of networking (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011), since it involves mobilising connections to attain what is wanted. Nonetheless, there is a negative side to *wasta* that studies generally avoid discussing that relates to corruption, as "people generally speak of *wasta* in negative terms and think largely of its corrupt side" (Hutching and Weir, 2006: 147). *Wasta* emphasises the primacy of informal relationships and social exchanges over organisational institutionalised ones. Most importantly, for international companies, its power can be mobilised to fill the formal institutional voids that characterise most countries in the Middle East (Mellahi, 2007). It is often argued that without *wasta* connections, foreign companies would be doomed to fail in the Middle East. In this respect, Mellahi et al. (2011: 408) state that

> "One of the fundamental decisions an [MNC] makes when entering the Middle Eastern market are the selection of local partners, and appropriate mode of entry…affiliation with powerful business groups or political actors is a *sine qua non* for successful operations in the region. Affiliation with the right partner is not only an insurance policy that shields the [MNC] against opportunism from powerful actors and institutions, but it also often provides the [MNC] with preferential treatment, and access to scarce and highly valuable political resources." (Italics in original)

Moreover, the norm of *wasta* extends to the implementation of other organisational processes, including PA. Different studies have reflected on its dominant role in the PA process in the Middle Eastern context (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). It poses a challenge to western and international PA being embedded such a context, since *wasta* could be mobilised to direct rewards and promotions for unworthy employees as it can override formal bureaucratic steps and procedures. Therefore, as opposed to the social exchange perspective of *wasta* that is predominantly drawn upon in research (Alsarhan et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017), there is another side to it that allows tasks to be accomplished corruptively. The second challenge for western and international PA processes is the orientation towards a collectivist

cultural dimension of Arab countries (Hofstede, 2001). International PA practices are rooted in the individualistic cultural dimension, with low power distance between the rater and ratee, and in which organisational rewards, career progression, and development opportunities are mainly linked to individual performance (Vo and Stanton, 2011). On the other hand, the Middle Eastern context is characterised by collectivism, with a high-power distance between subordinates and supervisors, and PA outcomes that are mainly linked to informal and subjective criteria that involve informal personal relationships or the allocation of outcomes equally for the whole group rather than specifically for well-performing employees (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). These two challenges together contribute to PA adoption failure in the Middle Eastern since they contrast strongly with formal PA procedures and goals. With *wasta*, actors can override PA formal procedures, and collectivist cultural values influence changes to process goals.

Therefore, the study contexts offer an advantageous environment for examining the main phenomenon in this thesis, -that is, the replication of international PA. These competing institutional configurations (western and Middle Eastern, *wasta*, collectivist-individualist) offer a fertile context for understanding how and why PA fails to be adopted as intended in non-western contexts, and how its implementation enables professionals to navigate multiple and competing institutional logics in the region. Moreover, increased rater bias in the Middle East (through the norm of *wasta*) strengthens the emergence of negative feelings and emotions throughout the process, so it is useful to understand how this influences how actors understand and take part in the process.

3.1.5 Data collection methods

3.1.5.1 Interviews

Interviews are considered a primary and powerful data collection method in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). They are a type of conversation that typically involves the researcher (or a proxy) asking questions and receiving answers from the study participants about a particular topic (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Hussey and Hussey (1997: 156) define an interview as "a method of collecting data in which selected participants are asked questions in order to find out what they do, think or feel." As such, interview conversations about a specific topic require the interviewer to understand a set of assumptions about the situation which includes (few) knowledge in the literature and the context (Denscombe, 2007). In general, through interviews researchers can obtain in-depth understanding about phenomena as the interviewees are allowed to express, explain, and draw examples from their own viewpoints. Robson (2002)

maintains that the right interview questions can provide a short cut to answering the study questions.

Interviews vary in terms of their structure, with structured, semi-structured, and unstructured types (Creswell, 2009). Creswell explains that structured interviews are mainly used to obtain objective understanding as they rely on closed-ended questions. Denscombe (2007) further adds that the format of this type of questioning requires tight control from the interviewer in such a way that interviewees are asked the same questions in the same order using the same tone to elicit a fixed range of answers from them. Furthermore, to achieve more objective understanding. In contrast, the format of unstructured interviews is loosely controlled, as respondents are asked open and general questions because the researcher also has a general understanding of the topic. In this type, the conversation style is informal, and respondents are free to talk and express their opinions (Saunders et al., 2009).

The third type, semi-structured interviews, is the most common in social sciences research. This type of inquiry starts with questions that are predetermined in order to guide the conversation (Denscombe, 2007). It aims to reveal understanding of phenomena through the eyes of the interviewees (Creswell, 2009). Patton (2002) adds that this type of approach utilises an interview schedule and uses open-ended questions to allow participants to express their thoughts, experiences, and feelings freely. Semi-structured interviews are advantageous because their format is more flexible than structured ones, and less open than unstructured ones. This flexibility allows interviewers to ask probing questions to help them obtain more information from participants (Cunliffe, 2010). The empirical studies in this thesis employed semi-structured interviews to enquire about the phenomenon in question, starting with a predetermined set of questions about the employee PA process, while probing participants' understandings and feelings about it. Questions related to the institutional configurations in the context were also included. The actual interview process is described in more detail below in section (3.1.5.5). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express their perceptions and understanding about the process and the context, as well as to articulate the negative feelings and emotions they experienced during the replication of PA.

3.1.5.2 Sampling

Neuman (2006) suggests that the main purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to collect data about specific cases, behaviours, or events, which can deepen and clarify understanding. As such, in contrast to sampling in quantitative research (i.e., probability-based), the sampling

used by qualitative researchers is non-probabilistic and purposive (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Neuman (2006) argues that purposive sampling is important when the researcher aims to choose a particular type of case to investigate in-depth. This was the case in the empirical studies of the thesis, as participants were required to have experience of PA in their respective companies.

The selection criteria for the study were that participants worked or had worked in GPSFs and occupied non-managerial positions, meaning mostly employees whose performance was subject to being appraised, with some (semi seniors and senior employees) also taking a small part in appraising others. It was assumed that the understanding of such employees of the practice and process of PA in the Middle Eastern context was rich and that their experiences were likely to include negative feelings and emotions, since they were the subject of performance evaluations (Murphy, 2020). The purposive sampling strategy was well suited to the aim of the study as it involved selecting respondents who were willing to share their honest understandings, perceptions, and experiences of how the process was/is being performed within their complex institutional configurations and the negative feelings they experienced during their organisational relationship, both of which met the demands of the questions of the empirical studies. As such, it was believed that the sample would reveal reliable and sufficient information that would help in understanding the phenomena in studies two and three.

The population of these studies was professionals from four GPSFs operating in a Middle Eastern country, as discussed in the research strategy and method section. These companies were selected because they are recognised as leading companies in the world and in the Middle Eastern region and because their adopted PA practice is global. Respondents were chosen from one department in all four subsidiaries because the employees in this department mainly worked with clients outside the company and experienced little direct managerial monitoring throughout their professional careers. At the same time, they undertook the majority of the fieldwork, so it was natural for them to experience work overload. Positions in these organisations in general are classified at seven levels, being from the bottom up junior, semi-senior, senior, assistant manager, manager, director, and partner. The target sample for this study were junior, semi-senior, and senior employees.

Qualitative researchers tend to avoid a specific or an ideal number of interviews, suggesting that the number relies on several factors. For example, it depends on the information the researcher is seeking, the time and resources available, and the purpose of the research

(Creswell, 2009; Silverman, 2016). However, some qualitative researchers argue that the sample size should not be bound by rules (Patton, 2002). To reach a middle ground, they agree that it is best for the researcher/interviewer to conduct interviews until saturation has been reached (Silverman, 2016; Creswell, 2009; Strauss and Corbin, 1990); that is, when interviews cease to generate new information and "no new relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category, either to extend or contradict it" (Silverman, 2016: 429). This number varies from one topic to another. For example, to study how practice adoption varies, Ansari et al. (2014: p. 1318) state that "[i]n total, twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted." On the other hand, Sonenshein (2016) held 60 interviews to understand the duality of routines and creativity.

Based on the criteria identified above, it was hard to obtain management approval for data collection. Researchers stress the difficulty of gaining access to these types of companies because they are privately owned, the competition between them is very high, and they tend to share as little information about their managerial conduct as possible (Dambrin and Lambert, 2008; Anderson-Gough et al., 2005). Particularly anything related to the way they manage their employees or conduct their performance appraisal as research of this sort is very difficult to find. Furthermore, the collected data pertain a highly sensitive subject that relates to counterproductive and unethical behaviours, and extremely imbalanced power dynamics. All of which are unaligned with the companies' image and reputation. Therefore, opting for formal access would hinder participants from sharing their true experiences about the process and the institutional context, and would make it difficult for them to be truthful about the negative feelings they experienced during their organisational relationship if they felt that they would be identified by the company.

For this reason, the interviewees were approached through the researcher personal network and snowballing was relied on afterwards (Detzen and Loehlein, 2018; Dambrin and Lambert, 2008). In this regard, the first few contacts were reached out by the researcher based on his own personal network and included participants who were willing to share their negative experiences with their companies, then the researcher asked each interviewee to nominate other colleagues to be interviewed. Therefore, the interviewees provided some opportunity for gathering varied perspective on the subject, but they are not intended to be a representative sample of the entire population. The sample was comprised predominantly of males (apart from two females), as the number of female workers is minimal in the targeted GPSFs. More details about participants can be found in Appendix A.

3.1.5.3 Data collection procedures

Data were collected between August and September 2019 by the researcher, who is native to the cultural context, and proved to be vital in offering deeper understanding of the context in which PA was being replicated.

30 in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees at varying non-managerial levels (see appendix A for more details on participants). The interviews varied in duration from 30 minutes to two hours with an average length of slightly over one hour; they were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews reached saturation after the 27th one and three more interviews were conducted to ensure that no further information could be generated about the phenomenon under study. The concept of saturation originated in Grounded theory and occurs when "gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories" (Charmaz, 2006: 113). Lincoln and Guba (1985) draw from a similar term: 'informational redundancy,' stating that sampling can be stopped when new information cease to be generated by sampling additional units. In addition to saturation, these companies employ a relatively small number of professionals in the focal department, many of which have less than one year of experience which makes them unsuitable respondents for the study.

The interviews were conducted outside the company premises for three main reasons: (1) due to the sensitivity of the topic, respondents felt more comfortable talking about it in a place of their choosing (e.g., a coffee shop); (2) since management approval was not sought, respondents needed to stay away from company premises to protect their anonymity; and (3) respondents were mostly visiting clients at the time the interviews were being collected and preferred to meet after office hours or at the weekend. The interviews started with broad questions about the PA process and as they progressed, the researcher started asking the participants questions about their feelings, their performance and the social and material context in which the process was embedded, together with in-depth questions about the institutional configurations. Moreover, the researcher asked probing questions whenever appropriate to understand participants' experiences more clearly and followed up on how major events had unfolded over time. This helped in drawing a holistic picture of how the international process was replicated in this context. Finally, the participants were given the opportunity to speak freely and described concrete events and examples spanning their organisational relationships; they were repeatedly asked to describe how the major events they drew from had unfolded over time (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016).

The interview schedule included 27 questions divided into four sections: (1) the performance appraising process; (2) unfairness and negative feelings in the appraisal process (operationalised through questions adopted from the organisational justice literature); (3) questions to obtain in-depth understanding of professional, corporate, and national contexts, and finally (4) participants' performance. The schedule was developed to obtain employees' understanding of the PA process in general and the micro-processes that make up appraisal (e.g., goal setting, supervisory monitoring, performance feedback, and annual appraisal interview). Following that, the schedule included questions about employees' perceptions of fairness in relation to the appraisal process, the negative experiences that they had gone through while taking part in the process were probed, and questions about the influence of national and company contexts on the process. The interview schedule ended with questions about participants' performance. These questions were intended to allow employees to reveal their understanding, perceptions, feelings, and actions regarding the process. In short, the schedule started with open questions about the process to make interviewees feel comfortable, while as the conversation progressed more in-depth and contextual details about the process were obtained. More details about the interview schedule can be found in Appendix B.

3.1.5.4 Interview piloting

Before commencing the actual interview process, pilot interviews were conducted with two PhD students who were fairly familiar with the PA process and the Middle Eastern context. This step allowed the researcher to rehearse the interview and detect questions that might be ambiguous or unclear to the interviewees (Saunders et al., 2009). Moreover, this stage helped the researcher to reflect on the interview structure and duration (Gillham, 2000). Subsequently, two employees who had worked in one or two of the GPSFs sampled in the study were contacted and piloted the interview with them (following amendments in the first stage); the first had five years' experience, while the second had seven. The second stage proved extremely helpful, as it enabled the researcher to refine the interview questions by reflecting the actual process that is adopted in these companies, in line with the preliminary understanding of the process obtained from the experienced employees. The second piloting stage proved important in finalising the preparations for the interviews (e.g., to ensure a clearly understood schedule and to tailor questions specifically to the adopted process in these companies). Nonetheless, a clear interview schedule was not taken for granted, as the researcher was prepared for any questions or comments to be raised during the pilot and actual interviews (Silverman, 2016; Mauthner et al., 1998).

3.1.5.5 Actual interview process

Regarding the actual interview process, the majority of the interviewees felt comfortable with the researcher and provided detailed and in-depth accounts of how they took part in the process, made comparisons with other employees' experiences, described the negative feelings they experienced, and explained any unique institutional configurations. Surprisingly, and although some sensitive questions that required building a rapport with the participants were included in the middle and at the end of the interview, the majority of participants started talking these sensitive topics much earlier in the interview. This enabled the researcher to use the remaining time in several of the interviews to probe further and gain more understanding of the topic in hand. In general, the first section of the interview allowed me to obtain in-depth understanding of the PA process. The first question elicited employees' general understanding of the process; participants described the patterns they usually enact during the process (i.e., ostensive patterns). Following that, they were asked to describe each micro-process and how it was actually performed. Whenever the participants indicated a change/deviation in the ostensive patterns and performances, the researcher paid attention to *when* this happened (i.e., temporality) and what also influenced this change.

Subsequently, the researcher started asking interviewees about how just they perceived the process to be and based on their answers the researcher started probing how that made them feel, as well as relating their feelings to previously expressed changes in patterns. This section included many "how did that make you feel" questions and numerous participants expressed a wide range of negative feelings, associating them with previously expressed experiences.

As the interview progressed, the researcher started asking questions about the organisational and national context in which the process was being replicated. In this section, participants often reflected on national cultural norms as a direct factor that influenced the implementation of the process; in particular, they drew heavily on *wasta* and provided in-depth descriptions of its influence on the process and the operation of the GPSFs in general.

Finally, since the interviews were conducted with professionals, the researcher asked them about their professional performance, including questions about their in-role and extra-role performances, in order to reach an understanding that covered all performance aspects. Participants were asked to describe how satisfied they were with their in-role performance and whether they performed extra roles (e.g., citizenship behaviours) and why, in order to reflect further on their professional performance. Many of participants' reflections on professionalism

were also obtained from other earlier interview questions, as they always provided examples of their professional conduct and professional aspirations as part of their answers to these questions.

Table 5: Data collection sources

Source	Quantity
Interviews: Collected 30 Semi-structured interviews from non-managerial employees Collection period: August 2019 to September 2019 Duration: from 40 minutes to 120 minutes (average 1 hour)	400 pages
Archival documents	184 documents 2,226 pages

3.1.5.6 Archival sources

In addition to the data obtained from the interviews, the researcher further consulted three categories of documentary data as illustrated in Table (5) above. First, the researcher reviewed the annual global reports of the companies chronologically from 2005 to 2020 in order to better understand the activities in which they were engaged and to trace changes in their global HRM policy. Similarly, a review was conducted of HRM policies, changes, announcements, and press releases that were publicly available on the company websites and their associated social media. The second category included a review of the companies' professional and ethical codes of conduct, as well as those established by formal industry professional bodies, in order to identify institutional logics. Moreover, several context-specific books and local press releases concerning *wasta* were reviewed to trace the dominance of the norm in social exchanges.

The third category involved reviewing documents related to international PA processes, including their rules, standard operating procedures, and multiple feedback templates. These

provided textual data and were used to corroborate employees' accounts of the PA process, and the logics that the actors navigated during the process. Furthermore, they revealed new details that had not been revealed in the interviews.

3.1.5.7 Interview translation

The interview questions were written in English; however, because Arabic was the mother tongue of participants, they were conducted in Arabic with some English to enable them to express their views freely without a language barrier that could have constrained the expression of their thoughts. However, Therefore, the interviews had to be translated into English verbatim. This refers to "the transfer of meaning from a source language…to a target language" (Marshall and Rossman, 2011: 165). The interviews were translated by the researcher, whose native language is Arabic, who has extensive knowledge of the context and who also understands the industry language that actors use to discuss their professional work. In order to do this, a meaningful version in English of the interview was carefully produced. In order to assess the reliability of the translation, the researcher employed back translation. Neuman (2006) states that this involves translating the new version back into the original language, and "then the original writing and the translated versions are compared" (p. 445). Moreover, to conduct a further check that ensured minimal loss of meaning in translation, the researcher asked a scholar in the field from the United Kingdom, whose native language is also Arabic, to select as many random samples as possible from the original interviews in Arabic and to check their translation into English. These resulted in negligible differences between the translations. These steps resulted in a few corrections that had to be made to the translated version.

3.1.5.8 Establishing trustworthy qualitative research

The trustworthiness of data is a concept that is mainly associated with quantitative research (Neuman, 2006), but also spills over into qualitative research (Pratt et al., 2020). Pratt et al. (2020: 2) briefly explain that for quantitative research "to be trustworthy, research must be replicable, and to better ensure replicability, researchers need to be more transparent about their data and methods." Along these lines, researchers from different positions often draw upon concepts such as authenticity, plausibility, and criticality for ethnographic research (Locke and Golden-Biddle, 1997); credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability for naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); and validity and reliability for positivist case studies (Yin, 2009). However, many of these concepts, such as validity and reliability, do not

apply to qualitative case studies, such as in the studies of the thesis. First, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 10) maintain that qualitative research "produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification"; therefore, trustworthiness in qualitative research is mainly referred to as "the degree to which the reader can assess whether the researchers have been honest in how the research has been carried out and reasonable in the conclusions they make" (Pratt et al., 2020: 2).

Consequently, trustworthiness in qualitative research can be achieved through concepts such as dependability (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) and truthfulness (Nueman, 2006). Creswell (2009: 190) argues that the reliability of qualitative data can be achieved if "the researcher's approach is consistent across different research and different projects". To this end, Pratt et al. (2020), Collis and Hussey (2009) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) all maintain that trustworthiness in the qualitative approach lies in dependability and confirmability, which are important in assessing qualitative research. Dependability refers to whether the research process has been "systematic, rigorous and well documented" (Collis and Hussey, 2009: 182), while confirmability is concerned with the processes of verifying the data and whether the research process is fully detailed (Pratt et al., 2020).

On the other hand, truthfulness or credibility, which equate to validity in qualitative research, are concerned more with authenticity than the truth. This means that the presentation of data should be honest, accurate, and fair, and should reflect the unfolding of situations as constructed in the minds of participants. In this regard, Creswell (2009: 190) argues that "the researcher [performs] checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures", such as asking oneself if "these findings [are] sufficiently authentic?" (Lincoln et al., 2011: 120), and "to what degree has the investigator given voice to the different constructions of reality found in one's data?" (Pratt et al., 2020: 10). To this end, trustworthy qualitative research presents the findings as they are constructed by the research participants.

However, regardless of epistemology, ontology or method, qualitative researchers should provide detailed and clear explanations and steps on the choices made during the research. For instance, Pratt (2008) proposes a checklist for the most important questions that should be addressed in the methodology section, namely "why this study?" and "why in this context?"; "what am I studying and why?" and "how did I study these things?" Therefore, as argued by Pratt et al. (2020):

> "The degree of transparency here is not set by the demands for replication but is more broadly set by the degree to which authors can convice [sic] the reader that they have been honest in how their research has been carried out and reasonable in the conclusions they make." (p.12)

These issues were taken into consideration throughout the thesis. The questions of trustworthiness and transparency were dealt with in the research stages, from developing the interview schedule, to conducting the pilot and the actual interviews, and analysis and presentation of the findings. For instance, probing questions were not used to direct participants' answers, but to gain in-depth understanding. Moreover, during the interviews, participants were given sufficient time to articulate their understandings and meanings. Additionally, the questions and probes were designed in a way that each question provided validation for participants' responses to previous questions, and the major events that they drew on were corroborated by the majority of study participants. Finally, there is another important step for trustworthiness and transparency that is only related to the process perspective, namely process temporality and the time ordering of events (Gehman et al., 2018; Langley, 1999). Fundamentally, this is an important characteristic that distinguishes process research from other interpretive approaches is the question of 'has the author studied things over time' in terms of events or process temporal ordering (Langley, 1999). Temporality and time ordering were taken into consideration and detailed in the data analysis for each empirical study in this thesis when appropriate. Moreover, the findings of each study are presented in terms of a temporal order, by relying on the temporality of both the process and events over time.

3.1.5.9 Ethical issues and considerations

The subject of ethics in social science research is extremely important because it mainly concerns people studying others (Biddle, 1979). Such ethical issues can have a negative impact on the validity and reliability of research (Creswell, 2007). It is therefore important to reflect on these and how they are addressed during the research process to produce good quality work and to satisfy university ethical research requirements. In general, any guiding documentation on qualitative research emphasises the importance of adhering to an ethical code, actors' consent, confidentiality, and trust to produce work in line with universally accepted research ethics guidelines (Silverman, 2016; Neuman, 2006). Actors' consent refers to the importance of making the research objectives clear to the research participants, ensuring their knowledge that they are being researched, and also providing them with the right to withdraw from the study at any time (Silverman, 2016). For this reason, the research ethics form from the business

school was completed and ethical clearance was obtained prior to the interviews being held. In addition, as advised by qualitative scholars (Silverman, 2016), the interview schedule, target sample, and the boundaries of the appropriate topics to be discussed with the study participants were considered with the researcher main supervisor at the time, before obtaining ethical clearance. Therefore, the researcher was aware of the ethical issues throughout the research and followed research ethics guidelines to produce quality work and satisfy the requirements of the University of Kent.

Moreover, the researcher handed out information sheets to the participants, which contained transparent information about the research project, such as the research title, purpose, and why they had been asked to be part of the research. It further included detailed descriptions of the interview procedures, the type of questions, and detailed statements and explanations of participants' rights, such as the right to refuse the interview to be recorded, the right to withdraw at any time, data protection procedures, and the right of the participants themselves to ask questions. This information was not just provided to be read but was further explained in detail by the researcher before each interview. Following distribution of the information sheet, the researcher obtained participants' signed consent by giving them a formal consent form that ensured they understood the ethical considerations of the research and their rights. They were assured that none of the information would reach their managers and no interviews with the managers would take place. Based on this, all the participants agreed to talk freely and provided their consent for the interviews to be recorded.

The second ethical issue is that of confidentiality. This refers to the obligation researchers have to protect the identity and anonymity of research participants (Silverman, 2016; Neuman, 2006). It includes refraining from disclosing their names or any information that could reveal their identity. Most importantly, confidentiality is vital when researchers intend to obtain information from employees about their involvement in counterproductive behaviour, the breaking of nominal organisational performance standards, or immoral or unethical activities and behaviour (such as for the empirical studies in this thesis). In this thesis, the anonymity of participants was protected because the names of the organisations, the country in which they operate, and specific details about their professional conduct were kept hidden. The researcher had to balance the trade-off between participants' privacy and the invaluable information that was obtained about the employee appraising process (Neuman, 2006). The participants provided invaluable information, and it would have been unfortunate if some of it were omitted

in order to reveal the specific context or the names of the companies where the participants worked.

The third major ethical concern is trust, which is a multifaceted concept, as it defines the standards of trust between the researcher and participants, as well as presenting the researcher's work as trustworthy (Silverman, 2016; Fine, 1993). The researcher must maintain a rapport and a trustworthy relationship with participants; they cannot inflict any damage or harm to employees' reputation, break privacy agreements, or reveal participants' secrets. This is an important aspect of this particular research, since the information provided by the participants were highly sensitive and had to be handled with care to avoid ethical breaches. In this respect, the protection of actors' anonymity means that some knowledge will have to stay with the researcher in the field, and if considerable information is omitted, this will make it difficult readers to follow and understand the story the participants want to tell. Nonetheless, omitting the country and company names enabled the researcher to navigate between protecting actors' anonymity and presenting as much information as possible to the reader without crossing the boundaries of research ethics.

Chapter Four: Process perspective on performance appraisal adoption failure in non-western contexts: a qualitative meta-synthesis

Abstract

An important stream of the international performance appraisal literature has investigated how the process is implemented in non-western contexts. Despite significant development, this stream is reaching crossroads. Previous research in the field try to capture how international performance appraisal succeeds or fails in non-western contexts by comparing between global and local cultural norms. However, beyond these insights, it remains unclear how these cultural norms are brought into the process and what underlying mechanisms explain how international performance appraisal fails to be adopted as intended. This systematic literature review addresses these issues by examining performance appraisal adoption failure using a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies research design through the lenses of institutional logics and roles. The qualitative meta-synthesis allows for analysing and synthesising the findings of previously published case studies in order to develop a process of PA adoption failure beyond the insights published in previous cases. The most important finding in this study is that international performance appraisal is selectively adopted by appraisers based on the type of multiple expectations they hold toward appraisees that relate to their organisations, society, and other individuals, which result in adopting either a lenient or a rigid process at the micro-level. Each of these processes can be explained by the interplay between the multiple and combined roles that appraisers and appraisees play in the organisation. Uncovering differentiated processes at the micro-level and explaining the underlying mechanisms helps to understand international performance appraisal adoption failure in non-western contexts.

4.1 Introduction

An important question that has puzzled international PA scholars is why it fails to be adopted as intended in non-western contexts. In the last decade, some researchers have started to examine international PA between transferring and adopting contexts by relying primarily on the assumption of isomorphism in neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991;1983). Many of these efforts have shown that local cultural norms in non-western contexts are the primary factor that results in PA adoption failure, i.e., adopted differently than intended. In this case, adoption failure refers to practices that are adopted ceremonially; not replicated exactly as intended and that do not maintain the essence of the intended practice (Ansari et al., 2014). For instance, dominant local cultural norms in non-western contexts that emphasise the primacy of informal relationships in organisations, such as *wasta* in the Middle East, *guanxi* in China, *yongo* in South Korea, highly contribute to more subjective and informal PA criteria (Vo and Stanton, 2011), lack of formal employee development and feedback (Yahiaoui et al., 2021), and particularism in rewards and career progression opportunities (Horak and Yang, 2019). Most of these efforts have relied on country-by-country comparison (Mayrhofer et al., 2019) and provided oversimplified descriptive explanations to explain why western PA does not fit into the local contexts of non-western regions. Additionally, these studies stop short from looking into how local cultural norms were actually brought into the practice.

At the core of these efforts, scholars have enquired about actors' behaviours and perceptions to establish how the process is enacted and whether these replicate the actions script that is encoded in the adopted western or global PA. By doing so, they mainly conceptualise the adoption process in terms of exact replication of the western practice and overlook actors' translation to the adopted process (D'Adderio, 2014). However, in relation to this assumption, two important issues have escaped researchers' attention. First, as argued by Barley and Tolbert (1997: 96) "practices and behavioural patterns are not equally [adopted]"; meaning that variations will always occur, therefore it is rare that transferred PA practices can be exactly replicated in western and non-western host contexts. Second, by examining employees' perceptions and behaviours to understand how the process is implemented in non-western contexts, researchers have inadvertently uncovered a pattern of behaviours that is different from the intended one. Therefore, in order to fully understand how the adoption of PA fails in non-western contexts, we need to move away from the country-by-country approach and identify the behavioural mechanisms at the micro-level that explain such failure. Without doing

so, we would be prevented from uncovering new insights for the literature (Mayrhofer et al., 2019) and provide practical recommendations that could help practitioners and organisations to be more successful in implementing PA in non-western contexts.

This study turns its attention to actors' roles for being the behavioural manifestation of institutions at the micro-level (Scott, 2014). Roles are broadly defined as certain set of characteristic behaviours that actors exhibit in certain social domains (Biddle, 1979). Studies on international PA are abound with instances of actors breaking their role expectations, i.e., behaving differently than per the adopted actions script. Those that have drawn conclusions about adoption failure of PA in non-western contexts have mainly shown that actors enact the process by primarily invoking action scripts that are rooted in local cultural norms and values. For instance, as stated earlier, studies conducted in Middle Eastern and East Asian contexts generally reflect on appraisers' tendency to avoid formal employee assessment, overlook formal PA assessment criteria, and link rewards to informal non-performance indicators (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017; Gu and Nolan, 2017, Vo and Stanton, 2011). In fact, such actions are in conflict with the formal roles that are assigned to the appraiser and the appraisee and the way appraisers execute their organisational roles is largely taken-for-granted in the current international PA literature, rather than actively examined.

This provides a strong indication that local actors' actions adhere to pre-adoption norms during the implementation of the intrusive foreign process (i.e., how they used to appraise performance locally before adopting the international process). However, at the same time role theorists maintain that actors in non-western contexts tend to integrate (i.e., combine) several roles and execute them together (Ashforth, 2000; Ashforth et al., 2000), which indicates that they are not likely to replicate the PA process purely based on pre-adoption roles and norms, but are more likely to integrate new and old roles. Based on these insights, the following question is posed: *How does role integration contribute to PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts?*

The question is examined through a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies (Habersang et al, 2019; Hoon, 2013). This approach departs from traditional knowledge aggregation and synthesis in management and PA fields which primarily rely on aggregating study findings quantitatively through meta-analysis (e.g., Schleicher et al., 2018; Levy and Williams, 2004), whereas the current study relies on interpretive and abductive research methods (Habersang et al., 2019) (more details on aggregation methods are discussed in section 4.3.2 in this chapter),

enabling us to synthesise the primary empirical data from existing qualitative case studies that have examined the topic of interest. Therefore, qualitative meta-synthesis aims to revisit previously published case studies "for the purpose of making contributions [to the literature] beyond those achieved in the original studies" (Hoon, 2013: 527), and through "the identification of recurring patterns across the re-examined cases" (Habersang et al., 2019: 21). Theoretically guided by concepts and ideas from existing research on international PA (through institutional logics), role theory, and the role of mechanisms in explaining processes of organisational change (e.g., Langley et al., 2013), this study investigates the influence of the appraiser role on PA adoption and replication failure in seven published studies that include 11 cases of PA adoption failure in non-western contexts.

An important finding of this study is that the reason for PA adoption and replication failure is because appraisers adopt and replicate lenient and rigid PA processes at the micro-level. Examining these in more detail suggests that each can be explained by combining multiple personal, organisational and societal role expectations and cueing different roles situationally throughout the adoption and replication these two processes. The study finds that in cases of the integration of personal role expectations (i.e., between friends), appraisers replicate a lenient process that favours actors with interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, in cases of integration of public role expectations (i.e., acquaintances), appraisers replicate a rigid process that disadvantages actors who lack such relationships. Furthermore, the findings suggest that it is the selective adoption and replication of the two extreme processes, lenient and rigid, at the micro-level is what explains how international PA fails to be adopted as intended in non-western contexts.

This study makes two main contributions. First, the study advances international PA scholarship by moving from a macro-level dichotomies to illustrate practice adoption (such as standardisation and localisation, convergence or divergence, and success or failure) (DeNisi et al., 2021; Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2019; Mellahi et al., 2016) to a more dynamic differentiated nature to adoption that is captured by the 'selective adoption and replication' mechanism at the individual and micro-levels. The findings extend the literature by uncovering underlying micro-level mechanisms, thus providing a valuable addition to the frequently drawn-upon global-local dialogue. Examining the behavioural manifestation to institutions (i.e., roles) at the micro-level allows us to revise the previously taken-for-granted assumptions about actors' behaviours associated with their ideal role or position (i.e., their organisationally assigned role) and the actual role that actors occupy as it could be a combination of different roles with

multiple expectations (i.e., personal, organisational, and societal). Second, by uncovering how role integration contributes to PA adoption failure, and by distinguishing between ideal and actual roles, the study further contributes a micro-level perspective on roles in PA, which helps to begin unpacking subjectivity in the process and how actors' self-seeking behaviours find their way into it while they are replicating it. For this reason, the findings of this qualitative meta-synthesis suggest that PA scholars in general should focus more on the role expectations between the appraiser and the appraisee in order to understand the underlying mechanisms that influence different and heterogenous replications of the process and cause it to fail.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, a theoretical background on roles and their relation to institutions and their nature in non-western contexts is provided. Second, the chapter provides an overview on knowledge synthesis studies, including its historical evolution and types, and discusses the meta-synthesis of qualitative studies in relation to other knowledge integration approaches. Third, a description of the systematic steps that were taken to identify relevant articles is delineated, the criteria for including or excluding them, and the data analysis methods. These are followed by the study findings and discussion.

4.2 Theoretical background

4.2.1 Multiplicity of roles in organisations

Roles are an integral part of every social domain. Biddle (1979: 11) maintains that "role theory is a vehicle, or perhaps the major or only vehicle, presently available for integrating the three core social sciences of anthropology, sociology, and psychology into a single discipline whose concern is the study of human behavior." The term is often derived from theatre to illustrate commonalities between the tasks and functions that actors perform (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). As indicated in the introduction section of this chapter, a role is defined as "those behaviors characteristic of one or more persons in a context." (Biddle, 1979: 58). However, in order to appropriately define roles, it is important to take assumptions about social sciences into consideration: the structuralist and the symbolic interactionist. From a structuralist perspective, roles are defined "as sets of behavioural expectations associated with given positions in the social structure" (Ebaugh and Ebaugh, 1988: 18). At the core of this definition, roles are fixed, taken-for-granted institutionalised positions that are assigned to actors in a given social structure, such as the role of an accountant (organisational domain), a mother (family domain), or a member of a religious community (religious domain).

On the other hand, social interactionists conceptualise roles as negotiated and emergent understandings (Mead and Schubert, 1934) and that "based on subjective perceptions and preferences, individuals attempt to coordinate their behaviour and come to jointly define what constitutes a given role" (Ashforth, 2000: 4). Ashforth suggests a middle position for organisational roles, in which they are often institutionalised through prefabricated positions (Goffman, 1961) according to how structuralists conceptualise them, but at the same time, "the meaning imputed to a given position and the way in which an individual enacts a position are negotiated within structural constraints" (Ashforth, 2000: 4). This chapter also adopts a middle position of roles associated with the adopted PA process, in which appraiser and appraisee roles are pre-identified by institutionalised role expectation templates and action scripts (Weber and Glynn, 2006), but at the same time are negotiated and emergent since they require interactions and revised understandings between individuals.

These definitions imply that the visibility of the role is somehow determined by the demands of the social domains that actors move between. Role theorists posit that contexts such as organisations, households, and religious and recreational locations contain social and situational cues that influence actors' occupancy of certain roles (Biddle, 1979); for instance, as supervisors or subordinates in organisations, parents or children in a household, or friends and fans in a recreational place (Ashforth, 2000). To this end, roles are characterised by their multiplicity; i.e., individuals are constantly occupying multiple roles throughout their lives, as explained by Biddle (1979: 313), "adulthood…[is] a life-long process of discovering new roles." Most importantly, by extension actors must also transition between the different roles they occupy in their lives as they mentally or physically change social domains (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Ashforth (2000) argues that there are two types of role transition, the first being the macro, which refers to the "the psychological and (if relevant) physical movement between *sequentially* held roles" (p.7, italics added), such as when actors are promoted or leave after being offered a position in another organisation.

The second type is micro-role transitions and involves "the psychological and (if relevant) physical movement between *simultaneously* held roles" (Ashforth, 2000: 7, italics in original), such as when middle managers transition between the role of subordinate when they meet with upper management and return to that of supervisor when they meet with lower-level employees in the same organisation. One of the fundamental differences between macro and micro role transitions is that in the former actors exit roles permanently, such as when they are promoted, whereas in micro role transitions "roles are temporarily suspended, not permanently exited"

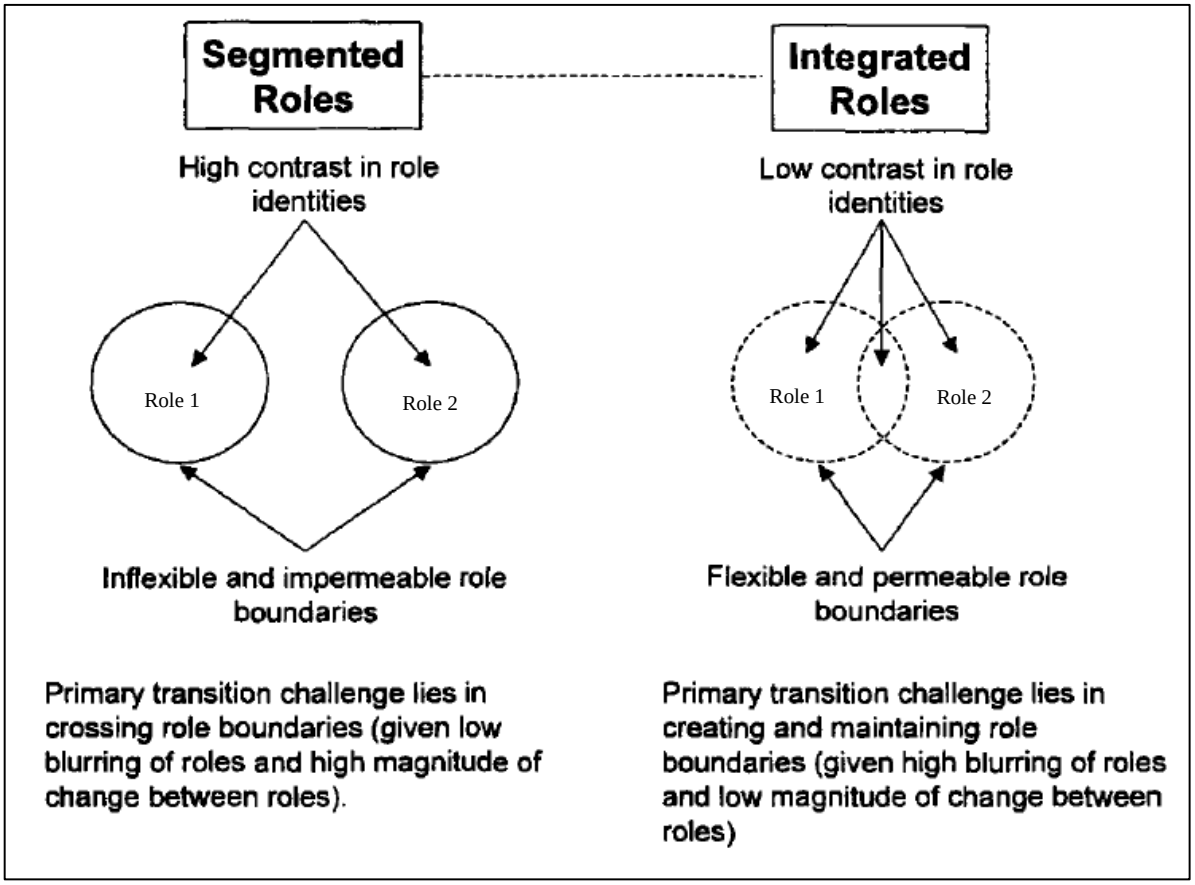
(Ashforth, 2000: 261). This chapter is centred in the latter, micro role transitions, since the PA process requires supervisors and subordinates to transition simultaneously between their other occupational roles (i.e., being a worker in the organisation) and those of appraiser and appraisee.

There are three underlying assumptions that are important in shaping the nature of roles in social domains: they are mentally bounded, stem from an identity, and exist in sets. First, roles have boundaries that are mentally put in place by actors (mental fences) to delimit their scope (Rothbard et al., 2005). Second, they are personalised, with distinct, overlapping, or multiple identities that characterise their orientation towards "goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles, and time horizons that are typically associated with a role…a definition of self-in-role, a persona that one may enact" (Ashforth, 2000: 6). Finally, the embeddedness of roles in social domains creates sets that are reciprocal, complementary, or conflicting across or within actors (Biddle, 1979). For instance, the role set of managers includes their subordinates, fellow managers, and other members of the organisation such as HR employees.

However, in reality, as actors have multiple identities and occupy multiple roles (Thornton et al., 2012), roles overlap, which makes it difficult to enact them separately. Therefore, the boundaries between roles that share a similar identity often become blurred, which is termed role integration (Ashforth 2000, Ashforth et al., 2000, Nippert-Eng, 1996) (see integrated roles in Figure 3 below). Role integration refers to "roles that are weakly differentiated…are not tied to specific places and times (flexible boundary), and allow cross-role interruptions (permeable boundary)" (Ashforth et al., 2000: 479). Whereas on the other end of the spectrum, role segmentation refers to roles that are strongly differentiated, confined to certain places and times, and allow limited cross-role interruptions (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Micro transitions, denoting movement between simultaneously held roles, are highly dependent on the extent to which the roles are integrated or segregated by actors and/or contexts. Rothbard et al. (2005), Ashforth et al., (2000) and Nippert-Eng (1996) maintain that actors roles lie on an integration-segregation continuum which is illustrated in Figure (3) below, on which complete integration or segregation is difficult or sometimes impossible to achieve. Actors who segregate roles prefer them to be informed by delineated identities and erect strong mental fences between them (non-permeable boundaries). On the other hand, actors who integrate roles pursue coupling between those that share similar identities by blurring the boundaries between them.

Role integration and segregation are crucial for understanding the psychological and physical effort required from actors to transition between roles (Tempelaar and Rosenkranz, 2019).

Figure 3: Role integration-segmentation continuum



Adapted from Ashforth (2000)

For instance, segregated roles require more psychological effort to move between them, whereas transitioning between integrated ones is effortless, but sometimes confused as actors might not have a clear view which role they are occupying in space and time (Ashforth, 2000). Therefore, for a successful PA process, actors must normatively segregate between the roles encoded in the PA adopted template and those that they held before its adoption (i.e., how they used to appraise performance) besides those they currently occupy in other social domains outside organisations (i.e., between friends or family) when implementing and replicating the process. However, this is unlikely, since the organisational context itself and the interactions between organisational members offer fertile grounds for roles to become integrated (Weber and Glynn, 2006).

However, integrating and segregating roles is not simply a personal choice but is also situationally generated. In this regard, Ashforth et al. (2000) and Ashforth (2000) maintain that certain situational cues such as contexts, cultural values and norms, together with personal role

expectations, influence actors' role integration and segregation efforts. For instance, when roles are occupied in separate contexts, they are more likely to be segregated (such as occupying the role of father at home and employee at work), while they are more likely to be integrated when they share the same context (such as the role of father and employee when working at home or the personal roles of two friends working in the same organisation). Cultures also influence role integration and segregation; research has found that actors in collectivist cultures are more likely to integrate roles than those in individualist ones (Ashforth et al., 2000; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Lobel, 1991; Kondo, 1990). Finally, the affective bond between actors strongly influences role integration (Biddle, 1979). Ashforth (2000) maintains that multiplex relationships, referring to relationships that are "based on more than one set of roles," strongly influence role integration, such as the case of romantic relationships and friendships at work.

Therefore, transitioning between integrated and segregated roles is important to understand the source of behaviours that are brought into the adopted PA process, and it could be argued that adoption failure is the result of appraisers and appraisees integrated roles since they include exhibiting behaviours that adhere to expectations beyond those defined by the organisation for the PA process. Therefore, it is important to reflect on how roles in non-western contexts throughout the adoption and replication of PA become integrated and how they influence failure. To do so, the next section highlights the link between roles and institutions which rely on the revised assumption to rationality and actors' agency highlighted in Chapter Two section (2.3). It further provides a critique for how roles are currently examined in studies investigating PA adoption in non-western contexts and illustrates how roles are likely to become integrated in these contexts.

4.2.2 Roles as carriers to institutional information: a micro-level institutional logics perspective

Organisations legitimise themselves by placing individuals within a context that involves the formal assignment of roles to achieve tasks; an authority structure; and a set of written documents such as rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures that tie the roles, tasks, and the authority structure together (Biddle, 1979). The institutional foundation of organisations is structured in material practices and cultural symbols (Friedland and Alford, 1991), and encoded into templates and scripts for action (roles) that are enacted by organisational actors (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). In this regard, Scott (2014: 99) maintains that institutional "classifications and typifications are often coded into organisational structure as

differentiated department and roles." From this perspective, roles are carriers of institutional information (Scott, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012). Their centrality for institutions is underscored by several institutional scholars, such as Berger and Luckmann (1966: 92), who argue that "all institutionalized conduct involves roles", and Scott (1995: 54), who posits that "rules and belief systems are coded into structural distinctions and roles." Therefore, roles are the behavioural manifestation of institutions at the micro-level as they are central to how institutions are reproduced and replicated by the actors occupying them.

Institutionalised, or official, roles in PA are those that are formally prescribed by the organisation in the form of positions (Weber and Glynn, 2006; Biddle, 1979) such as a manager, vice-president, and company president. Such roles are primarily bureaucratic (Thornton et al., 2012) and are bound together by a hierarchal authority structure that actors derive from their membership to the organisation (Biddle, 1979), which grants appraisers more authority than appraisees. However, in studies which have considered the adoption of PA in international settings, scholars have mainly focused on actors in terms of their official organisational role expectations, overlooking other non-official role expectations that might overlap with those defined organisationally, such as personal or societal roles.

To illustrate this, it is important to look between the lines of studies on adoption failure of PA in non-western contexts. For instance, Vo and Stanton (2011) examined PA in Japanese multinational subsidiaries operating in Vietnam. They reflect on how if an employee raises concerns about an objective they are coerced to achieve, their immediate supervisor "might feel you are not heartily enthusiastic with your job or, worse, you are not capable of doing it" (p. 3521). Horak and Yang (2019: 1433) quote the following from an expat working in an MNC in South Korea: "Usually the most senior expects promotion because he was already the senior in university." Gu and Nolan (2017: 1442-1443) find that employees are "strongly motivated to obtain better performance ratings because they wished to maintain mianzi [i.e., save face]." Finally, Yahiaoui et al. (2021: 10) maintain that in PA conducted in the Middle Eastern context, "managers' responsibility toward their employees is related to their fear of a [G]od"

If we examine the above examples closely, we can see that these are expectations that employees or managers have during the PA process, but that they are far from official organisational role expectations (i.e., the ideal or institutionalised one). Ideally, the same studies should reflect that employees expect to have a voice in the identified objectives rather than facing coercion (Vo and Stanton, 2011); that they expect to be rewarded individually based

on their performance, not because they were the most senior in their university (Horak and Yang, 2019); that they expect to obtain better ratings for career progression, not to save face (Gu and Nolan, 2017); and that managers' responsibility toward their employees should be more formally constrained rather than informal (Yahiaoui et al., 2021). In general, institutionalised roles commonly feature in the PA literature; they are what scholars always refer to in terms of how the process *should* be conducted, i.e., the *normative* roles in the PA process.

To be realistic, one 'uniform' institutionalised role set for appraisers and appraisees in the literature cannot be identified because the PA process is implemented differently across actors, organisations, and contexts (DeNisi et al., 2021); neither can a single set of roles be identified as best and therefore strongly institutionalised. At best, we can point to the set of behaviours characteristic to appraisees and appraisers using coarsely grained actions, abstract enough to be applicable to the majority of appraisers and appraisees in worldwide organisations. By taking stock of how the process is normatively conducted, we can also unpack PA ideal roles, as scholars generally do not refer to components of the process without addressing the best approach to execute it, i.e., the normative action script.

As previously shown in Figure (2), in general, appraisees are first expected to set performance goals and objectives aligned with organisational strategy. Then, throughout the year they are expected to engage in a cycle of receiving (in)formal performance feedback and performance development. At the end of the year, employees then take part in the annual performance assessment meeting. On the other hand, appraisers' role includes helping employees set their goals and objectives and ensuring that these are aligned with organisational strategy, and then they engage in a cycle of monitoring employees' efforts and providing them with performance feedback. At the end of the process, appraisers calibrate and communicate rankings and ratings across employees and meet with them to communicate annual feedback. In general, these are the same ideal sets of behaviours that are characteristic to the appraiser and the appraisee which are assumed and taken-for-granted in the current literature. Both parties take part in generating PA artefacts such as the generation of completed feedback forms, the appraiser's diary about employees' performance, and the outcomes of the annual appraisal interview (Aggerholm and Asmuß, 2016; Vo and Stanton, 2011).

For instance, note this description of the process in Vo and Stanton's (2011: 3518-3519) study. "Each employee set their own performance objectives... Employees [discuss] their objectives

and measures with their managers [who] made relevant changes [and approve them] … [employees are] still expected to achieve the specified performance objectives." Managers "normally conducted the review of employee performance annually or biannually." Additionally, managers are expected to provide "performance coaching, and counselling and coaching, where necessary." This is an example of the ideal set of behaviours characteristic to appraisers and appraisees. If the investigated actual actors' perceptions and behaviours of PA are aligned with this ideal pattern, albeit partly, then researchers conclude that adoption has been successful, or otherwise a failure.

However, the ideal pattern does not determinate actors' actions and expectations, as illustrated above in how studies indicate adoption failure to PA, which mainly show that actual behaviours and expectations diverge from ideal ones. In this regard, Weber and Glynn (2006: 1651) argue that "the institutionalization of roles and scripts enables individuals to form expectations for the conduct of others as well as derive their own course of action," meaning that institutionalised (or ideal) roles only provide guidance to behaviours, but do not determine them. In this regard, Levy (1952) reminds us about an important distinction between institutionalised and actual roles:

> [A role is] any position differentiated in terms of a given social structure whether the position be institutionalized or not…An *ideal* role is an *institutionalized* role. Such a role involves normative standards, conformity with which is generally to be expected … An *actual* role is the position in fact occupied by an individual (p. 159: italics added)

From this perspective, in order to actually understand how PA fails to be adopted as intended through the lens of roles, we need to differentiate between ideal (institutionalised) roles and actual ones, i.e., those that actors actually occupy, which could be based on multiple expectations, rather than just the ideal institutionalised ones which mainly follow one action script that is set by the organisation. This limited view of roles prevents us from understanding the underlying mechanisms that influence actors to behave differently and fail to live up to the performance expectations that are prescribed by organisationally institutionalised roles, hence leading to the success or failure of PA adoption. Therefore, we should be focusing on actual roles and consider how they influence the adoption and replication of PA, rather than actors' institutionalised (or ideal) ones.

Finally, roles are not just organisational, but also penetrate other social domains. Individuals occupy different roles throughout their daily lives, some of which intersect within the same

context or with other actors' role sets. One of the most prominent examples in PA involve roles that are played by actors with multiplex relationships (i.e., more than one set of roles binds the relationship, such as romantic liaisons between office colleagues) (Ashforth, 2000) or kinship in family businesses (Biddle, 1979). Examples of the influence of multiplex relationships can be found in studies that reflect on favouritism in PA based on personal relationships (Harbi et al., 2017; Vo and Stanton, 2011; Narcisse and Harcourt, 2008). Such empirical findings shed light on the multiplex relationships that are shared amongst groups of PA role occupants, and how the roles occupied by appraisers and appraisees are likely to differ based on in-group and out-group dynamics (Horak and Yang, 2019; Harbi et al., 2017). From this perspective, the focus on organisationally institutionalised (or ideal) roles, and the taking for granted of actual roles that could simultaneously hold multiple role expectations in current international PA literature, prevents us from understanding the influence of actual behaviours on PA adoption failure.

In this respect, the institutional logics perspective provides a useful lens to examine the interplay between institutions and both institutionalised and actual roles, and hence, unpacking their influence on PA adoption failure in non-western contexts. Institutional logics refer to the socially constructed 'organising principles' of a given social domain, they provide actors with multiple common frames of reference that guide what actions to take and what constrain others from being taken in different social domains (Smets et al., 2015). There are currently dominant seven logics that were identified in the interinstitutional system and they are: family, community, religion, state, market, profession, and corporation (refer to Appendix C: Thornton et al.'s (2012) revised interinstitutional system ideal types for more details on these logics). Similar to roles, logics are characterised by their multiplicity and hybridity, meaning that in any given social domain, there are multiple institutional logics that compete for primacy and saliency either jointly or individually to organise people's lives (Friedland and Alford, 1991).

For instance, on the one hand, there are social domains in which one logic dominates and can be more salient than others, such as the religious logic in mosques and churches, or the family logic in a household. On the other hand, organisations are often portrayed in terms of hybrid logics, such as the blending of religious and market logics in Islamic banks in Germany (Gümüsay et al., 2020), or that of professional and bureaucratic logics in professional organisations (Alvehus, 2018; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). The institutional logics perspective is more suitable for examining international PA in non-western contexts as by having a space for family, community, and religion in the interinstitutional system, which

primarily make up the foundational institutions and the cultural norms of non-western contexts, it provides a more realistic picture for the influence of institutions on practice adoption in these contexts.

Each logic in the interinstitutional system is composed of "cultural symbols and material practices that govern a commonly recognised area of [western societies'] life" (Thornton et al., 2012: 54). Since the institutional logics perspective recognises that actors (organisations and individuals) are partially autonomous from institutions, meaning that their agency is partly embedded in institutions (Friedland and Alford, 1991), then these logics can provide actors with multiple frames of reference to inform the behaviours associated with their multiple roles. In this regard, Thornton et al. (2012: 57) maintain that "individuals are quite capable of dealing with *multiple roles* and identities. For instance, an individual can avoid cognitive conflict when pairing a norm from one institutional order with a norm from another by compartmentalizing the norms" (italics added). Consequently, Individuals are more likely to couple (or combine) and decouple (or segregate) the cultural norms between different institutional orders to attain the demands of multiple role expectations (Ashforth et al, 2000; Ashforth, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996).

In this respect, this chapter utilises the institutional logics of regional community and HRM bureaucracy as major macro-level frames of reference that actors in non-western contexts invoke throughout the adoption and replication of PA process. The adoption of PA naturally invokes the HRM bureaucratic logic since it benefits and contributes to growing bureaucracy in organisations from the structured positions (or institutionalised roles) of the appraiser and appraisees (Alvehus, 2018). The HRM bureaucracy logic advocates the formal and ideal action pattern that appraisers and appraisees should follow throughout enacting the process. Whereas the regional community logic in non-western contexts in this study poses a competing one as it emphasises on getting things done through informal relationships which are labelled in specific terminologies that are developed in these contexts and they constitute an important frame of reference for actors in the conduct of organisational practices such as *guanxi* in China, *yongo* in Korea, *blat* in Russia, *sifaresh* in Pakistan and *wasta* in the Middle East (Nadeem and Kayani, 2019).

These labels in general refer to informal institutions in non-western contexts (Al Jawali et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019) that contribute to attaining benefits from formal organisations informally through social exchanges between actors and this will be detailed clearly in the

findings on this study. Therefore, this logic advocates a more informal action pattern that is also followed by actors in organisations. These action patterns (informed by HRM bureaucracy and regional community) could be combined to reflect the actual roles that appraisers and appraisees occupy in non-western social organisational domains throughout the conduct of PA and therefore the simultaneous existence of multiple logics and roles in PA is more likely to influence how the process is adopted and replicated. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between institutionalised and actual roles, since the latter sources and combines between multiple frames of reference and this provides a more realistic picture of how institutions materialise through multiple roles and expectations at the micro-level in non-western contexts and how these in turn contribute to international PA adoption and replication.

4.3 Method

Qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies

In order to develop a process model of how roles influence the failure of adopting international PA in non-western contexts, this study adopts a qualitative meta-synthesis research design (Habersang et al., 2019; Hoon, 2013). However, before delving into the meta-synthesis steps, it is important to understand the history of knowledge integration studies and discuss this technique in relation to other knowledge synthesis approaches.

4.3.1 Evolvement of the knowledge synthesis field

A qualitative meta-synthesis is a systematic approach to producing evidence-based reviews and can be broadly referred to as a systematic review of the literature since they share several similar characteristics. Silverman (2016) identified two types of literature review that scholars commonly use in social sciences: authorship and the contractual literature reviews. The former refers to the traditional literature review that scholars generally use to show their awareness of the literature by drawing on and critiquing key papers in a specific field coherently and plausibly. This type of review dominates most of the social sciences and is generally produced by relying on scholars' expertise and mastery of a body of knowledge (Silverman, 2016); therefore, it is more subjective and constructed in a narrative fashion (Cooper, 1998). On the other hand, the contractual review presents a more systematic and scientific process to producing knowledge by establishing pre-specified review protocols, a priori, and criteria (Hoon, 2013). In explaining why, a systematic review is more reliable than a traditional one, Cook (1997) argues that it:

> "Includes a clear statement of the purpose of the review, a comprehensive search and retrieval of the relevant research, explicit selection criteria, critical appraisal of the primary studies, and reproducible decisions regarding relevance, selection, and methodological rigour of the primary research" (p. 350)

A systematic literature review addresses mainly the 'what works' question (Kastner et al., 2016) and "addresses a specific question, utilizes explicitly and transparent methods to perform a thorough literature search and critical appraisal of individual studies, and draws conclusion about what we currently know and do not know about a given question or topic." (Briner and Denyer, 2012: 112). This type of literature reviews is considered scientific and systematic because it presents a rhetoric that follows pre-specified review protocols, literature search priori, and explicit methods (Silverman, 2016; Hoon, 2013). Established in the health and medical fields, systematic reviews have been long used in established sciences as far back as the 1700s to integrate knowledge across specific topics of interest; the earliest attempts to aggregate and combine study results statistically can be traced back to the early 1900s (Silverman, 2016; Pearson, 1904). This type of review became grounded in the positivist tradition, since statistically derived results provide higher reliability and confidence for researchers and decision makers (Ohlsson, 1994). Consequently, systematic literature reviews started to enjoy "a special kind of scientific authority" (Silverman, 2016: 423) and became regarded as the only reliable form of literature review research (Khan et al., 2001).

With this scientific authority, such reviews found their way into the management field in particular, and social sciences in general. Over time, and as the number of studies increased exponentially across the management field, "the assimilation of already existing studies" became a pressing need (Light and Pillemer, 1986). With this purpose in mind, management scholars adopted similar systematic review approaches that are predominantly used in the medical field. By remaining faithful to the scientific authority that positivistic systematic reviews provide, management scholars draw from a technique that is frequently used to systematically review the literature and aggregate its results, meta-analysis (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006). Rooted in positivistic epistemology (Hoon, 2013), meta-analysis (i.e. analysis of the analysis) is a conventional systematic review technique, which refers to combining quantitatively derived data from studies on the same topic to generate superior evidence and contribute general conclusions about the interplay between variables (i.e. how the outcome of Y is impacted by the intervention of X) (Cook et al., 1997). It is used to analyse and summarise the results of different studies on the same topic (Kastner et al., 2012) and has been widely

adopted to aggregate results from the PA literature (e.g., see Schleicher et al., 2018; Pichler, 2012; Levy and Williams, 2004). Although the findings of meta-analyses are more robust and generalisable as well as useful for making plausible future predictions, by the turn of the twenty-first century some scholars started questioning the state of the integrated literature and the overreliance on quantitative meta-analysis. For instance, some debated whether such techniques developed in the natural sciences were suitable for informing the management field (Hammersley, 2001), since unlike natural sciences, management researchers often debate what is considered an objective truth and whether bias should be eliminated or accepted and acknowledged (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006). Moreover, positivistic systematic literature reviews are unable to answer complicated questions such as those related to employees' perceptions (Tricco et al., 2016).

This excessive focus on reproducing generalisable and robust studies has often deterred the use of qualitative studies in evidence-based reviews (Hammersley, 2001) for the reason that qualitative research does not meet the standards for statistical analysis (Silverman, 2016). Consequently, qualitative research is highly undervalued and misrepresented in systematic literature reviews in general, across both the social and scientific fields (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006). Noting this underrepresentation, scholars across different fields have shifted their attention to "interpretation synthesis" (Hoon, 2013) and started to recognise the increasing value of qualitative research. As a result, and by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a great deal of interest had emerged in the inclusion of qualitative research in evidence-based reviews (Cochrane Collaboration, 2022; Dixon-Woods et al., 2004; Kastner et al., 2012). For instance, Kastner et al. (2012) and Dixon-Woods et al. (2004) highlighted many evidence-based literature reviews dedicated to qualitative research, such as in relation to meta-ethnography, narrative analysis, and meta-synthesis.

Although some of these techniques for synthesising knowledge from qualitative studies received increasing interest among management scholars (Hoon, 2013; Habersang et al., 2019), they remain "embryonic, underdeveloped and in need of further exploration" (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006: 224); their definitions overlap (Kastner et al., 2012); and while the existing techniques are still evolving, new ones continue to emerge (e.g., best fit framework synthesis (Carroll et al., 2013)). This rapid development in the knowledge synthesis field has led to conceptual confusion between systematic review techniques, as in some studies the same method is used to describe different issues (e.g., meta-synthesis) and some research papers claim to have adopted the technique, whereas they were poorly executed or this was in fact not

the case (Silverman, 2016; France et al., 2014). Therefore, in terms of how to synthesise knowledge systematically from qualitative research, the field needs consensus among scholars and further development in the field of social sciences.

4.3.2 Integrating qualitative research: qualitative synthesis

Evidence-based reviews became regarded under a wider umbrella term for 'knowledge synthesis' that also values the underrepresented insights from qualitative studies (Kastner et al., 2012). Kastner et al. (2016) argue that there is a need to move beyond conventional systematic reviews that conclude with 'what works' and to consider *how*, *why*, and in *what* contexts things work. Knowledge synthesis is a study that "summarizes all pertinent studies on a specific question, can improve the understanding of inconsistencies in diverse evidence, and can define future research agendas" (Kastner et al., 2012: 2). These efforts led to the development a large number of knowledge synthesis methods that accommodate the preferences of scholars in both qualitative and quantitative camps (Dixon-Woods et al., 2001; Kastner et al., 2016). In conjunction with systematic reviews, knowledge synthesis is also systematic and aims to interpret the results of different studies on the same topic in order to provide relevant knowledge for practitioners and policy makers (Hoon, 2013). However, there is equal emphasis on qualitative and quantitative methods, as statistical aggregation techniques are only part knowledge synthesis (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006).

Qualitative knowledge synthesis techniques ascribe to the interpretive paradigm and share the same ontological and epistemological assumptions of knowledge (Gephart, 2004), as "knowledge is regarded as social facts…[and] subjective, individual, and collective interpretation of these facts, patterns and, later, constructs can be derived that underlie individual and social life" (Hoon, 2013: 526). A brief on the ontological and epistemological assumptions beside methodology for interpretive research synthesis can be found in Figure (4) below. Therefore, and throughout the accumulation of evidence, researchers adopting a qualitative perspective to knowledge synthesis are actively looking between the lines for a subject individual, a mechanism, a social process, or a structure that can describe the underpinning causal relationship of what they are examining (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In doing so, qualitative knowledge synthesis enables scholars to generate interpretive explanations of the underlying phenomena rather than simply predictions (Hoon, 2013). Qualitative knowledge synthesis is made by extracting evidence and identifying categories and patterns across studies, while preserving the integrity of the original studies.

Figure 4: Three perspectives on research synthesis

Perspectives on Synthesis	Paradigmatic Assumptions	Ontology: Nature of Reality	Epistemology: Theory/Nature of Knowledge	Methodology: How to Synthesize Knowledge	Role of the Researcher	Type of Synthesizing Knowledge Into Theory
Research synthesis as aggregation						
Synthesizing entails an aggregative, deductive, accumulative logic; facts serve as a building block that adds to the growing of knowledge; averaging across studies leading to a better truth	Positivist organization theory	Objective truth claims, reality is independent of observers' perception and experience	Knowledge derives from pure reason and can be expressed and analyzed in terms of formal logic; phenomena are stable and fixed; studies come to a final, unarguable summary	Nomothetic: Seek to uncover universal regularities and causal laws of a rule-governed reality	Researcher as independent observer or objective scientist to aggregate quantitative raw data	Establishing predictive theory: Aggregated findings are applicable to other populations or samples; generalizability
Research synthesis as interpretation						
Synthesizing entails an interpretive logic; understanding general patterns of behavior and perception as valid part of building theory	Postpositivism	Reality exists independently of what anyone thinks, believes, or knows about it and how people perceive it	Knowledge derives from "depth ontology" in which many kinds of evidence are valid; the observable rarely provides a full understanding or explanation of complex social phenomena	Uncover causal linkages or mechanisms that operate in all social phenomena, but cause and effect may not be directed	Researchers strive for objectivity, but the researchers' interpretation of findings is valid as long as it is justified	Building theory: aggregating to produce holistic and causal explanations; variables and relationships as building blocks of theory building; replicability
Research synthesis as translation						
Synthesizing through the formation of ever more informed constructions; interpretative, reciprocal translations of studies into another; constructing interpretations	(Social) constructivism	Social reality is context-dependent, based on perspective, values, and interests of the observer; reality is not fixed but multiple and constructed	Knowledge is constructed; a variety of constructions exist, aiming at reconstructing the world at the point at which it exists	Idiographic: Gain understanding why individuals create and interpret their world in a particular way; reflexivity; meaning is not inherent in raw data but reconstructed via hermeneutical/ dialectical process	Researcher is part of the setting; interpretations are constructed by a single researcher/a team; multivoice; different researchers create different interpretations of the phenomena	Interpretive explanation and understanding: synthesis through the formation of more informed constructions to reveal something new or present information that disrupts conventional thinking

Adopted from Hoon (2013: 525)

This research employs a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies (Habersang et al., 2019) to examine How does role integration contribute to PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts.

4.3.3 Qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies

A qualitative meta-synthesis refers to the synthesis of primary evidence in case studies in order to provide the literature with contributions not made by the original cases (Habersang et al., 2016; Rauch et al., 2016; Hoon, 2013). The basic idea of synthesising knowledge from qualitative cases is to accumulate the disparate results of standalone case studies in order to refine, contribute new relationships to existing theory, or develop a new theory (Hoon, 2013). In particular, qualitative meta-synthesis is suitable for developing a process model to examine how role integration contributes to PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts for the following reasons. First, qualitative case studies provide a rich and contextualised examination of a phenomenon in a single setting and across multiple levels of analysis (Yin, 2014). Therefore, accumulating central insights across such studies enables us to theorise how and when specific events, material practices, or processes interact over time and why such interactions lead to the failure of international PA adoption.

Second, the qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies allows us to overcome difficulties related to generalisability from context-bound individual case studies (Yin, 2014). Drawing on a larger number of case studies allows us to reconcile between varying types of empirical evidence about PA adoption and replication failure in contexts with different institutional configurations, and as such "provide more robust, generalizable and comprehensive findings" (Habersang et al., 2019: 22). Third, with the qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies, researchers can contribute new relationships between concepts beyond those established in the existing theory (Maxwell, 2012). The examination of such relationships in different cases and research contexts can contribute knowledge about the processes of heterogeneous PA to a more general theory that could be widely applied. Since the dominant approach to synthesising knowledge in the PA literature is through the quantitative aggregation of study results (e.g., Schleicher et al., 2018; Pichler, 2012; Levy and Williams, 2004), it is important to start the attempt to synthesise knowledge provided by the increasing number of qualitative studies in the literature.

Ostensibly, the process of conducting a meta-synthesis of qualitative case studies practically shares the same steps as other systematic review techniques; however, they vary in how each step is taken in practice in relation to the specific technique adopted. For instance, the second

step after developing a research question is to locate relevant research that will be used in the synthesis. Scholars qualitatively synthesising knowledge from cases will direct their literature search efforts to identifying and locating relevant qualitative case studies (Habersang et al., 2019), as opposed to realist synthesis, for example, which can involve the identification of both qualitative and quantitative studies (Habersang and Reihlen, 2018). Similarly, appraising the quality of qualitative research is a highly subjective step that differs amongst qualitative scholars in terms of how to assess the quality of case studies' methodology and findings. This influences which studies to include and which to exclude (Silverman, 2016). Finally, involving qualitative research in knowledge synthesis raises more challenges for researchers that need to be dealt with before and during its conduct, which will be detailed below for each step.

4.3.4 Step 1: Locating and narrowing down relevant research

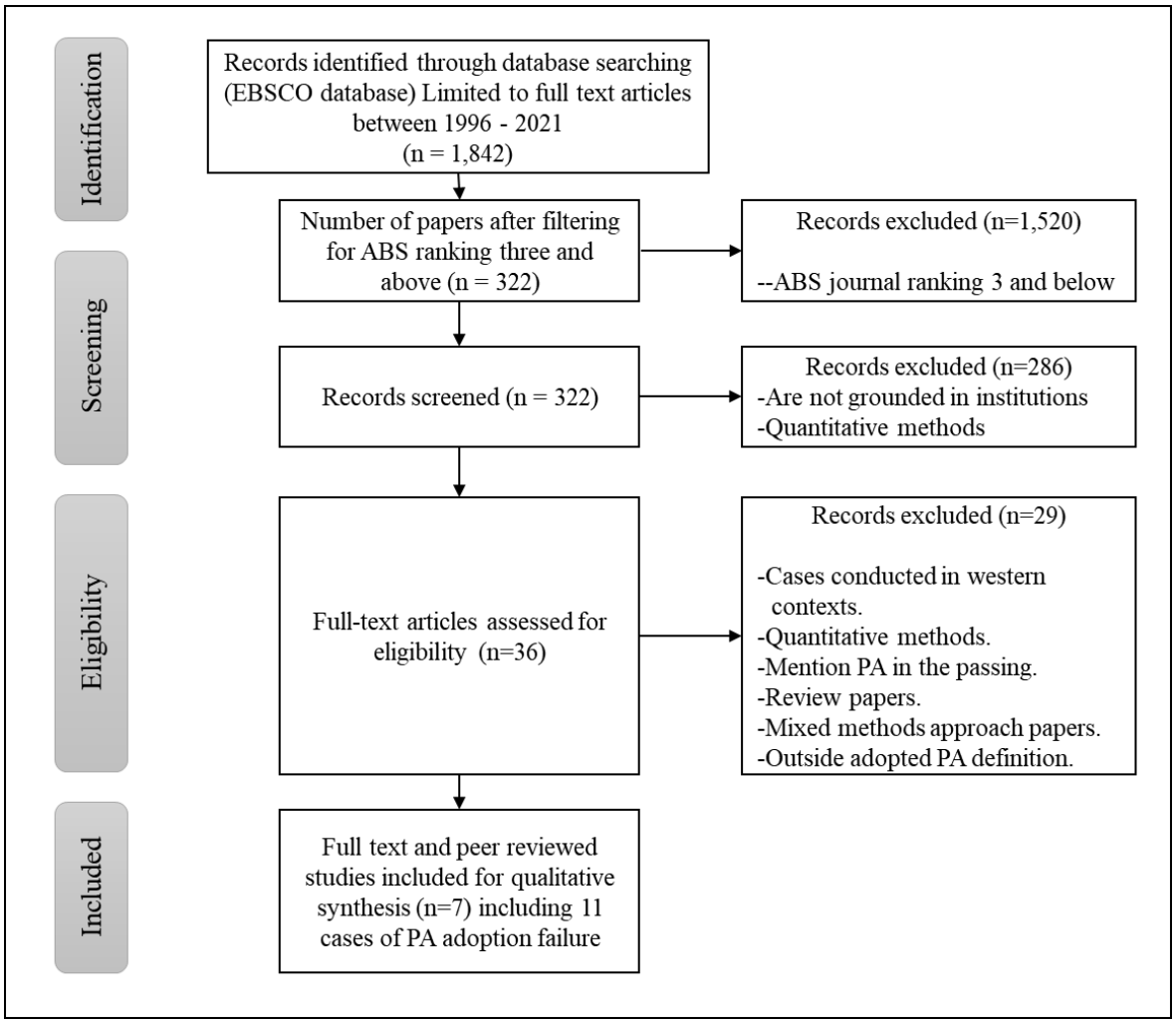
This knowledge synthesis started with a broad interest in PA adoption in non-western contexts. After inspecting the literature and testing the topic against the empirical studies that were initially selected, the researcher finally focused the meta-synthesis of the qualitative cases on the research question: How does role integration contribute to PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts. The researcher started by identifying the different bodies of research that could be relevant for the purposes of the meta-synthesis based on familiarity with the topic. The researcher settled on the scholarship of international PA from an institutional theory perspective because this body of research explicitly examines the transfer and adoption of PA between different contexts.

To locate related qualitative case studies, the literature search was conducted on the EBSCOhost database and further searched journal outlets that received the most hits (Hoon, 2013). In order to yield as many relevant case studies about PA as possible, the researcher initially performed a broad search for qualitative PA studies in the management literature based on the following search string: 'Performance appraisal' or 'performance reviews' or 'performance management' or 'performance feedback' or 'performance evaluation' or 'performance measurement' (AND) 'qualitative research' or 'qualitative study' or 'qualitative methods' or 'interview' or 'ethnographic' or 'phenomenological' or 'case study'. This search string includes the most relevant labels for PA that are used in the literature (see review by Schleicher et al., 2018) and the common keywords that indicate the adopted qualitative methodology. The search was limited to the period between 1996 to 2022 in order to include both early and recent qualitative case studies. Furthermore, the search was refined to include only studies that were published in the business and management fields, which yielded 1,842

studies. In order to make the sample more manageable, the search was focused on the Association of Business Schools' (ABS) academic journal rankings of three and above. This yielded 322 contributions, which were thus easier to manage and screen manually.

Overall, the sample of 322 studies was published between January 1996 and December 2021. The search incorporated 18 journals ranked three and above (ABS ranking) focusing on various business and management areas (e.g., human resource management, business ethics, management accounting, and public management), thereby acknowledging the widespread use and publication of PA studies across different disciplines. Additionally, this broad set of journals contained ones that are viewed as open to publishing qualitative case studies, such as the International Journal of Human Resource Management and Human Resource Management. The steps for locating relevant research for the qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies are summarised in Figure (5) below.

Figure 5: Steps for locating relevant research for the qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies



Since the sample number was manageable, the researcher started screening the titles and abstracts manually by reading them for keywords related to the institutions perspective, such as institutional theory, institutional work, convergence and divergence, standardisation and localisation, isomorphism, global-local, informal institutions, host-country (or context) or country-of-origin, source country (or context), home country (or context), and national culture. This step yielded 36 case studies that had adopted an institutional perspective to examining International PA. These included studies whose theoretical and methodological approaches were not clearly explained in the abstract and needed further inspection, since the reasons for using a qualitative research methodology are not always clear in their abstracts (Hoon, 2013).

4.3.5 Step 2: Inclusion/exclusion criteria

The next step in the conduct of a meta-synthesis of qualitative case studies is to include relevant ones. The inclusion/exclusion criteria are of central importance to meta-synthesis studies "since the validity of a synthesis depends on the quality of the primary studies on which it is based" (Hoon, 2013: 534).

In this step, the researcher started scanning the sample in more detail, sometimes reading the whole paper if necessary (de Bakker et al., 2019). Based on the predetermined criteria mentioned above, cases that examined PA in non-western contexts were included and those conducted in western contexts were excluded, such as those focused on western Europe and North America. Moreover, case studies that adopted a quantitative approach were excluded but qualitative ones that were explicitly framed by an institutional perspective to PA were included. Furthermore, mixed methods case studies which mainly relied on quantitative measures to analyse the data were excluded and only included such studies if they collected qualitative data through in-depth interviews as the majority of those that adopted a mixed method approach only included open-ended questions in their surveys. Fourth, some studies included multiple cases with different outcomes; therefore, the researcher only included cases that resulted in PA adoption failure (i.e., ceremonial adoption). Finally, case studies that focused on individual PA within the definition of employees' PA adopted in this thesis (Chapter Two section 2.1) were included whereas the ones that focused on appraising the performance of institutions or products or that focused on sustainability were excluded. According to these criteria, 29 published studies were excluded from the sample. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are summarised in Table (6).

Table 6: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1	Cases conducted in non-western contexts	Cases conducted in western contexts
2	Qualitative case studies that are explicitly framed by the institutional perspective	Case studies that adopted a quantitative approach
3	Mixed methods studies with data collected through in-depth interviews	Mixed methods studies that were primarily quantitative
4	For studies with multiple cases, I included cases that reported adoption failure	For studies with multiple cases, I excluded cases that reported successful adoption
5	Studies that focused on individual performance appraisal	Studies that focused on appraising inter-organizational performance and sustainability performance

Consequently, the final sample consisted of seven articles that include 11 case studies about PA adoption failure in non-western contexts, which were all checked in terms of quality, ensuring that they all provided a clear link between theory and evidence and reflected the methodological standards that scholars such as Yin (2014) and Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) contribute to the field of case studies. As a result, no further studies were excluded.

Overall, 36 articles were read in full text, seven of which met the study inclusion criteria and were ultimately incorporated into the meta-synthesis (seven articles that included 11 cases of PA adoption failure). These case studies were conducted between 1996 and 2022 in different non-western countries and industries. They involved organisations that are highly concerned with the effective implementation of individual PA practices for both developmental and administrative decisions/information about employees, such as MNCs. Overview of cases included in the synthesis are presented in Table 7 below.

4.3.6 Step 3: Data analysis

The qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies employs abductive reasoning in the data analysis (Habersang et al., 2019; Maxwell, 2012). This involves iterative movements between the analysis, the study data, and the emerging theory (Smets et al., 2015; Maxwell, 2013), and hence it considers a combination of inductive and deductive steps (Habersang and Reihlen, 2018; Klag and Langley, 2013). In practice, contributing a new construct or relationship to the theory by using abductive reasoning requires immersion in the existing theories on PA adoption failure, as potential theoretical lenses for data interpretation; coding, abstraction and emerging

Table 7: Overview of cases included in the study

No	Case	Industry	PA origins	PA host context	Authors (year published)	Article title	Publishing outlet
1	Equipment	Automobile	France	Tunisia	Yahiaoui, Nakhle, and Farndale (2021)	Culture and performance appraisal in multinational enterprises: Implementing French headquarters' practices in Middle East and North Africa subsidiaries	Human Resource Management
2	Chemical	Chemical					
3	Pharma	Pharmaceutical	France	Lebanon			
4	Cosma	Cosmetics					
5	PK	Automotive	Global	Czech	Uddin et al (2021)	Performance measurement in a transitional economy: unfolding a case of KPIs	Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal
6	SMEs	Various	Global	South Korea	Horak and Yang (2019)	Whither seniority? Career progression and performance orientation in South Korea	The International Journal of Human Resource Management
7	MNEs	Various	Western				
8	Universities	Academia	Global	Poland	Dobija et al. (2019)	Rational and symbolic uses of performance measurement: Experiences from Polish universities	Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal
9	State bank	Banking	Global	China	Gu and Nolan (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
10	Japanese subsidiaries	Automobiles and fast-moving consumer goods.	Japan	Vietnam	Vo and Stanton (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
11	US-owned subsidiaries	IT industry	United States	China	Cooke and Huang (2011)	Postacquisition evolution of the appraisal and reward systems: A study of Chinese IT firms acquired by US firms	Human Resource Management

themes; categorising and linking categories and themes; and reflecting on these with reference to existing theories. The data were managed and analysed using the software program NVivo 12.

Data analysis steps. The data for this chapter were analysed in five main steps. The unit of analysis is the performance appraisal process, and the focal level of analysis is the individual, the appraiser in particular, whereas empirical attention was paid to actors, behaviours, and expectations that are derived from macro and micro-levels (societal, organisational, and personal). First, a table that included deductive codes was developed which were theoretically informed by current institutional and role theory and the literature on PA adoption failure in non-western contexts. As an interpretive background for the data analysis, the following main theories were identified in relation to the study subject: neo-institutional theory,

theory of isomorphism, institutional logics theory, and role theory. For instance, based on neo-institutional theory, the researcher identified the central themes of ceremonial adoption, decoupling, and institutional distance. Examples of deductive first-order observations and codes included 'community logic source of authority', 'coercive isomorphism', and 'divergence with global practices.'

In the second step, within-case analysis was performed that involved line-by-line coding for each separate case. This consisted of "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 57). In addition to the above-mentioned table of deductive codes, the researcher allowed for inductive codes to emerge throughout the process (Klag and Langley, 2013). Open coding helped to make sense of the data "by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data" (Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 12). Within this step, attributes for the adopted PA process and the associated contexts were identified, such as 'goal setting', 'appraisal criteria', and 'appraisal frequency' for the deductive code, and 'sources of identity', 'sources of legitimacy', and 'sources of authority' for the inductive codes. By doing so, the researcher identified the PA process (and micro-processes if available), actors, and the source of the adopted process. Additionally, the researcher identified the most salient cultural norms in the adopting context such as *guanxi* in China and *wasta* in the Middle East. The third step involved using axial coding to generate categories among the first-order concepts. This refers to generating categories among first-order codes and thereby abstracting them into higher-order themes and abstract categories (Habersang et al., 2019). In this step, for instance, 'roles ascribed by age' and 'paternal roles' were linked to *societal role expectations in PA*. 'Confucian value system',

‘valuing groups over individuals’, and ‘emphasis on interpersonal relationships’ were linked to *sources of collectivist identity*.

To make sense of the data, the fourth step involved constructing visual maps (Langley, 1999) for each case in order to understand the process of adoption in each of them. Visual maps “allow the presentation of large quantities of information in relatively little space, and they can be useful tools for the development and verification of theoretical ideas…and they can easily be used to show precedence, parallel processes, and the passage of time.” (Langley, 1999: 700). These involved the home and host context cornerstone institutional orders; the process of PA (or micro processes if available); PA outcomes in terms of development and rewards; and actors’ institutionalised (or ideal) and actual roles with a focus on the appraiser role. Visual mapping at this stage was fundamental to the analysis, as it revealed that instead of any role breach by appraisers, it was patterns of role integration that were more salient, because throughout the process of PA adoption and replication, appraisers occupy multiple roles including those organisationally institutionalised, such as integrating between societal and organisational roles. Based on the outcomes of this step, first-order codes were abstracted into higher-order constructs.

The fifth step involved analysing the relationships between the codes. Current studies mainly reflect on ‘high-power distance’ and ‘local cultural norms and values’ as the main reasons for adoption failure at the macro-level. Therefore, this step was started by distinguishing between the roles actors integrate and the sources of authority (identified in step four) that are cognitively invoked during the implementation of the process. For instance, in case firms operating in South Korea, appraisers integrate between organisational roles (as performance appraisers) with a hierarchal authority structure legitimised by bureaucracy; roles that are societal (e.g., age-ascribed seniority); and others that are interpersonal (informed by friendship ties embodied by *yongo*, *haykon*, and *jul*). Authority for societal role sets in non-western contexts are also structured hierarchically and are legitimised by regionally-accepted value systems such as the Confucian in east Asia and Islam in the Middle East; nonetheless, authority for interpersonal roles is highly unstructured and legitimised by interpersonal expectations. However, following the advice of Thornton et al. (2012), authority or power as constructs are not sufficient to explain failure or change in reproducing institutions; therefore, an analysis to the relationships between codes was further required to establish the underlying mechanisms for how authority is mobilised at the micro-level leading to PA adoption failure.

The researcher started looking into how actors manage to navigate the multiple and conflicting expectations that are associated with their roles at the micro-level. 38 incidents of breaking the institutionalised 'appraiser' role expectations were extracted from the cases and the similarities and differences between the patterns were analysed. Two distinct patterns of role breach were identified by the researcher, which were mainly traced to appraisers' role integration between (non)personal and societal role expectations. For instance, the Middle Eastern cases reflect the paternalistic role in PA that is expected in such society and therefore appraisers 'do not rate employees negatively', 'do not provide formal feedback to employees', 'place high regard to affect in relationships', 'treat employees similarly in rankings' and 'avoid talking about career progression opportunities with employees'. This pattern shows integration between organisational and societal roles.

By further iteration with role theory, the two patterns of role integration were clustered in terms of private (between actors with interpersonal relationships) and public (between actors bound only with acquaintanceship) role expectations. Following that, and with the help of the visual maps, the researcher started to trace which pattern was salient under which situational cues within each case and across cases in order to make sense of the influence of role integration, multiple role expectations, and the cultivated authority on PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts. This step revealed more simplified and abstract constructs for the first-order codes, second-order themes, and third-order aggregated dimensions (see Gioia et al., 2013). Two aggregated dimensions were identified which represented competing micro-level adoption and replication failure processes. Each process can be described through a sequential pattern between private and public role cueing mechanisms.

Finally, it is important to note that in analysing the data abductively, the coding process itself is not sufficient to produce a theory without an 'uncodifiable creative leap' (Habersang et al., 2019; Smets et al.; 2015, Suddaby, 2006). Throughout the analysis, the researcher referred to various theories and created several abstract process models that illustrated the unifying themes of PA adoption failure in non-western contexts and reflecting upon them in relation to the theories consulted. Therefore, theory building in this chapter was informed by the reflexive mode (Habersang et al., 2019; Alvesson and Karreman, 2011). In this regard, Habersang et al. (2019) state that this mode is useful in "identifying emerging themes and categories from the data, using these insights as a recourse to challenge tentative theoretical frameworks, and reflecting them with the existing literature" (p. 32). Figure (6) below illustrates the emerging structure of the data (Gioia et al., 2013).

Figure 6: Data structure for chapter four

First order empirical observations	Second order codes		Third order theoretical constructs
	Macro-level	Micro-level	
Formal PA process – Align employees' goals with organisational strategy -objective and subjective goals. – Conduct performance feedback and develop employee performance. – Link rewards and career progression opportunities to individual performance.		Adoption and replication of formal PA process	Selective adoption and replication of PA processes
Actual replicated PA process – Ambiguity in goal setting – high subjectivity. – Lack of formal development opportunities. – Subjective performance assessment criteria. – Emphasis on groups over individuals in performance. – Precedence of informal criteria for rewarding and career progression. – Actors avoid confrontation. – Appraisees' incorporate informal goals (e.g., saving face, loyalty to manager) – Employees with informal relationships are appraised preferentially.		Adoption and replication of informal PA process	
Preconditions to PA adoption failure in non-western contexts: contextual factors – Authority for societal roles is hierarchically structured. – Authority for organisational roles is hierarchically structured. – Authoritative exercise of supervision – societal roles (ascribed). – Soft exercise of supervision – interpersonal roles (achieved). – Authority is legitimised by bureaucratic logic. – Authority is legitimised by regionally-accepted value systems. – Sources of collectivist identity.	Complex institutional configurations in non-western contexts – complementary sources of (amplified) authority and legitimacy, and competing sources of identity	Increased role movement autonomy for appraisers	Multiple situational cues for appraisers
Preconditions to PA adoption failure in non-western contexts: multiple role expectations – Interpersonal role expectations in PA. – Societal role expectations in PA. – Organisational role expectations in PA.		Multiple role expectations for appraisers and appraisees	
Pressures for role integration – Appraisers' role breach. – Private role expectations. – Public role expectations. – Coupling between organisational roles and societal roles. – Coupling between interpersonal and organisational roles.		Appraisers role integration	

4.4 Findings

Following Langley et al. (2013), this section presents a thick narrative of how role integration and multiple role expectations influence PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts. For process theory building, the narrative "identifies the plot or generative mechanism at work" (Langley et al., 2013: 9). Therefore first, this study describes the preconditions that influenced PA adoption failure at the macro and micro-levels by first unpacking the institutional complexity in non-western contexts at the macro-level with a focus on the sources of authority and identity in the institutional logics of community and HRM bureaucracy, then it unpacks the preconditions at the micro-level by reflecting on how the cultural norms and material symbols in each logic, particularly sources of authority and identity, contribute to multiple role expectations, and then explains how roles influence the course of PA adoption at the micro-level. The explanations of the findings are accompanied by a process model constructed by the researcher in Figure (7) below and will be referred to whenever is appropriate.

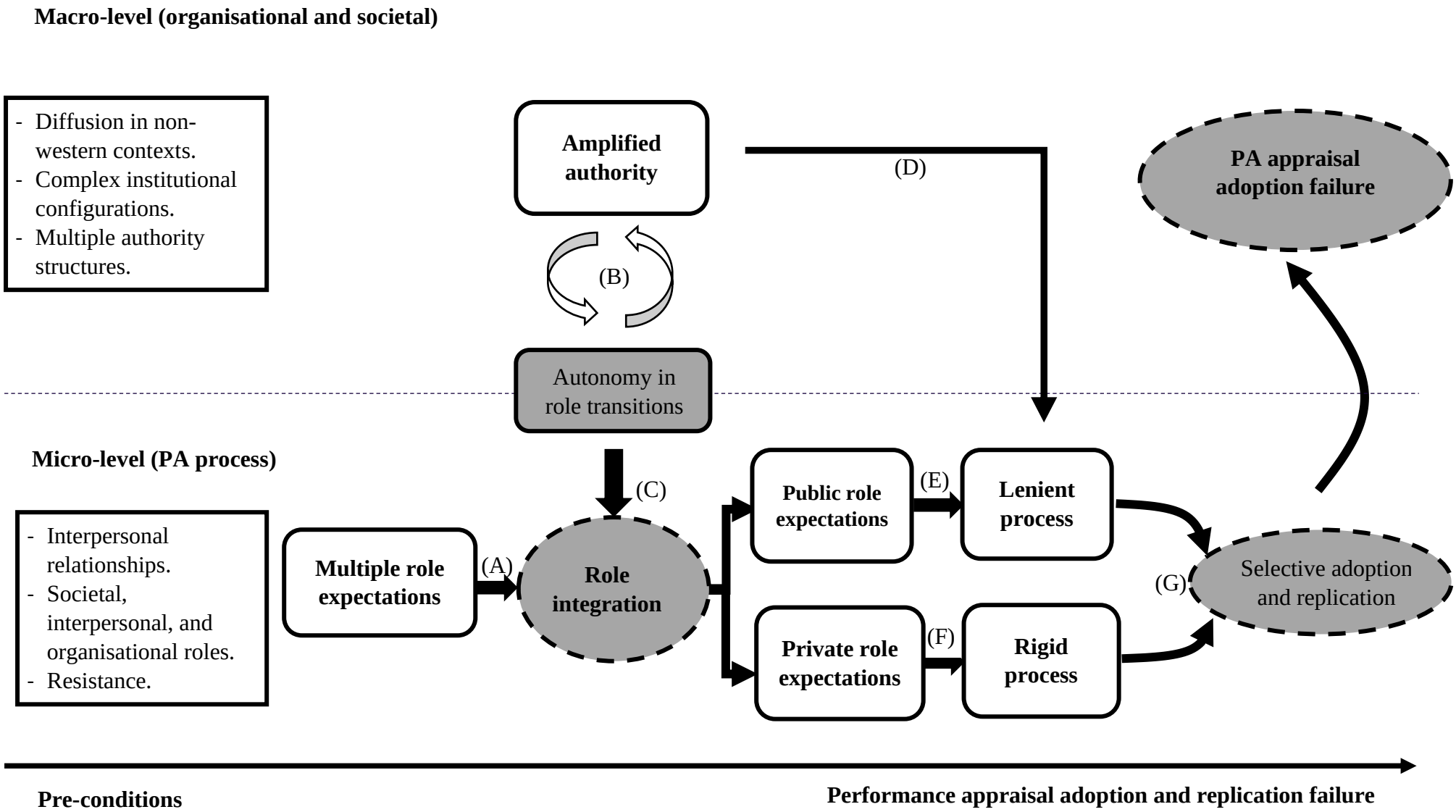
4.4.1 Unpacking the institutional complexity in non-western contexts: macro-level pre-conditions

In order to understand adoption failure, it is first important to make sense of the institutional elements that are related to the adopted PA template (i.e., international PA), as well as the adopting context. The cases consist of two types of organisational nationalities, local and multinational.

Therefore, the adoption of PA is either coerced by western headquarters for multinational subsidiaries, or because of normative pressures for local organisations by reforms imposed by upper management. Nonetheless, both western and global PA practices are rooted in the western bureaucratic tradition, which emphasises the appraisal of performance individually. However, the analysis revealed multiple institutional orders that compete with certain norms and are complementary with others, each having different implications for PA adoption.

First, two sources of authority in the adopted PA process are legitimised by the HRM bureaucratic logic (from pressures for isomorphism) and regional community logic (from pressures of regionally-accepted value systems). This means that ceremonial adoption of PA at the micro-level does not disable the source of authority actors obtain from HRM bureaucracy, since loose coupling theory (see Orton and Weick, 1990) argues that actors are

Figure 7: Process model of how role integration influences PA adoption and replication failure



able to couple and decouple between institutional norms even when these are adopted ceremonially and decoupled at the macro-level. This is mainly evident by how actors position themselves in cases in relation to the organisational hierarchal structure, as often they refer to themselves in terms of 'supervisor' and 'subordinate', such as "her Japanese immediate supervisor" (Vo and Stanton, 2011: 3520). This is illustrated by the quote below from the Chinese context, which explains how appraisers are able to source the bureaucratic authority from the adopted formal PA.

> "The new appraisal system provides direction to us on how to make a proper evaluation for each employee ... now I can refuse to benefit those employees who have *guanxi* [within the bank] and I can use the new regulations as a good reason to explain my decision" (Gu and Nolan, 2017: 1443).

However, upon close inspection of the authority actors derive from regional community logic, the study finds that the institutional configurations in non-western contexts are more complex than currently conceptualised. By tracing the authority of regional community logic to its source, we can see that it derives its legitimacy from a hybrid and layered combination of religious and family logics besides the community. In the cases studied, the internalised cultural values that the authors and case actors often refer to illustrate the deep and layered authority structure that are first legitimised by regionally-accepted value systems, such as religions or philosophical teachings, which emphasise respect to hierarchy and loyalty.

> "Korea is known as a country in which Confucian ethics are strongly pronounced. Hence, hierarchical relationships in a family-like sense are regarded as a natural social order, and loyalty, moral discipline, and interpersonal relationships are held in high regard" (Horak and Yang, 2019).

> "… in the MENA region through how the managers' responsibility toward their employees is related to their fear of a [God] who is controlling them as well as to their belongingness to the "Umma"—the community that reflects the importance of loyalty to the in-group which is more important than productivity" (Yahiaoui et al., 2021: 10).

This source of legitimacy to hierarchal authority extends further to family logic.

> "…the children address parents differently from others. In the US people address each other simply with 'you,' but in Korea we have different forms of addressing different people in order to show respect" (Horak and Yang, 2019: 1430).

> "…employees, who have been in PK for a long time, talked about "family atmosphere"" (Uddin et al., 2021: 379)

Therefore, the hierarchal authority structure in PA is not just limited to the HRM bureaucratic logic, but transcends the boundaries of multiple logics in non-western contexts and is therefore amplified.

This perspective is important for PA adoption failure because it shows that the high-power distance between hierarchies in non-western contexts is composed of multiple authorities that are legitimised by multiple institutional orders namely: family, religion and community (see appendix C for more details on the cultural norms of these logics). This multiple and amplified authority in PA disrupts the structural power dynamics between the appraiser and appraisee in organisations, as it places the latter in a more powerless and submissive position.

> "We [subordinates] will do what we are told to do. It is hard to say that you do not feel comfortable with this or that objective" (Vo and Stanton, 2011: 3521).

While the multiple authority structures that actors blend from different institutional orders seem to be complementary between the one associated with the organisation and the ones imposed by regional-accepted values systems in non-western contexts, as they both emphasise a hierarchal top-down flow to authority, the way actors identify in non-western contexts seems to be in contradiction with the sources of identity prescribed by the western bureaucratic logic and thus becomes a primary reason to resist PA adoption at the micro-level. The action scripts and performance expectation templates in the transferred PA process mainly identify with western Weberian bureaucracy, which emphasises the segregation of the personal and the organisational. This identity mainly breeds performance expectations from actors' structured roles that relate to and prioritise the accomplishment of overall organisational tasks, while other performance expectations become secondary. On the other hand, in non-western contexts individuals identify more in a collectivist way, which provides "*insufficient performance differentiations among employees, the phenomenon of the "small rice pot" (i.e., everybody in the team shares from the same pot)"* (Cooke and Huang, 2011: 853). Moreover, norms related to *wasta* in the Middle East, *guanxi* in China, and *yongo*, *haykon*, and *jul* lines of loyalty in Korea are rooted in the reciprocation of informal social exchanges based on expectations of loyalty, trust, and returned favours between individuals in organisations. For instance, in China *"employees' guanxi connections, still influenced the process"* (Gu and Nolan, 2017: 1441), and in Korea *"jul, or the informal relationship that one establishes with one's superior, is important"* (Horak and Yang, 2019).

This source of identification is also legitimised by the internalised regionally-accepted value systems that place identification and belonging to informal groups over identification and belonging to the formal organisations, as discussed above. Therefore, identification with informal groups breeds multiple performance expectations, some of which are structured (by organisations) and some unstructured (by informal group memberships).

To summarise, organisations in non-western contexts are composed of complex institutional configurations that involve the blending of multiple institutional logics with complementary sources of authority and competing sources of identity. A primary source of legitimacy in non-western cultures are religious and philosophical teachings. Cultural symbols and material practices from regionally-accepted value systems transcend the boundaries of multiple institutional orders (family, religion, community) and provide actors with multiple sources of authority throughout the process of PA adoption and replication. They further influence the dynamics of how actors arrange their identification priorities in relation to informal group memberships and the formal organisation, which in turn influence how actors have multiple and complex expectations of one another. Next an identification on how authority and identity translate into role occupancy and role integration at the micro-level is provided.

4.4.2 Multiple role expectations in non-western contexts: preconditions for role integration at the micro-level

As indicated above, one important distinction between western and non-western contexts is that actors identify differently in organisations, which breeds different expectations for the roles non-western actors occupy. Some of these expectations are related to how roles are formally structured and others to roles that are not formally structured (organisational and non-organisational), as explained in the following section.

Formal organisational roles. These are the typical roles that are prescribed by the formal organisation and encoded in the transferred template, namely appraiser and appraisee. The prescribed performance expectations of the formal appraiser role throughout the implementation of PA include helping appraisees identify their formal goals; providing appraisees with feedback; developing their performance; assessing their performance objectively and subjectively; ranking and rating employees based on their individual performance; and communicating such information to employees transparently. The authority structure in organisational roles is formal and top down. On the other hand, appraisees are expected to set annual goals and objectives in line with company strategy; meet with their

supervisors to receive (in)formal performance feedback; develop their performance; and meet with supervisors for an annual performance assessment interview.

Societal roles. Societal roles are structured and legitimised by the regionally-accepted value systems and involve role expectations related to ascribed identities, such as those associated with age: *"Seniority is important in every sphere of life…Without a certain age…nothing moves here"* (Horak and Yang, 2019: 1430) and kinship relationships:

> "Managers here are like fathers who know everything. We do not give specific promises because we cannot change our words afterward. Our image is jeopardized" (Yahiaoui et al., 2021: 8).

Most importantly, younger employees are expected to respect the authority of senior appraisers; for instance, these are *"aspects of Vietnamese culture such as respect for authority and acceptance of hierarchical orders"* (Vo and Stanton, 2011: 3521). Moreover, employees are expected to passively accept performance appraisers' communications and decisions throughout the process and its outcomes: *"it is a junior's task to obey and support the senior"* (Horak and Yang, 2019: 1440) and *"performance appraisals were conducted strictly top-down and the supervisors' decisions were considered as final"* (Vo and Stanton, 2011: 3521). Such societal structured role expectations can be seen in Middle Eastern and East Asian contexts; however, the former is softer than the latter. The societal roles that are prescribed in Middle Eastern cases blend this hierarchy and respect for authority with paternal roles, which indicates that role expectations between managers and employees softer than those in East Asian cases, even to the extent of finding jobs for terminated employees,

> "It's very important to keep good relationships with our employees even after they leave the company" (Yahiaoui et al., 2021: 9).

Interpersonal roles. Distinctively, interpersonal roles are highly unstructured and the expectations they hold derive from the rights and obligations that actors owe to each other from the types of interpersonal relationship they share. In the Middle East, for instance, *"in the tradition of wasta, local managers appeared to value more the loyalty of their employees toward them"* (Yahiaoui et al., 2021: 8). Interpersonal roles are the most salient, since traditionally the cases are located in collectivist contexts where there is a high emphasis on group membership and informal relationships. The legitimacy of such roles stem from group membership, which is explicitly expressed in terms of *wasta* in the Middle East, *guanxi* in China, and *yongo, haykon*, and *jul* lines of loyalty in South Korea. They derive their expectations from factors specific to the relationships, such as maintaining loyalty and trust, as

indicated above. Such expectations give precedence to informal relationships over formal organisational ones. On the other hand, not all organisational actors enjoy the status of interpersonal relationships; some only share acquaintanceships, which reverts role expectations to being structured (i.e., only based on organisational and societal roles). With reference to Biddle (1979) on the types of expectations that bind individual actors' roles, this study terms the expectations that bind roles with interpersonal relationships as *private role expectations* to denote their exclusivity to role occupants, and those that bind acquaintanceship roles as *public role expectations.*

As a result, the actual roles actors occupy throughout enacting the PA process in non-western cultures are composed of multiple organisational and non-organisational role expectations, which put pressure on actors to integrate between different roles in order to manage the multiple and conflicting demands of different role expectations as is clearly illustrated in path A in Figure (7), which represents a process model for how role integration influences PA adoption and replication failure. This means that the boundary between the abovementioned roles become blurred and confused, but at the same time it makes it easier for actors to transition between multiple roles in order to satisfy different expectations (Ashforth, 2000). This is a salient pattern of role integration in the cases, as both appraisers and appraisees draw from the performance expectations that combine the multiple roles they occupy. For instance, in South Korea managers integrate societal and appraiser roles, while in the Middle East managers tend to integrate paternal and appraiser roles (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019).

4.4.3 Multiple role expectations and selective replications of performance appraisal

The abovementioned macro and micro-level preconditions for adopting PA in non-western contexts reveal two distinct patterns of adoption and replication at the micro-level, one that relates to private role expectations and the other associated with public ones. The pressures on actors to integrate roles due to multiple expectations require further explanation in relation to how they move between these roles, and since the boundaries between them are blurred, it is important to understand which roles becomes salient and in which situations.

As demonstrated above in the preconditions, there are multiple authority structures that actors are able to blend and include in the process from the complex institutional configurations in non-western contexts which amplify this authority. This amplified authority grants appraisers more autonomy to transition between their integrated roles (path B in Figure 7). In this case, the autonomy appraisers enjoy stems from other actors and appraisees not questioning their

actions, which primarily derives from societal role expectations. This gives appraisers more autonomy to transition between their integrated roles (path C and D in Figure 7), which greatly influences the course of PA adoption and replication at the micro-level. By extension, in this process they gain control over the saliency of the roles they occupy in different situations. By tracing which role is salient under which situational cue, it becomes apparent that *private* and *public* role expectations are the situational cues that influence the saliency of the occupied role (i.e., which role to exhibit in the appraising process).

Private role expectations. There are patterns of behaviours that show how private role expectations influence the course of PA adoption at the micro-level. Private roles (such as friendships) are unstructured and derive their expectations from owing rights and obligations that are specific to individuals. To this end, the role that appraisees choose to be most salient is the interpersonal one, which involves replicating a lenient PA process that favours the expectations of interpersonal roles. From this perspective, those who are connected with interpersonal relationships (e.g., *wasta, guanxi, and yongo*) in organisations are appraised more favourably. For instance, case organisations operating in the Middle East indicate that on behalf of employees who have *wasta* but perform less well than expected, managers *"negotiate with HR on negative appraisals and try to reach a consensus by giving another chance to the employee"* and by *"giving even very long periods to employees to ameliorate their performance."* (Yahiaoui et al., 2021: 9). Therefore, the role expectations that stem from interpersonal relationships (i.e., from *wasta*) interrupt the exclusivity and dominance (Ashforth, 2000) of the ideal appraiser role and become more salient in the situation.

Similarly, cases for organisations operating in China, South Korea, and Vietnam also corroborate how interpersonal relationships interrupt the exclusivity and dominance of the formal organisational appraiser role (the ideal role). For instance, in cases operating in China *"… were clear indicators that preferential treatment, based on employees' guanxi connections, still influenced the process"*, which traditionally implies that *"If the employee had a good guanxi with the supervisor, for example he gave gifts to the supervisor on occasions, the supervisor would provide a good performance evaluation in exchange"* (Gu and Nolan, 2017: 1441). Similarly, in relation to the *jul* lines of loyalty in Korea *"It is observed that, once a superior is promoted, members of the jul line move up in the corporate hierarchy as well"* (Horak and Yang, 2019: 1435), and in Vietnam, Japanese appraisers *"do have their favourites"* and that *"it was not unusual that they [Japanese managers] upgraded or downgraded the ranking significantly, based on their personal view of the employee"* (Vo and Stanton, 2011:

3521). These examples show that the existence of private role expectations that are derived from interpersonal relationships makes these the situational cues that influence the primacy and saliency of interpersonal roles during the process. Such saliency creates different role dynamics, which involve owing personal unstructured rights and obligations to one another, which in turn puts pressure on actors to replicate a more lenient PA process that favours those involved in the relationship (path E in Figure 7).

Public role expectations. Another competing pattern of behaviours emerged in relation to role expectations between actors with no interpersonal relationships, which also influenced the course of adopting and replicating a competing PA process based on acquaintanceship expectations. Acquaintanceships refer to work colleagues who are bound to an organisational relationship but are not as close as friends are, which in non-western contexts reflects role expectations such as those held for strangers (Biddle, 1979). In contrast to private role expectations, public ones influence the saliency of roles that are highly structured, with a top-down authority flow. For instance, the saliency of the stranger role is highly evident in Korea:

> "Korean society strongly distinguishes between in-group and out-group members…Outside the boundary, on the contrary, people are treated as "non-persons" and there can be discrimination and even hostility." (Horak and Yang, 2019: 1430).

Similarly, in case organisations operating in China, appraisees who felt that they belonged to the wrong group were dissatisfied with being treated authoritatively:

> "I think the employees in their workgroup are lucky. However, with my supervisor…He still does what he did before in appraisals" (Gu and Nolan, 2017: 1443).

As such, the role that appraisers choose during the PA process as the most salient is that of acquaintanceship, which mostly entails mobilising unquestioned authority against appraisees. In other words, public role expectations are exhibited when individuals are strangers, which in the non-western context entails that actors are only bound by organisational and societal roles where 'submission to supervisor' is the main role expectation from the appraisee. To this end, appraisers replicate a PA process that is more rigid, which disadvantages employees since rewards become expensed in favour of private role expectations. For instance, Japanese appraisers in Vietnam offered *"no formal career development pathways"* to their employees, and *"had the final say in ranking subordinates"* (Vo and Stanton, 2011: 3521), although as indicated above in the private role expectations section, the same Japanese managers also had their favourites who were appraised more leniently. Similarly, in South Korea, those who did

not have interpersonal relationships had to wait longer to receive favourable PA outcomes such as promotion:

> "Our employees expect to be promoted every three to four years. There is less a sense for individual performance than for making no mistakes and serving the leader" (Horak and Yang, 2019: 1433).

However, significantly, in the same context such PA outcomes are accelerated for actors who are embedded in interpersonal relationships: *"However, firm internal yongo still works; if people have certain jul [Korean for 'line'] in big Korean firms, they may get promoted once their senior they are loyal to gets promoted too."* These examples show that when personal relationships are absent, 'public role expectations' become the situational cue that influences the saliency of the acquaintance (or stranger) role during the enactment of the process and replicating a more rigid PA process (path F in Figure 7) that disadvantages appraisees by, for example, downgrading ratings or making them wait several more years for promotion.

To conclude, and as demonstrated in Figure (7), in non-western contexts there are complex institutional configurations with equally complicated authority structures that inform the actual roles involved in PA, as well as different identifications, which breed multiple role expectations for appraisers and appraisees at the micro-level. Different identification, multiple authority structures, and multiple role expectations translate into role integration and autonomy to move between these roles at the micro-level. Such expectations put pressure on actors to integrate between the different roles in order to manage the competing demands of role expectations. In addition, with multiple sources of authority, appraisers gain more autonomy to transition between integrated roles and choose which is salient and when. The saliency of the role occupied is determined by the situational cues of private and public role expectations; in the former, appraisers mobilise their strengthened authority to replicate a lenient process that favours appraisees with interpersonal relationships. Whereas in public role expectations, they choose the stranger role to be salient and mobilise their authority against appraisees. Consequently, resulting in selective adoption and replication of PA (path G in Figure 7).

4.5 Discussion

The study in this chapter was motivated by the limited understanding we have on how PA fails to be adopted as intended in non-western contexts in particular, and because of the lack of qualitative meta-analysis studies in the PA literature in general. By moving away from normative institutional analysis that relies on the global-local dialogue and the traditional

assumptions of neo-institutional theory (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Kang and Shen, 2016), this qualitative meta-synthesis assimilates the findings of empirical qualitative case studies on PA adoption and replication failure in light of institutional logics and roles theories, which resulted in two major findings.

First, the qualitative meta-synthesis found that PA was selectively adopted and replicated at the micro-level, based on the expectations actors hold of the multiple roles they occupy. By doing so, the study highlights how ceremonial adoptions are not simply the result of incompatible cultural norms and values, but also that of actors taking advantage of multiple competing logics to advance their self-seeking goals and navigate complex role expectations. Second, the study uncovers integrating roles as the underlying mechanism for PA selective adoption and replication at the micro-level and illustrates how multiple role expectations, and the saliency of different roles influence the selective adoption and replication of two different PA processes, lenient and rigid ones, which in turn results in macro-level adoption failure (i.e., ceremonial adoption). Hence, this illustrates that PA is adopted and replicated selectively, depending on private and public role expectations. These findings and their implications are discussed in more detail next.

4.5.1 From ceremonial adoption to selective adoption of PA: role integration in non-western contexts

By focusing on cases of PA adoption failure in non-western contexts, the study findings show the extent to which the successful adoption of PA and global convergence between practices in non-western contexts in general is difficult to achieve. This is primarily due to the tendency for actors to integrate between multiple roles throughout enacting PA which influences selective adoption and replication of heterogenous processes at the micro-level. Contrary to previous studies that overlook societal and personal expectations as an integral part of the appraiser's role in non-western contexts, this study incorporates these expectations in the actual roles that actors occupy in PA. Therefore, the findings show how these local cultural and interpersonal expectations become part of adopting and replicating international PA at the micro-level. The study highlights role integration as the underlying mechanism behind how non-western actors integrate different structured (e.g., organisational) and unstructured (e.g., interpersonal) roles while they are enacting the process of PA and how this mechanism results in selective adoption and replication of the process depending on the relationship between the appraiser and the appraisee. As such, the findings bring us closer to how the process is actually

adopted in non-western contexts by considering cultural norms and actors' personal dispositions as part of the process.

Traditionally, International PA studies examine to what extent locally adopted practices resemble the global one which is mainly derived from western contexts, the United States in particular (DiNisi et al., 2021; Gooderham et al., 2019). These studies are based on the assumption of isomorphism in neo-institutional theory which entails that "forces of globalisation will create management practices that become increasingly similar as a result of increased use around the world of very similar technologies and communication" (Brewster and Haak-Saheem, 2020: 22). From this perspective, when the enactment of local PA fails to resemble in essence the global or western one, scholars mainly conclude ceremonial adoption to PA, which indicates surface-level adoption at the organisational level for legitimacy reasons (Townley, 1997). In this respect, studies in non-western contexts follow this tradition and mainly conclude with behaviours that explain adoption at the macro-level such as when Yahiaoui et al. (2021: 10) concluded that cultural differences between home and host context "result in ceremonial rather than active adoption" or when Gu and Nolan (2017: 1445) concluded "evidence of divergence" to illustrate adoption failure in state owned banks, and Vo and Stanton (2011) stating that adopting international PA was unsuccessful for Japanese MNCs in Vietnam.

These are more of descriptions on how the process was adopted rather than explanations, and beyond citing non-western cultural differences as the main reason for the adoption behaviour, they fall short from illuminating the interplay between these cultural norms and actors' agency that leads to adoption and replication failure. Moreover, the literature on international PA recognises that convergence and standardisation of PA practices is only possible across leading and developed nations whereas in other nations, particularly developing and non-western ones, the overwhelming feature is localisation and divergence for the practice (Gooderham et al., 2019).

Therefore, if we keep examining the adoption of PA in non-western contexts using the traditional way of active comparisons between western and non-western cultures, we would only be repeating insights that could be summarised in divergence and localisation when PA fails to be adopted as intended (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2017; Kang and Shen, 2016) while overlooking mechanisms that contribute to such divergence or at best, looking for organisational factors such as ownership structure (Gu and Nolan, 2017) or

corporate culture (Vo and Stanton, 2011) to address factors that could help global PA convergence and standardisation. This qualitative knowledge synthesis, on the other hand, synthesised how actors' roles contribute to PA adoption failure at the micro-level and uncovered a more dynamic and differentiated nature to adoption that is captured by 'selective adoption and replication' which captures a more idiosyncratic and subjective way for adoption that moves beyond the singular descriptions of ceremonial adoption, ineffectiveness, failure, or divergence. By doing so, this knowledge synthesis contributes a more refined understanding to PA adoption failure not as a process that actors perceive as "inefficient and of little value" (Kostova and Roth, 2002: 220) to the organisation which primarily underlie the singular descriptions that scholars often draw from, but a social currency that appraisers and appraisees highly value and use to maintain personal expectations and to reciprocate social favours as illustrated in the findings.

This social currency perspective is illustrated in what role integration achieves in the process. PA is not simply enacted in organisations, as the findings of this study indicate, but its social sphere extends to the societal level in non-western contexts. This is mainly because actors tend to have multiple identities and role expectations that are informed by the broader societal context in which they are embedded (Biddle, 1979). The findings show that there are ascribed (e.g., societal) and achieved (e.g., interpersonal and organisational) role expectations that put pressure on actors to integrate different roles in order to navigate multiple and conflicting role expectations.

More importantly, the study highlights private and public role expectations to be the situational cues that influence the saliency of one role over another in different situations. This perspective shows the complexity of embedding a social process that involves rewarding and sanctioning employees in social contexts (Murphy, 2020, Levy and Williams, 2004). This is particularly important, because naturally when institutional symbols (e.g., from HRM bureaucracy and community logics) and people mix, they trigger the necessity for social categorisation within individuals, which includes defining their roles in relation to other individuals within the organisational context and, crucially, to which authority figure actors should be responding (Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013; Biddle, 1979). In this regard, the findings show that interpersonal relationships and acquaintanceships define the situation to a great extent, making private and public role expectations the main situational cues that privilege one role (i.e., a friend or a stranger) over another (i.e., the appraiser). Thornton et al. (2012), Ashforth (2000)

and McCall and Simmons (1978) argue in this regard that the social categorisation process helps actors to cue different identities for relevant situations and that:

> "Roles and other social identities can be arrayed [in a] *hierarchy of situational relevance*, where situational relevance is defined as the degree to which a given identity is socially appropriate to a given situation (i.e. a specific context, setting, or encounter). By *socially appropriate*…the identity would be considered by others to be legitimately applicable to the situation" (Ashforth, 2000: 32, italics in original).

In this case, the findings show that interpersonal and acquaintanceship roles are integrated and arrayed with that of the appraisers and they are triggered by the situational cues of private and public role expectations. The former is unstructured and gives primacy to interpersonal rights and obligations between individuals (Biddle, 1979) which relate, for example, to personal loyalty and trust (Yahiaoui et al., 2021, Horak and Yang, 2019). To this end, appraisers reciprocate with organisational rewards (i.e., incentives and outcomes) and therefore selectively replicate a lenient process that maintains interpersonal role expectations. Public role expectations, on the other hand, are the complete opposite and are triggered when actors are not bound to a personal relationship, thus cueing the acquaintanceship role, which gives primacy to the rights and obligations owed to strangers that relate to mistrust and disloyalty. This in turn is reciprocated by the appraiser with sanctions or loss of rewards through the replication of a more rigid PA process that disadvantages appraisees. This perspective explains how the PA process is operationalised as a social currency, for holding rewards and sanctions, through which rewards are reciprocated between individuals with private role expectations and loss of rewards or sanctions are reciprocated between individuals with public role expectations within the same organisation.

It was important to explain PA adoption and replication failure in non-western contexts through the lens of roles. First, they show how macro-level adoption failure and ceremonial adoption (Kostova and Roth, 2002) are in fact actors' purposeful efforts to navigate the competing demands of multiple structured and unstructured role expectations which result in selective adoption and replication of two competing and heterogenous processes at the micro-level, and therefore provides the international PA a nuanced understanding of how actors' behaviours at this level contribute to process adoption failure. This perspective emphasises how actors' personal interests and self-seeking behaviours are brought into the process and therefore revises our understanding of adoption failure, not as the absence of actively enacting to the formal process by the adopting organisation, but as an effortful replication (D'Adderio, 2014) of multiple PA process in which actors help themselves to navigate the multiple demands of

societal, organisational, and interpersonal role expectations. With these findings, this study contributes to the international PA scholarship the mechanism of integrating roles that results in selective adoption and replication to PA adoption in non-western contexts which results in PA failure at the organisational level (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Kang and Shen, 2016; Vo and Stanton, 2011).

4.5.2 Organisationally institutionalised versus actual roles in PA

Another important distinction that this study contributes to the existing international PA literature is that between institutionalised and actual roles. Segregating institutionalised from actual roles limits our understanding of how the process is actually replicated at the micro-level and therefore prevents us from making recommendations for successful PA adoption in non-western contexts outside the calls for hybridising practices to fit these contexts (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019). This is an important distinction to pay empirical attention to because as the findings illustrate, considering actors' actual roles provides a much clearer and realistic picture of how they actually replicate the process. They shed light on how adoption and replication is associated with a complex web of private and public expectations (organisational, societal, and personal) entwined in the actual integrated roles that actors occupy.

Murphy (2020: 2) argues that "a common feature in virtually all performance appraisal and performance management systems that contributes substantially to their failure—that is, they are built around subjective evaluations of job performance." In this respect, if we continue to overlook how behaviours and expectations associated with actual roles play out during the adoption and replication of PA processes, we will not be able to unpack how subjectivity shapes these (Murphy, 2020; Murphy et al., 2018). By distinguishing between institutionalised and actual roles, and by uncovering sociological mechanisms at the micro-level that influence the shaping of the process, as done in this study, we can actually start to understand how subjectivity influences PA in general and its tendency to fail in non-western contexts in particular.

4.6 Practical recommendations, avenues for future research, and study limitations

The study suggests the following avenues for future research and recommendations for scholars and practitioners. First, to understand how PA fails, we need to consider how actors incorporate multiple role expectations during the replication process. To do so, it is necessary to move

away from the global-local dialogue and look for convergent or divergent behaviours, with more studies examining how actors' behaviours replicate PA at the micro-level. Overlooking actors' mindful agency, interests, and self-seeking behaviours could be remedied by adopting more openly from practice and process perspectives. There are currently efforts being made to incorporate such perspectives in the human resources and management accounting fields, but they remain small-scale and mainly focused on Latour's actor network theory (ANT) (e.g., Lounsbury, 2008; Gendron et al., 2007; Vickers and Fox, 2010). However, beyond ANT, there are several other theoretical perspectives that provide similar approaches to understanding PA replication, such as sensemaking (Maitlis, 2005); routine dynamics (Feldman and Pentland, 2003); and roles (Ashforth, 2000), as considered in this study.

These perspectives pay more attention to "the notion of *performativity* to highlight how there is always a good deal of natural practice variety that results from the idiosyncratic performances of actors as they enact a particular practice" (Lounsbury, 2008: 365, italics in original). The PA literature in general and its international scholarship in particular will benefit greatly from the inclusion of practice and process perspectives in future studies, as they enable us to uncover underlying mechanisms through which we can begin to understand how and why the process fails to be replicated in line with the expectations of scholars and organisations. Moreover, as roles are central to the success and failure of the process, we need more studies that incorporate some of the consequences of role integration and multiple role expectations, such as role conflict, role ambiguity (Fried et al., 1998; Keeley, 1977), and role clarity (e.g., Whitaker et al., 2007; Cäker and Siverbo, 2018).

Second, by uncovering role integration, situationally cueing private and public roles as well as distinguishing between institutionalised and actual roles, it is recommended that international PA scholars and practitioners alike should not simply focus on designing a process with organisationally institutionalised roles, but should also actively consider designing a process that could eliminate or minimise actors' role integration efforts, since they contribute greatly to PA adoption and replication failure. Although this is beyond the scope of this study, several others have reflected on the successful adoption of the PA process in different contexts from which we could learn. Upon close inspection of these studies, it appears that socialisation (DiMaggio, 1988) between home and host country actors and the diffusion of the home country's corporate culture in host context subsidiaries contribute greatly to preventing actors from integrating multiple roles, resulting in them mainly occupying organisational institutionalised roles, hence leading to successful adoption. Socialisation between actors in

home and host contexts appears in different case studies (e.g., Gu and Nolan, 2017; Mellahi et al., 2016; Vo and Stanton, 2011). Concerning socialisation, Mellahi et al. (2016) argue for the importance of involving actors from the home country at the early stages of adoption and maintaining subsequent formal and informal communication between them in order to maintain the successful application of the process. They state that "[MNCs] use expatriates strategically when they deem it necessary and they occasionally assign HQ staff to subsidiaries to facilitate the diffusion of values and procedures" (p. 894).

Moreover, in the same studies that reflected on successful adoption, corporate culture was also a distinguished construct that led to the interruption of role integration efforts. For example, in the case of adopting European-designed PA in foreign banks in China, Gu and Nolan (2017) reflect on how diffusing the home corporate culture into the host organisations interrupts role integration efforts. They note that such foreign corporate culture made it uncommon "for employees to have informal interactions with their supervisors, such as having dinner together or engaging in gift-giving. This means that there is no real opportunity for employees to try and develop *guanxi* with supervisors" (p. 1444). The findings in Gu and Nolan study and others (e.g., Vo and Stanton, 2011) show that diffusing corporate culture can interrupt role integration efforts. It seems that the institutional knowledge that is transferred by expatriates concerns role segregation, a valuable area of knowledge. Therefore, it is recommended that scholars and practitioners turn their attention to further understanding how such mechanisms (i.e., socialisation and diffusion of home country culture) contribute to the interruption of role integration efforts and result in successful adoption of PA.

Regarding the study limitations, this research is a qualitative meta-synthesis of case studies and offers valuable views on the importance of roles in adopting and replicating PA at the micro-level. Therefore, it would be useful if these findings were replicated in organisational empirical settings using larger samples. For example, the findings of this study rely mostly on how scholars have interpreted the process and the handful of direct quotes they used to support their interpretations. However, cutting across these qualitative case studies and interpreting their findings from a different theoretical lens provide valuable insights that could be tested in future studies. Moreover, in relation to the sample, only studies from journal outlets ranked three and above using the ABS rankings were included; therefore, the qualitative meta-synthesis is not exhaustive and reflective of all the qualitative studies in the international PA literature. Finally, although studies in the literature clearly differentiate between the cultural norms in non-western contexts, such as *wasta*, *guanxi*, and *yongo* ties, in this study they are assumed to have similar

impact on the process. Nonetheless, if we look closely at these, they display several differences and their underpinning assumptions are informed by different regional-accepted value systems, so should be examined in more depth in light of their uniqueness to the importance of role expectations and integration in non-western contexts. Despite these limitations, the study has uncovered important explanations and micro-level mechanisms that influence PA adoption and replication failure which can be further investigated and examined in future studies.

Chapter Five: The micro-level replication to management control and development systems in the Middle East: A Multiple case study

Abstract

The study in this chapter aims to examine how global professional services firms in the Middle East replicate international performance appraisal while navigating the logics of professional, HRM bureaucracy, and the regional community logic of *wasta* (e.g., informal connections). This paper couples the institutional logics perspective with routine dynamics theory and reports on an in-depth study of professional service firms by exploring how professionals balance between multiple and conflicting logics at the micro-level. By following a multiple case study research design and drawing on 30 interviews from professionals in non-managerial levels as well as documentary data. The results show a more corrupt version of performance appraisal that is dominantly invoked by the regional community logic of *wasta* at both the macro and the micro-levels to alleviate the psychological and physical effort associated with navigating competing institutionalised logics. At the micro-level, two versions of performance appraisal are replicated 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, institutional logics and routine dynamics theory on how actors translate multiple macro-level logics into actions at the micro-level and how this in turn influence the replication of performance appraisal for global professional service firms in the Middle Eastern context.

5.1 Introduction

Global professional service firms (GPSFs) widely adopt a version of formal performance appraisal (PA) to manage and control employees' performance. However, much of their development and control are achieved by informal means (Alvesson et al., 2015). GPSFs primarily rely on the knowledge and skills of employees to improve organisational performance and therefore managing their performance becomes the top priority as the survival of GPSFs is sensitive to reputation and service quality (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). To this end, the performance of GPSFs is determined by its professionals (Swart et al., 2015); therefore, despite achieving employee development and control informally, it is argued that bureaucracy plays a significant role in creating and maintaining a competitive advantage for PSFs (Alvehus, 2018; Kinni and Swart, 2012).

DeNisi et al. (2021) recently concluded that we still need to examine PA in global companies in particular, and to understand how it works in different national contexts. To this end, the past decade has seen a proliferation of contextualised case studies aiming to understand the adoption of PA by global companies and subsidiaries in non-western contexts (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Mellahi et al., 2016). The majority of these mainly rely on differences between global and local cultures to explain how specific constructs influence the macro-level adoption behaviour of PA, 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 Stanton, 2011). As valuable as the insights in the literature are, they serve mainly to explain the *what* and *why* of PA adoption and fall short of explaining the *how*, as such our understanding is limited to the influence of institutions on PA practice adoption. Within this global-local comparison, local cultures and actors' agency are largely externalised from the process and their centrality to the process of institutionalisation is largely overlooked. Finally, the PA literature and related international scholarship mostly overlook the replication of PA at the micro-level and therefore our understanding of how institutional logics are translated into actions at the micro-level and how these actions influence the replication and transformation of the PA process is lacking.

In this study, the attention is turned to GPSFs operating in the Middle East, as they face multiple difficulties and cultural constraints that lead to resistance to anything labelled as 'western' (Mellahi et al., 2011). Conceptualised in terms of institutional logics, research has shown that

GPSFs often adopt hybrid (conflicting) institutional logics, mainly professional and bureaucratic (Kirkpatrick and Noordegraaf, 2015; Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), which enables them to "balance pressures of commercial success with professional integrity" (Suddaby et al., 2008: 898). However, such forms of organisation originated in the west to navigate the multiple logics that are unique to that 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* (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Al Jawali et al., 2021) is prominent and which GPSFs need to navigate.

Wasta, likened to favouritism, cronyism, or 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 employee management practices in general and PA practice in particular. Significant evidence shows that it co-evolves with the recruitment, development, and appraisal of employees as well as progression of their careers (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Yahiaoui, et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). However, its influence on GPSFs and their PA practices remain largely undiscovered. Moreover, research on international PA in general is still limited and calls are still circulating to advance our understanding of 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; Al Jawali et al., 2021 Mellahi et al., 2011; Mellahi et al., 2007). With these insights, this paper poses the following question: *How do professionals navigate professional, bureaucratic, and community logics during the replication of performance appraising routines in GPSFs in the Middle East?*

An embedded multiple case studies design is adopted, and the institutional logics perspective is coupled with routine dynamics theory to examine how Middle Eastern professionals navigate multiple logics at the micro-level (Powell and Rerup, 2017). Organisational routines in general are material micro-level structures, through which institutional information is enacted and reproduced in organisations (Scott, 2014). 30 interviews were conducted with non-managerial professionals in four GPSFs subsidiaries operating in a single country in the Arabian Peninsula where *wasta* is salient and further documentary data were collected. By examining how professionals navigate multiple logics during the enactment of PA at the micro-level using a practice and process perspective, the study yields several valuable insights.

First, the findings reveal that the dominance of institutional logics in general is not static but shifts over time. While professional/HRM hybrid logic dominates at early stages of employment, over time two sets of PA routines are implemented, each invoking different multiple institutional configurations simultaneously, based on how well employees are connected. The first set consists of hybrid *wasta* community/bureaucratic logics that are invoked when the subject actors are not well-connected (have weak *wasta*), whereas the second set consists of hybrid *wasta* 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 simply compete for primacy, but further enables actors to completely disjoin between professional and bureaucratic logics, which are highly institutionalised in GPSFs. By doing so, the study reveals how Middle Eastern professionals translate, replicate, and transform PA into 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 amongst GPSFs operating in the Middle East, where commercial success is more important than professional integrity.

With these findings, the study advances the international PA literature with a nuanced understanding at the micro-level of how Middle Eastern professionals navigate the conflicting professional, bureaucratic, and community logics faced by GPSFs operating in the region. In particular, the study taps into the dark side of human resource management by showing how PA evolves into a more corrupt version that disadvantages some employees over others. Furthermore, the study contributes a micro-level perspective of PA, as a process that unfolds in temporal order, which provides a more complete picture of the success and failure of employee management practices (DeNisi et al., 2021). In addition, the findings contribute to institutional theory an understanding of the institutional complexity associated with non-western contexts, in particular the Middle East, and to what extent the Middle Eastern community logic of *wasta* can help actors (organisations and employees) alleviate the psychological effort associated with navigating the moral and ethical maze of formal institutionalised logics. Therefore, we shed light on the dysfunctional and complex institutional complementarity between multiple institutional logics in GPSFs in the Middle East. Finally, exploring logic navigation through a routine dynamics lens provides novelty to the international PA body of research by unpacking the performativity of PA at the micro-level.

The paper is structured as follows. First, it starts by reviewing the relevant institutional logics literature before discussing the competing institutional spheres for GPSFs located in the Middle East. Following that, it introduces the routine dynamics perspective and its relevance in institutional research, then detail the methods, present the findings, and discuss these in relation to the relevant institutional literature.

5.2 Literature review

Institutional logics refers to the "socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences" (Thornton et al., 2012: 2). They are "taken-for-granted social prescriptions" (Battiliana and Dorado, 2010: 1420), that "shape the rules of the game" (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008: 112) and provide actors with the vocabularies of motives, frames, and scripts that guide actions (Friedland and Alford, 1991). In addition, they specify "which issues to consider salient, which ends to pursue, which means to employ, and which standards to use to define success" (Smets et al., 2015; 934).

The perspective originates from institutional theory but holds distinct assumptions about organisational rationality and actors' agency. The perspective was first developed by Friedland and Alford (1991), concurrently and independently from DiMaggio and Powell's tradition to institutional analyses. In fact, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) and Friedland and Alford (1991) presented their contributions in the same book, with the former commenting on the latter's efforts as "developing quite a different argument from the rest of the contributors" (p. 29). Friedland and Alford's (1991) work was fuelled by a more social constructionist orientation to institutions. Friedland and Alford (1991) rejected the idea that organisational rationality is conceived in binary terms, as either rational or non-rational (Cloutier and Langley, 2013), and argued that "institutions must be reconceptualised as simultaneously…rational and *transrational*" (Friedland and Alford, 1991: 243). This broadened institutional scholars' conception of rationality further than that contributed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991), which are derived from the state (coercive), profession (normative), and market (memetic) and provided a more dynamic conceptualisation of how institutions influence the behaviour of organisations, individuals, practices, and processes (Thornton et al., 2012).

This is an important reconceptualisation of rationality, as Friedland and Alford's developments recognise that "individuals and organizations are embedded in social structures, yet

also…externalized or partially autonomous, allowing them to construct institutions socially" (Thornton et al., 2012: 72). To this extent, the institutional logics perspective gives back some control to individuals over their behaviours in institutional analysis. The perspective maintains that during practice adoption and replication, multiple institutional logics compete for primacy and saliency to organise people's lives in different social domains, which is referred to as the multiplicity of institutional logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991).

To understand how logics compete for primacy and saliency, it is important to understand how they respond to established social sciences concepts, including, but not limited to, legitimacy, identity, and authority. Thornton (2004) developed a model for multiple institutional logics that consists of institutional orders (X-axis) and established social sciences concepts (Y-axis) (see Appendix C). Each institutional order on the X-axis "is defined as a different domain of institutions built around a cornerstone institution that represents the cultural symbols and material practices that govern a commonly recognized area of life" (Thornton et al., 2012: 54). Initially, Friedland and Alford (1991) identified five institutional logics that they considered at the time to be the pillars and most influential institutions of western society: the capitalist market, the bureaucratic state, democracy, the nuclear family, and the Christian religion as shown in Figure (8) below.

Figure 8: Friedland and Alford's (1991) interinstitutional system

Organizing principles	Capitalist market	Bureaucratic state	Democracy	Nuclear family	Christian religion
Rituals that reinforce beliefs	Signing contracts	Issuance of budget & plans	Voting	Marriage	Communion
Relativation of values	Accumulation & commodification of human activity	Rationalization & regulation of human activity	Popular control over human activity	Motivation of human activity	Symbolic construction of human activity
Basis of affiliation		Legal & bureaucratic hierarchies	Citizen participation	Community	Membership in congregation
Basis of obligation	Convert human activity to a price	Convert diverse individual issues into consensus		Reproduction of family members	Convert issues into moral principles
Basis of loyalty				Unconditional to members	Faith of congregation

Adopted from Thornton et al. (2012).

The number of institutional orders increased (by decomposing, adding, and discarding logics) over the years following developments by Thornton and her colleagues (such as their seminal

contribution, Thornton et al., 2012) for instance, by recognising community as a separate institutional order. The Y-axis in Appendix (C) refers to established concepts in social sciences that enable us to understand the structural and material characteristics of each institutional order (Friedland and Alford, 1991). Thornton et al. (2012: 59) state that "The elemental categories of the vertical Y-axis shown in the tables are established social-science concepts; the horizontal X-axis represents cultural subsystems or institutional order of societies."

Thornton et al. (2012) further argue that the cultural subsystems they identified are not set in stone. they are representative and they should not be taken-for-granted as the different social domains have different and unique frames of reference (i.e., logics) that guide actors actions. For instance, Alvehus (2018) drew from HRM bureaucratic logic, which will be operationalised in this chapter, to examine international PA in GPSFs and this exact logic is not identified in the interinstitutional system that Thornton and her colleagues established.

This revised perspective to rationality within the institutional logics perspective means that it is unlikely that organisations, practices, or processes will be informed by a single logic. Some logics are more salient than others, and some compete for dominance within any given social domain (Thornton et al., 2012). The cultural symbols and material practices between institutional orders (i.e., the intersecting cells between the X-axis and Y-axis in Appendix C) can also be integrated or segregated based on different situational demands. In this vein, Thornton et al. (2012: 180) maintain that "logics are blended into a hybrid [logic], or logics are segregated and thus *compartmentalized* from each other" (italics added), which means that the norms of one institutional order can be paired with and segregated from another depending on the situation or the organisational configurations. Again, this is important for recognising actors' partial autonomy from institutions (Friedland and Alford, 1991) as it shows actors ability to cognitively invoke different cultural norms from different institutional orders while they are replicating organisational activities (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008).

Therefore, this study argues that the institutional logics perspective is more suitable for examining international PA, particularly in non-western contexts. By recognising actors' partial autonomy and by having a space for family, community, and religion in the interinstitutional system which majorly constitute the cornerstone institutions and the cultural norms of non-western contexts, these logics provide space for non-western contexts' local cultural values and norms to become part of the institutionalisation process, rather than an externalised construct. As opposed to how they are traditionally considered in PA research that

takes for granted the assumptions of neo-institutional theory such as forces of isomorphism and the three forms of rationality (coercive, normative, memetic) theorised by DiMaggio and Powell (1991; 1983) (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2016; Gu and Nolan, 2017). This perspective is highly important when addressing issues around institutionalising complex processes in contexts with complex and fluid institutional configurations, such as that of PA in non-western contexts.

In general, institutional theory is plagued with studies that examine phenomena at the macro-level to understand the mutual constitution of institutions and organisations (e.g., Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). To this end, our knowledge is limited to how these logics play out during the enactment of various organisational activities at the micro-level (Quattrone, 2015; McPherson and Sauder, 2013; Thornton et al., 2012). These studies predominantly conceptualise institutional logics as taken-for-granted natural configurations (Battiliana and Dorado, 2010: 1420) that passively shape individuals' cognitions and actions in organisational fields (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Ocasio, 1997).

However, organisational actors are becoming a key source in understanding the institutional process and how it is achieved through their agency. Shortly before the introduction of the institutional perspective of Friedland and Alford (1991), DiMaggio (1988) highlighted the role of social actors in reproducing, maintaining, and disrupting institutions. By reflecting on their socialisation and power, DiMaggio posited that employees' agency in organisations is what reproduces or disrupts institutional norms through socialisation or by the use of power. DiMaggio's argument on the importance of social actors for institutions fuelled a body of research which examined their influence on reproducing and transforming organisations aiming to uncover the paradox of embedded agency in institutions. Many of the related studies were directed to understanding how institutional entrepreneurs were able to transform their fields (e.g., Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; also see review by Hardy and Maguire, 2008). Nonetheless, the concept of institutional entrepreneurs and actors in general in institutional theory and its logics are mainly exclusive to the macro-level, i.e., the level of organisations and governing bodies (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Beyond macro-level conceptions of institutional entrepreneurs, recognising the centrality of actors' agency in reproducing and transforming institutions has captured the attention of few organisational scholars (Powell and Rerup, 2017; Quattrone, 2015; McPherson and Sauder, 2013; Thornton et al., 2012). This perspective is often referred to as the 'microfoundations of

institutions' and considers how institutions are reproduced by the actions of social actors. It proposes that "from a micro perspective, institutions are reproduced through the routine activities of ensembles of individuals" (Powell and Rerup, 2017: 1), who themselves enact the norms and values of institutionalised organisational activities, but at the same time their actions can introduce variations into such activities. The concept of the microfoundations of institutions rejects the dominant structural deterministic view, in which actors' embedded agency is shaped by institutions, and instead recognises the mutual constituency of structure and agency in institutional analysis (Thornton et al., 2012).

Since institutional logics focus on the plurality and heterogeneity of institutions in organisations, practices, and processes. This means that competing institutional logics exist in constellation rather than in isolation, and in competition rather than being complementary; this multiplicity and competition requires navigation at the micro-level (Smets et al., 2015). In this respect, Thornton et al. (2012: 77) argue that "institutional contradictions provide individuals and organizations with opportunities for agency and institutional change by exploiting these contradictions". Therefore, at the micro-level, the dynamics of institutions become more driven by social actors themselves, since decisions to invoke and harness the cultural norms and material symbols of the multiple institutional orders are at the expense of social actors (ibid). In terms of exploiting contradictions at the micro-level, scholars have mainly focused on actors' agency in relation to being guided by contradictory logics and their social identities, mostly overlooking "the pursuit of self-interest and the satisfaction of individual needs" (Thornton et al., 2012: 79). For instance, McPherson and Sauder (2013) examined multiple logics in a court room to show how professionals such as probation officers, clinicians, public defenders, and state attorneys in a drug court reproduced their home (own professional logic) and non-home logics at the micro-level in making decisions. They focused on the vocabularies that each group of people socially identified with. As such, they paid more attention to how multiple groups of actors reproduced the practice by how each of them identifies with their group, overlooking the self-seeking behaviours of each group.

Self-seeking behaviours in institutions are mainly recognised at the macro-level, where professional bodies or groups of organisations mobilise their power to disrupt institutions and lobby for their interests (e.g., institutional entrepreneurs) (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). However, this perspective is mostly overlooked from the perspective of how individuals at the micro-level mobilise their power and lobby for their interests during the replication of practices and processes. Therefore, it is important to incorporate self-seeking behaviours in institutional

analysis because logics are not just taken-for-granted prescriptions and actors are not passive replicators of logics. Few scholars have emphasised logics in terms of Swidler's (1986) cultural tool kit, in which the cultural norms of multiple institutional orders are compartmentalised, and actors can blend and segregate between multiple norms when performing organisational activities (Quattrone, 2015; McPherson and Sauder, 2013). Within this perspective, it is very limiting not to "equate agency with interests, or self-seeking behaviour" (Thornton et al., 2012: 79) when examining the replication, and most importantly, the transformation of practices on the ground. Without incorporating self-seeking behaviours at the micro-level, we would be prevented from understanding the trajectory and moral compass of the reproduced and transformed practices. Therefore, in addition to understanding how logics are reproduced during micro-level organisational activities, it is important to include actors' self-seeking behaviours in harnessing the cultural norms of these logics (i.e., recognising them as both prescriptions and tools).

5.2.1 Multiple institutional logics of PA in GPSFs: a Middle Eastern focus

This section will first highlight the dominant logics that are connected with GPSFs and then discuss the more contextualised logic that informally dominates social exchanges in the Middle East, namely the community logic of *wasta*.

GPSFs are one of the most distinct forms of MNCs that has been growing rapidly over the past four decades and they are the least researched firms in organisational and management studies (Alvehus, 2018; Empson et al., 2015). They are broadly defined as global companies that rely on individuals' mastery of a particular skill, knowledge, and professional expertise to generate income (Von Nordenflycht, 2010). GPSFs such as architecture, law, accounting, and management consulting firms play an important role in the contemporary global economy and employment as in 2020 these sectors alone generated global revenues of around US$1.8 trillion and employed nearly 19 million professionals (IBISWorld, 2021a; IBISWorld, 2021b; IBISWorld, 2021c; MarketLine, 2021). GPSFs differ substantially from service and manufacturing companies in their operations, managerial arrangements, and organisational forms (Suddaby et al., 2008). These companies have unusual structures and embrace the notion of a unified worldwide service quality, which is provided by their professionals, as their commercial success is highly defined by upholding a good reputation (Boussebaa, 2009).

To achieve this, Muzio and Faulconbridge (2013: 898) state that GPSFs pursue "a 'one firm' strategy based on integrated global profit pools and remuneration structures as well as on the

re-organization of work processes around best practices usually derived from the firm's home jurisdiction." To these firms, transferring a unified ethnocentric version of traditional PA practices to their subsidiaries is important since their commercial success is highly dependent on their reputation that is upheld by its worldwide employees (Muzio and Faulconbridge, 2013). At the same time, due to their professional nature and unusual structures, these companies are more reliant on informal techniques to manage, coach, and control their employees, as well as improve their performance (Alvesson et al., 2015) since traditional employee management and appraising practices are insufficient for these purposes (Alvehus, 2018). Therefore, in order to properly examine PA in these types of companies, researchers must pay careful consideration not only to the context where PA is adopted but also to both formal (HRM-related) and informal (professional-related) appraising processes and techniques.

The presence of GPSFs is well established in the Middle East because many countries in the region are resource rich and plenty of the world's largest MNCS are located there and the majority of these companies are prosperous and profitable (Mellahi et al., 2011). Therefore, it is not unusual to have the subsidiaries of the largest western-headquartered GPSFs operating in the region such as global leading accounting firms: PwC, EY, Deloitte, and KPMG, and global legal services firms such as 'Baker & McKenzie' and 'Kirkland & Ellis' (IBISWorld, 2021a MarketLine, 2021). However, there is a dominant local cultural norm in the region, *wasta*, that is highly operationalised by its Arabic nationals and must also be taken into consideration throughout examining international PA because it is deeply rooted in managerial practices and in particular those that require social exchanges between organisational actors such as PA (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Alsarhan et al., 2021; Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). Therefore, in addition to the formal and informal appraising practices that exist in GPSFs in the Middle East, professionals must also navigate the informal cultural norm of *wasta.*

Therefore, in order to actually understand how PA is replicated at the micro-level and reflect the complex institutional configurations for GPSFs operating in the region, it is crucial to take the multiple frames of reference of the formal practice (i.e., guided by HRM bureaucracy logic), the informal practice (i.e., guided by professional logic) and *wasta* (i.e., guided by regional community logic) into consideration as these three logics mainly shape the PA practice while it is being replicated by Middle Eastern professionals at the micro-level.

5.2.1.1 Professional and bureaucratic logics

GPSFs are organisations that combine a variety of professions (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Traditionally, their business conduct is underpinned by the "beliefs in autonomous professional, informal, and collegial relations; merit-based authority; and professionally determined standards of performance." (Alvehus 2018: 33). This professional logic creates value for these firms by their capitalising solely on knowledge workers who possess client-specific expertise and skills (Alvesson, 2004). GPSFs are characterised by decentralised structures that place less emphasis on aligning and developing employees' performance through formal bureaucratic channels (Alvehus, 2018), as well as the adoption of 'keep them on the edge' kind of control mechanisms by implementing career progression and promotion styles that takes a tournament form and rely on up-or-out criteria (Alvesson et al., 2015). To this end, Freidson (2001) maintains that measuring employees' performance in GPSFs is highly subjective and is based on professional interests and judgements.

At the same time, GPSFs adopt different forms of bureaucratic management (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), such as the adoption of formal best practice PA (Alvehus and Spicer, 2012). On one hand, as knowledge workers in GPSFs spend the majority of their time at clients' locations, it becomes difficult and inaccurate to follow HRM bureaucratic procedures faithfully (Alvesson et al., 2015). Therefore, GPSFs tend to develop employees' performances mainly through informal coaching and control their behaviours by relying on informal and socio-ideological creative ways, such as adopting the 'corporate clone' model or inducing anxiety for their employees' (Alvesson et al., 2015; Alvesson and Karreman, 2004). On the other hand, GPSFs cannot deny the significant role that HRM bureaucracy plays in managing and improving employees' performance, as in this case 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 GPSFs (Alvehus, 2018: 33). To this end, several scholars have argued that GPSFs do not operate through one dominant logic, but adopt dual or hybrid logics, such as organisational professionalism (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2008) or hybrid professionalism (Kirkpatrick and Noordegraaf, 2015), which need navigation (Smets et al., 2015) and reconciliation (Alvehus, 2018) at both the micro and the macro-levels.

These logics are often in competition and therefore constantly pressurising actors to choose, navigate, reconcile, or reject them. For example, Smets et al. (2015) examined how reinsurance traders at Lloyd's Bank in London balanced conflicting logics at the micro-level. They uncovered the processes of segmenting, bridging, and demarcating to illustrate how traders

differentiated spatially between their work practices, negotiated between different logics to pursue different demands, and situationally foregrounded one particular logic to take advantage of its benefits, while maintaining boundaries with others. More recently, Alvehus (2018) examined how professionals reconcile between professional and HRM bureaucracy logics by examining employee PA in a major global accounting firm in Sweden, revealing that actors replicate, revisit, and reject HRM bureaucratic logics. Alvehus argues that "hybridity between conflicting logics may appear on an organizational level, whereas a single logic dominates in everyday work" (p. 31). Smets et al. (2015) and Alvehus (2018) show how different institutional logics need to be balanced, reconciled, and navigated at the micro-level. However, our understanding is still limited on how actors do this in non-western contexts.

The majority of GPSFs navigate these competing logics; however, they face another conflicting logic that is rarely considered in institutional research, namely regional community logic, which mainly portrays salient non-western cultural beliefs and norms, as discussed below.

5.2.1.2 Regional community logic: *wasta* in the Middle East

Undoubtedly, and as different studies have clearly delineated, managers' and employees' interpretations of PA are closely guided by their national cultural interpretive schemas (Gu and Nolan, 2017; Harbi et al., 2016; Vo and Stanton, 2011), with logics from dominant local cultural norms informally institutionalised at the micro-level (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019). For instance, studies examining the adaptation of PA in collectivist cultures indicate convergence with HRM practices at the organisational level, but once away from this level (i.e., at the level of individuals), they reveal different dynamics in PA that are mainly guided by dominant cultural norms (as illustrated in the qualitative meta-synthesis in Chapter Four). Hence, it is also important to understand how such norms are employed and navigated at the micro-level. This study specifically considers one norm that is shared at least at a high level among different collectivist regions and cultures; that is, the attainment of ends informally by means of informal relationships. Several studies examining PA from an institutional perspective have highlighted the influence of these dominant and strong cultural norms, such as the Chinese concept of *guanxi* (Vo and Stanton, 2011; Gu and Nolan, 2017); South Korean seniority, y*ongo* and *jul* ties (Horak and Yang, 2019); and Middle Eastern *wasta* (Yahiaoui et al., 2021) on shaping the adoption and internalisation of PA practice.

However, in general these studies do not embrace local cultural norms and values in the process of institutionalisation, instead conceptualising them and actors orientation towards them as

constraints to the faithful adoption of PA in non-western contexts. Paradoxically, several of these studies conclude that we need to accept the deep structure of local cultural norms in at least the hybridisation of the process prior to implementation (Horak and Yang, 2019; Vo and Stanton, 2011). Therefore, in light of the recent unfolding scholarly interest in PA adoption in non-western contexts, much remains to be understood about this complex organisational process of the co-evolvement of local cultures and PA. This paper operationalises the role of *wasta*, defined as "the use of power, relationships and networking to hire people for high position, resolve conflicts or obtain benefits" (Yahiaoui, 2015; 1674), as an informal community logic that is dominant in everyday social transactions in the Middle East and operates both on the front and back stages (Goffman, 1959) of the interinstitutional field.

Community logic has only recently been recognised as an important, yet overlooked, part of interinstitutional systems (Thornton et al., 2012). Brint (2001: 8) defines communities as "aggregates of people who share common activities and/or beliefs and who are bound together principally by relation of affect, loyalty, common values, and/or personal concern." They include 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; Marquis and Battilana, 2009). In this chapter, I focus only on *wasta*, a shared norm among groups of people bound within the geographical region of the Middle East (as per the definition in Chapter Three section 3.1.4). In the institutional logics literature, several contributions have highlighted the important role of community in understanding organisations and institutions (e.g., Thornton et al., 2012; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007; Zald, 1970). Community logic helps us understand how different localities with shared taken-for-granted norms, values, and frames of references shape practices and behaviours, as well as how they imbue regularity to social organisational reality (Marquis and Battilana, 2009).

The importance of the institutional logics perspective in examining culturally-bound PA in non-western contexts in fact stems from the recent recognition of community as an institutional order. As a result, the institutional logics arena has become more welcoming and inclusive to local cultures, rather than being an intruder into adopted practices. Therefore, by clearly identifying the boundaries of the community under investigation, it becomes easier to incorporate local cultural norms into institutional analysis. In the Middle East, *wasta* is one of the most salient local cultural logics that is interwoven in everyday life and is highly salient in politics, legal systems, and intertribal transactions (Al-Ramahi, 2008), and also in organisations (Al Jawali et al., 2022; Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et

al.,2017; Brandstaetter et al., 2016; Branine and Pollard, 2010). *Wasta* logic is based on the belief in informal social reciprocation; informal relations based on kinship and friendships; relational power and authority; and precedence of relationship goals over organisational ones. Together, these are the main cultural norms that constitute most of the logic of *wasta* in the Middle East.

Researching the influence of *wasta* on HRM activities in general, and PA in particular, provides valuable insights into its role in rendering regularity in Middle Eastern organisational behaviours and how its application extends beyond formal organisational boundaries. For instance, Harbi et al. (2017) show how *wasta* enables organisational actors to accrue reciprocal favours from their superiors by sharing blood ties or by simply running their personal errands. Yahiaoui et al. (2021) show how managers use *wasta* to communicate negative appraisals to employees, while Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) demonstrate how it influences career advancement and mentoring activities in Middle Eastern organisations. In general, these studies reflect on how employees pursue their career progression by navigating through the additional conflicting logic of *wasta*. They provide very important, yet superficial, evidence on how *wasta* is deeply structured in HRM activities and the PA process in the Middle East.

Finally, it is important to distinguish between front and backstage *wasta* in order to fully understand how actors invoke this logic and the course of their moral compass during the replication of PA in the Middle East. The use of *wasta* could result in either good or bad outcomes of organisational activities. For instance, it is often equated with the western notion of networking and sometimes referred to in terms of a social capital (Ali et al., 2015; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011). This is generally linked to the idea of 'front stage' *wasta* intended for public consumption. On the other hand, *wasta* is also associated with hedonism and corruption (Hutching and Weir, 2006) and mainly kept hidden from the public, thus making it difficult to examine. This chapter focuses on this backstage use of *wasta* logic; that is, how navigating it can result in unfavourable replication and transformation of PA.

Wasta competes directly with HR bureaucratic logic; for example, since it implies the reliance on informal connections to obtain benefits, individuals in GPSFs in the Middle East are able to mobilise it to overcome and circumvent bureaucratic difficulties, such as employee recruitment (Yahiaoui et al., 2021) or even governmental dealings (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). However, these are essentially descriptive insights that do not advance our understanding of how *wasta* logic coexists with bureaucratic and professional logics. To this end, there is a need

to shift our empirical attention from the dominant cultural norms and informal institutions, such as those relating to *wasta*, to regional community logics (Al Jawali et al., 2022), and to understand how such informal logics play out at the micro-level during the replication and transformation of complex organisational activities such as PA.

To this end, it is necessary to understand the influence of professional, HRM bureaucracy, and regional community logics on PA. In particular, the study aims to examine the combined influence of these competing logics on shaping PA practices at the micro-level. In doing so, it will be possible to shed light on how varying conflicting logics coexist and feed off one another (Smets et al., 2015). Consequently, the study adopts from organisational theory and turns attention to PA at the micro-level; that is, the PA routine. The study also relies on the theory of routine dynamics (RD) because of its unique power in explaining how phenomena unfold, progress, and end over time at the micro-level (Salvato and Rerup, 2018). With its roots in practice and process perspectives, RD is suitable to overcome dichotomies such the local/global and structure/agency by considering their embeddedness in the environment where routines are being enacted and replicated, as well as placing more focus on practice performativity and the centrality of actors' agency in performing organisational routines.

5.2.1.3 Navigating multiple logics by enacting organisational routines

Organisational 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, such routines were portrayed as inert and likened to standard operating procedures (Feldman and Pentland, 2003), which in some ways subscribes to their current conceptualisation in the institutional literature. Recent advances, however, show how they are dynamic and require the effortful accomplishment by actors; therefore, scholars of routine dynamics place actors' agency at the centre of routine enactment (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Again, organisational routines are defined as "a repetitive, recognizable pattern of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors" (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 105). They consist of two interrelated aspects that interact recursively: the ostensive aspect, which refers to what actors understand about the routine or "the abstract idea of the routine (structure)" (ibid: 95); and the performative aspect, which refers to "the actual performances of the routine by specific people, at specific times, in specific places (agency)" (ibid: 95). The basic idea of their recursion is that understandings guide actions, while actions enacted in concrete situations update our understanding of the goals routines should accomplish (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, which is why organisational routines are conceptualised as dynamic. This perspective resonates with one of the most important assumptions in the institutional logics perspective which recognises actors' partial autonomy in both organisations and institutions (Lounsbury, 2008) and which in turn shapes how they reproduce and transform organisational activities at the micro-level.

Organisational routines are a source of stability and change for organisations, which turn practices into routinised activities to reduce costs and imbue these practices with legitimacy in order to maintain stability in the replication of organisational activities and social reality in general (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). At the same time, such routines are designed to maintain adaptiveness and readiness to change and provide room for idiosyncratic actions to be performed in the accomplishment of routine goals. Ultimately, some of these aligned and unaligned actions become dominant patterns in routine performances (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013). Rooted in March and Simon's Carnegie school, one of the most important assumptions about organisational routines is that they consist of commonly internalised scripts that enable actors to accomplish specific organisational goals; therefore, they act as a truce between routine participants during the accomplishment of multiple and competing organisational goals (Salvato and Rerup, 2018). This assumption recognises that conflict exists between such participants against the backdrop of almost every social transaction between individuals in different organisational levels and departments (Nelson and Winter, 1982). However, having commonly shared, recognisable patterns of interdependent actions in accomplishing tasks, participants mainly agree to disagree and accomplish their organisational goals by relying on the recognisable internalised pattern (Powell and Rerup, 2017). This perspective on organisational routines shows the ability of actors to use them to balance multiple and often conflicting goals.

For instance, D'Adderio (2014) examined the transfer of a manufacturing routine between different countries, a process which needed to balance the goal of replicating the routine exactly as it is being enacted in the home country while simultaneously allowing for innovation and flexibility. To balance the conflicting pressures of exact replication and innovation, routine participants altered foregrounding between the two types of patterns in accomplishment of routine goals. Such alteration enabled actors to navigate between the two conflicting goals of exact replication and innovation and accomplish the manufacturing routine effectively. Later, Salvato and Rerup (2018) extended this concept to show how routines can be used to accomplish multiple conflicting goals of efficiency and innovation at the same time in the

product development routine by demonstrating an ecology of actions (splicing, activating, and repressing) that allows routine participants to achieve the competing organisational goals of efficiency and innovation flexibly in the new product development routine.

These studies highlight the ability of organisational routines to balance organisational goals. What is important for this study is that this perspective could be scaled up in order to understand how routines are used to balance more macro-level structures such as multiple and conflicting logics. More recent efforts by practice and process scholars have aimed to lay down the groundwork on how to examine the microfoundations of institutions from the perspective of routines (Powell and Rerup, 2017; Cloutier and Langley, 2013). In this respect, Powell and Rerup (2017) state that "we might be able to understand stability and change in higher-level structures by tracing lower-level micro-actions taken to accomplish routines" (p.37).

From this perspective, routines can help professionals not simply to accomplish organisational goals, but also to manage the conflicting institutional logics that shape practices. This could be further investigated by understanding the dominant PA action patterns that actors understand and enact, and how such understanding and enactment help them to navigate the competing professional, HRM bureaucracy, and regional community logic of *wasta* in GPSFs operating in the Middle East. However, with regard to institutional theory, a conceptual bias that places more focus on examining phenomena at the macro-level dominates in the literature, since institutions are only depicted as being higher order phenomena. Therefore, scholars adopting a microfoundational approach to institutions need to tread carefully and not overly focus on actors (i.e., their actions and behaviours) and overlook institutions. The basic notion of the microfoundations of institutions is to recognise the mutual constitution of actors and institutions in the organisational field (Powell and Rerup, 2017; Thornton et al., 2012).

5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 Research context

This paper conducts a qualitative inductive multiple case study (Eisenhardt, 1989b) to provide in-depth examination of PA adoption and replication failure in the Middle Eastern context. This approach allows the collection of multiple comparative case data, enhances the understanding of a specific phenomenon, and is more likely to generate more accurate and generalisable theory as well as powerful explanations than single case studies (Yin, 2014). This research follows the literal replication logic (Yin, 2014) through which the identification of

empirical patterns and regularities across cases offers contextualised explanations that strongly focuses on theory, which is frequently viewed as suitable in providing more persuasive support for theory development, and thus, strengthening the robustness of the overall study (Zeng, 2022; Yin 2014). The selection of the cases followed a purposeful sampling strategy pursuing the collection of "the most relevant data about the phenomenon under investigation" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 181). This study involves cases from four GPSFs operating in a single country in the Arabian Peninsula and focuses on non-managerial professionals from one subunit/department (being the primary unit of analysis). The name of the country and the companies are omitted to protect the anonymity of the participants and their organisations. Table (8) below provides additional details for the case companies.

Their headquarters are located in Europe, which have adopted standardised global PA best practice across their worldwide subsidiaries. All four companies offer a wide range of the same multidisciplinary services to their clients, including management and IT consulting, outsourcing services, and financial advisory services. There are virtually no differences between these firms as they are usually grouped together because of their similar size, workforce and revenues compared to the rest in the industry. They are highly regulated, have the same codes of professional and ethical conducts and follow the same institutional norms. Research involving these companies have shown a strong level of uniformity and consistency in their environment globally (Kalaitzake, 2019; Tara, 2014; Dambrin and Lambert, 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Inter-firm differences were not found in previous studies as these companies have high levels of similarity in relation to their employee management practices, their organisational structure, formal and informal control systems, professional conduct, and pressures to simultaneously follow traditional bureaucracy and maintain professional standards (Alvehus, 2018; Boussebaa, 2009; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Sweeny and Pierce, 2004). Most importantly, these companies are considered to be exporters of "best" management practices across the globe, therefore they play a crucial role in the expansion of global management practices and setting global management standards (Mellahi et al., 2016; Boussebaa, 2015). This is an interesting feature in these companies as some studies indicated that employees are more likely to accept PA if it was designed by these types of companies (Mellahi et al., 2016). Additionally, the four companies promise their employees with the best professional and inclusive environment, career advancing opportunities, networking with giants, and fair equitable compensation and rewards.

Table 8: Background characteristics for cases for chapter five

Company alias	GPSF1	GPSF2	GPSF3	GPSF4
HQ location at the time of interviews	Europe	Europe	Europe	Europe
Ownership structure	Private partnership	Private partnership	Private partnership	Private partnership
Global reputation	High	High	High	High
Year established in host context as per company registration certificate	2004	2010	2002	2009
Number of years in operation in host country (up to interviews date)	15	9	17	10
Number of professional departments in host country	8	8	8	8
Total Number of employees in host context	120	70	47	35
Number of non-managerial (managerial) employees in the focal department	60(9)	40(7)	30(6)	30(6)
Number of interviewed non-managerial employees in the focal department	14	9	5	2
Percentage of interviewed non-managerial employees in the focal department	23%	23%	17%	7%

These claims are advertised in ideal slogans such as ‘the best working environment,’ ‘diverse and inclusive culture,’ ‘our main asset is our employees,’ ‘personally tailored career development,’ and ‘fair benefits.’

However, and crucially, professionals in these companies are subjected to difficult working conditions that are characterised by achieving deadlines, high workload and long working hours, adaptation to first-mover global standards (Alvehus, 2018; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), anxiety, navigating formal and informal controls, and ‘up or out’ or a tournament style career type (Alvesson et al., 2015). Moreover, these companies operate through a contradictory hybrid organisational form that combines between professionalism and traditional bureaucracy which confuses employees’ enactment of formal organisational and management practices, particularly international PA (Alvehus, 2018; Alvesson et al., 2015; Muzio and Faulconbridge, 2013; Suddaby et al., 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). These factors push professionals to reject the practice of PA (Alvehus, 2018), and therefore, examining these companies will

enrich existing PA literature with knowledge on the sectoral and individual levels and will shed light on international PA adoption failure from companies that set global management standards.

In the single country of focus in this thesis, these branches staff nearly 200 non-managerial professionals in all their departments who have varied levels of experience to fulfil the needs of their clients. Furthermore, although they are global companies, they only hire local employees which is another reason that strengthen PA adoption failure in these firms. The thesis focuses on non-managerial professionals from one subunit/department (being the primary unit of analysis) in the four companies (with a total of 160 professionals) that provides the core service and generates the largest portion of their revenues. The Middle Eastern subsidiaries adopt a global PA process, which is important for maintaining the quality of the services they provide, since these companies have a reputation to uphold and they are financially sensitive and often include third parties (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2013). Their formal PA process emphasises the assessment and development of individual performance PA is designed to ensure employee development through formal and informal on-job coaching and frequent performance feedback. Furthermore, the information provided during the PA process is used for administrative and career progression decisions, such as salary increases, sanctions, and promotions. All of this is managed on global centralised PA software to ensure transparency and accuracy in the process.

At the same time, the PA process is also embedded in a national context that has a unique culture, emphasising on the collective rather than the individual, together with the primacy of informal relationships (via *wasta*) over formal organisational ones that results in bypassing formal procedures.

5.3.2 Data collection

Interviews. 30 interviews were conducted with non-managerial professionals at varying levels (junior, semi-senior, and senior) (see Appendix A for details about the participants). The researcher followed purposive sampling (Zeng, 2022) and the interviewees were approached through the researcher personal network and snowballing was relied on afterwards (Detzen and Loehlein, 2018; Dambrin and Lambert, 2008). Therefore, the first few contacts were reached out by the researcher based on his own personal network and included participants who were willing to share their negative experiences with their companies, then the researcher asked each interviewee to nominate other colleagues to be interviewed. The semi-structured interview

schedule was designed to obtain interviewees' perceptions, understandings, and actions over time in relation to the PA process and included questions about the direct influence of *wasta* logic on process performativity. Additionally, participants were probed for more details whenever necessary. The interview questions allowed exploration of how competing logics influenced important aspects of the PA 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 the interviews were conducted with home country nationals since when asked the participants affirmed that their companies did not employ expatriates. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, their mother language, and then translated and transcribed verbatim. Refer to Appendix B for a copy the interview schedule.

Table 9: Data collection sources for chapter five

Source	**Quantity**
Interviews: Collected 30 Semi-structured interviews from non-managerial employees Collection period: August 2019 to September 2019 Duration: from 40 minutes to 120 minutes (average 1 hour)	400 pages
Archival documents	184 documents 2,226 pages

Documentary data. I further consulted three categories of documentary data. First, I reviewed the annual global reports of the companies chronologically from 2005 to 2020 in order to better understand the activities they engaged in and to trace changes in their global HRM policy. Similarly, I conducted a review of the HRM policies, changes, announcements, and press releases which were publicly available on the company websites, together with their associated social media for the same period. The second category included a review of the companies' professional and ethical codes of conduct, as well as those established by formal industry professional bodies, in order to trace the professional and bureaucratic logic. Moreover, I reviewed several context-specific books and local press releases concerning *wasta* in order to

trace the dominance of *wasta* logic in social exchanges. The third category involved a review of documents related to the global PA process, including its rules, standard operating procedures, feedback, and rating grid and criteria. These documentary data provided textual information and were used to corroborate employees' accounts of the PA process, and the logics the actors navigated during it. Furthermore, they revealed new details that were not forthcoming from the interviews.

5.3.3 Analytical approach

In an effort to keep the data manageable and ensure their trustworthiness, the following steps were taken. First, an audit trail was kept to manage the emerging understanding from the data, by keeping records of all the interviews and documents. Second, the data were organised on an Nvivo 12 database, which facilitated the indexing, searching, coding, theorising, and recoding of the data as patterns and themes emerged (Smets et al., 2015). Following other similar studies on organisational routine dynamics (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Dittrich et al., 2016), this study followed an abductive approach to analysing the data, which required a back-and-forth iteration between the study data, emerging insights, and the existing literature. The researcher followed common recommendations for multiple case studies analyses by conducting within-case and cross case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989b). The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the analysis began by temporally bracketing (Langley, 1999) the main events in the performance appraising process for each case, as described by the study participants, to identify routines and process boundaries, as well as "to identify actors, actions, and artifacts that contributed to enactments of this routine." (Salvato and Rerup, 2018: 178).

By re-sequencing participants' accounts for each case, seven micro-processes were identified; in temporal order these were establishing an annual plan; assigning employees with a work portfolio; conducting fieldwork; monitoring employees; requesting frequent/quarterly performance feedback; calibrating employees' ratings; and attending an annual PA interview. Each micro-process was a routine that was embedded in a software artefact and required face-to-face interaction between employees and managers. In this stage, the researcher conducted within-case analysis by gathering notes and writing thick narratives in order to generate concepts and preliminary theoretical explanations for the cases. The focus was on analysing the interview data as well as triangulating and integrating facts from multiple data sources (Zeng, 2022). Participants' accounts and initial empirical observations were openly coded in each case separately in a line-by-line manner through "breaking down, examining, comparing,

conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 57), and clustered first-order codes to the corresponding event; for example, "I appealed [my rating] of course and nothing happened" and "I asked why but my people manager justified with those rubbish replies" were clustered under the annual PA meeting event.

At this stage, the researcher examined employees' understandings and actions for each case in relation to the overall process, including their perceptions and understandings of the PA micro-level routines that were solely performed by managers (e.g., monitoring and calibrating employee ratings). It was important not to neglect the meanings and understandings participants attached to these because they are an important part of the ecology of PA routine (Howard-Grenville et al., 2016). Furthermore, the researcher coded participants' expressions relating to their professional identity, performance, and career progression and clustered them under profession. The open or inductive coding used in this stage facilitated gaining "insights into the data by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data" (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 12). At this stage, it was possible to observe similarities and differences across how employees in cases enact the PA process as opposed to how its enactment is traditionally portrayed in the existing literature. Participants described two contrasting sets of patterns of action which completely diverged from the best practice typical pattern that is designed to take professional autonomy into consideration. This became a focus of interest, as the majority of the actions described by the participants were deviant, counterproductive, and some informed by local cultural norms.

In the second stage, the researcher set to identify "similarity in the apparently dissimilar situations" (Eisenhardt, 1989b: 544) that were found at the end of stage one. The researcher zoomed in to the focal routines and focused on the actors, artefacts, and actions. Furthermore, an open coding approach was adopted to identifying actors (e.g., employees, managers, councillors, human resource personnel); to the artefacts used by participants to accomplish their routines (e.g., feedback system, forms, emails, mobile phone, manager's office); and to the actions described by the participants (e.g., preparing annual goals, filling the feedback template, appealing against unfair ratings, lying to the system). This step revealed two groups of actors, employees either rich or poor in *wasta*, a situation which influenced the performance appraising process through imbalanced power dynamics. In order to make sense of participants' contrasting performance in relation to institutional logics, multiple strings of sequential data were arranged (Salvato and Rerup, 2018) to trace their actions to their intentions (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018), and then traced the strings of data to the employee grouping (rich or poor in

wasta). For instance, the following was a string of sequential data for a *wasta*-rich senior level employee, Mohammad (alias), with seven years' experience in GPSF2.

> (a) Mohammad (an actor) received an unfair annual rating in his third year (outcome) via a corporate email (artefact). During the annual PA meeting, he did not receive a realistic justification (outcome) and his informal appeal (action) was unsuccessful, although he presented (action) objective evidence from his official feedback forms (artefact). (b) The following year, Mohammad recruited (*wasta*-related action) his father's business as a client and thus gained power (*wasta*-related outcome). In his fourth year, Mohammad (actor) was able to establish (action) a personal relationship with his direct manager (actor), lowered (action) his performance significantly, lied (action) to the annual plan and feedback systems (artefact), and mobilised his *wasta* (action) to gain a promotion (*wasta*-related outcome).

In the third stage, and by noticing the dominance of *wasta* logic at the micro-level in stage two, the researcher started to focus on the influence of national cultural norms. By focusing on *wasta*, the researcher extracted events that involved the use or influence of *wasta* during the performance appraising process. 131 events were identified (73 directly related to PA) that involved the use and influence of *wasta* (some of which were drawn upon by multiple participants) and each event was traced to the micro-level routine it co-evolved with. For instance, "in my second year, the manager told me explicitly that I deserved a promotion and a high rating during the meeting but also told me that he would assign my high rating to another employee who he shared *wasta* with" was clustered under the "annual PA meeting" micro-level routine. However, the dominance of *wasta* logic partly explained my observations, since at the micro-level a distorted version of both HRM and professional logics were still present in various forms. Therefore, in order to fully understand the dominant influence of *wasta* logic at the micro-level, the researcher explored how employees at the micro-level balanced the varying conflicting logics (bureaucratic, professional, and *wasta*) by focusing on their behaviours and the vocabularies they drew from.

In order to make sense of the complex data and insights that emerged, a visual mapping strategy for each case was used, as this allows for "the presentation of large quantities of information in relatively little space…Visual graphical representations are particularly attractive for the analysis of process data because they allow the simultaneous representation of a large number of dimensions." (Langley, 1999: 700). With the visual maps, first order empirical observations

were plugged in on the temporally ordered PA process for all the participants for each case. This facilitated understanding the similarities and differences between actors' behaviours during the enactment of the process in relation to the group where they belong.

As relationships and patterns emerged, the researcher started to look for similarities and differences across the various strings within cases, and following process theory, only stable and repetitive patterns that "are oriented according to the same practice" were kept (Jarzabkowski et al., 2017: 238). Through this inductive analysis of situated *wasta* events of specific data strings for the performativity of performance appraising routine, two stable processes and patterns of actions were identified that can be directly traced to shirking intentions for each identified group. However, the motive behind shirking was different between the groups and clustered under hedonism through the use of *wasta* for one group, with the other behaviours closely related to retaliation because of the absence of (or weak) *wasta*. For example, "I work half what I used to work last year because I have a personal *wasta* with my superior," resonated with hedonistic intentions. Whereas "I lowered my performance because I work and work and work, and in the end, I am not getting anything in return," resonated with retaliation. In this step, axial coding was used (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to arrange first-order concepts into categories. In doing so, the researcher linked first-order empirical observations to higher-order themes and was able to generate more second-order abstract categories.

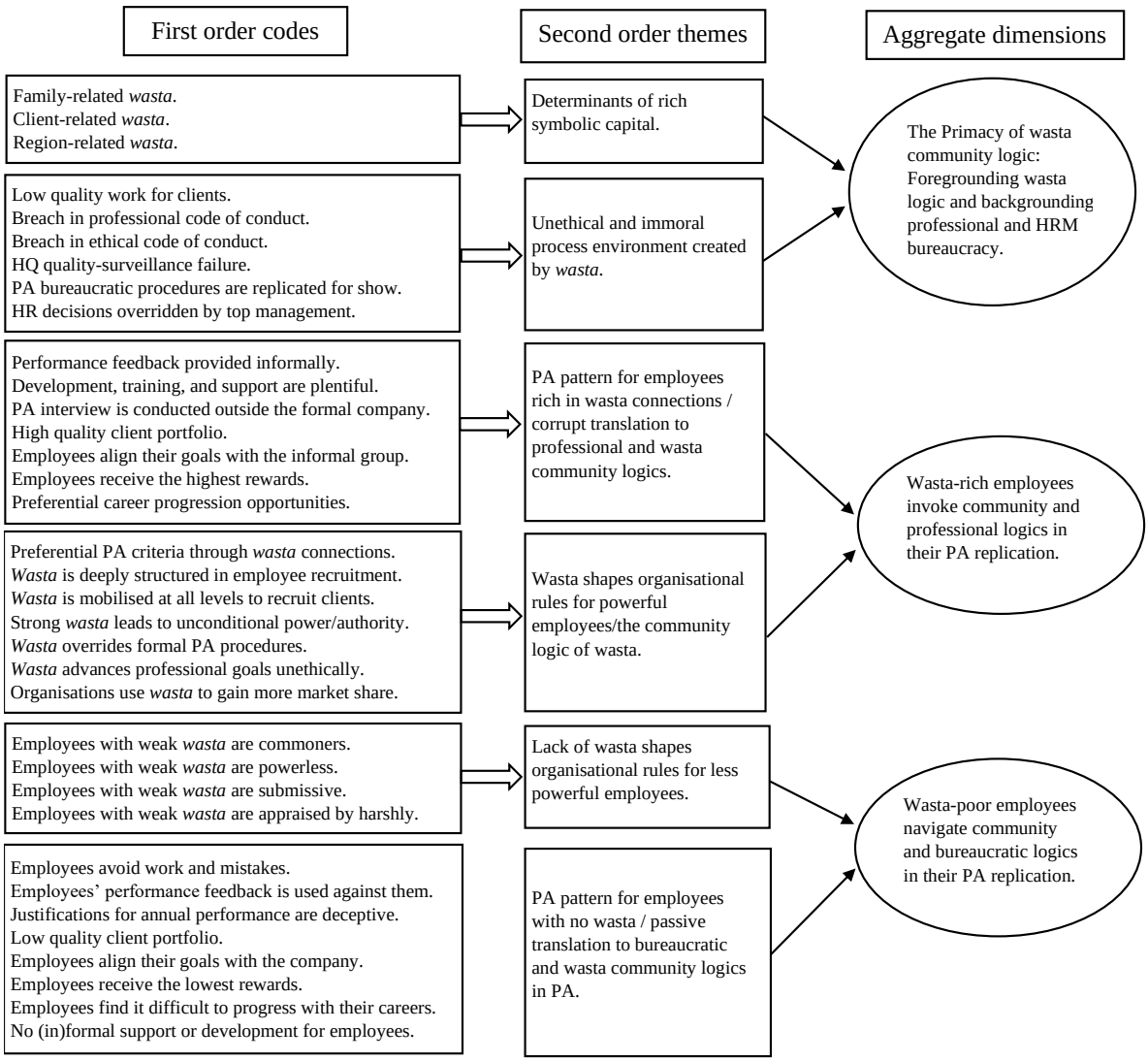
In the fourth stage, and in order to understand the interplay between micro-level enactment and macro-level logics, the researcher focused on the vocabularies of motives (cultural, professional, bureaucratic) that the actors invoke for each of the two processes over time so as to understand the influence of institutional logics on the replication of the two sets of performance appraising routines and vice versa. During this stage, the researcher further relied on the visual maps that were constructed but this time, the focus was on the two groups of employees and the pattern for each group was traced to the dominant logic that informed it. During this process, a distinctive set of institutional configurations that each process invoked was noticed.

For example, the statement from a *wasta*-rich employee that "we do not formally meet for coaching or performance feedback, my manager prefers to do these things informally over coffee and shisha in a coffeeshop" is clearly informed by a hybrid *wasta*/professional logic. On the other hand, "My cousin who works here is my *wasta,* but it is a weak *wasta*…when I

establish my goals in my annual plan, the manager clicks ‘agreed and discussed’ without even discussing anything with me” is clearly informed by a corrupt *wasta*/HRM logic. In all case companies, *wasta* or lack of it enabled one set of hybrid logics to become dominant in informing PA practice. As a result, the researcher was able “to come up with logical explanations that [qualitative scholars] term “the whys” for the underlying logic of the emergent relationships among constructs” (Gehman et al., 2018: p. 14).

Finally, and upon completion of the individual case studies, the researcher conducted cross-case analysis by cutting across the cases to probe for alternative theoretical relationships and constructs that might be a better fit for the data than the initial emergent theory (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989b). Moreover, to identify more generalisable PA processes and patterns of actions across the cases. Initially, the researcher juxtaposed cases in pairs and compared between them to identify similarities, differences, and any common dilemmas between them (Zeng, 2022). This step involved looking for similarities and differences across the various strings and theoretical constructs for the juxtaposed cases and further iteration between theory, data, and the literature was done to refine the findings and clarify the study contributions. However, since the case companies are highly similar and follow the same procedures, no substantial differences were found across the patterns except for the ones influenced by strong and weak *wasta* that were identified earlier. Consequently, the researcher was able to aggregate the visual maps into one that represents the multiplicity of logics in replicating PA processes for the four cases and abstract second order codes into aggregate theoretical dimensions as shown in Figure (9) below. Overall, analysing institutional logics from a routine dynamics perspective facilitated the understanding of how multiple logics are translated by actors and influenced replicating the PA routine the micro-level in GPSFs subsidiaries in the Middle East.

Figure 9: Data structure for chapter five



5.4 Findings

This section is presented following the suggestion by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) for the presentation and structure of multi-case findings. First, the researcher presents a processual narrative for the typical PA action script as implemented by the global HQ across the case companies. Afterwards, a second layer of the findings is presented that is suited to explain how professionals translate the multiple institutional logics of bureaucracy, professionalism, and wasta community into multiple and competing action patterns that replicate different versions of the PA process at the micro-level. This section aims to balance between "conveying both the emergent theory that is the research objective and [presenting] the rich empirical evidence that supports the theory" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007: 29).

5.4.1 Typical pattern of actions in performance appraisal

The companies in this study are considered top worldwide employers in the GPSFs industry. They place strong emphasis on HRM, as each subsidiary has an HR department which aims to develop employee performance. The PA process that is adopted in the four subsidiaries is informed by global PA best practices and there are virtually no differences between their policies. The typical pattern of actions for the PA starts when employees establish their annual goals and objectives using the global annual plan software. Subsequently, employees engage in professional work for clients and submit their deliverables to the main ERP system for review by their immediate supervisor. After work on client engagements is completed, they request performance feedback using the global feedback system. When doing this, they describe how they performed during specific clients engagements in relation to pre-set key performance indicators that are mainly linked to five overall strategic objectives and global values: leadership, teamwork, client satisfaction, technical skill deployment, and global exposure. In turn, the project manager agrees or disagrees with the employee on the feedback form and gives his version of their performance in relation to their monitoring and the projects employees delivered.

Each feedback form also consists of a rating scale ranging from 'below expectations' to 'outstanding' performance, which is completed by project managers, and the performance ratings for each client project must be explicit for the employees. As they complete various projects, they accumulate multiple formal performance feedback and ratings for each project on the global feedback system which indicate their average performance levels. Once a certain number of completed feedback forms have been completed, employees must attend a frequent/quarterly developmental feedback meeting with their immediate superiors to discuss their performance levels in relation to their established annual goals. By the end of the process, and as employees' project portfolio work is completed, managers discuss together their performance feedback and calibrate the employee ratings. These are then communicated to the employees through an official corporate email that also includes the associated rewards (i.e., salary increases and promotions). Shortly after this, employees attend the annual PA meeting, where they discuss their annual feedback, the received ratings, and their rewards.

Employees' rights are also protected within this pattern of action as the companies adopt an open-door policy by which employees should be able to raise any challenges they face and any concerns over the process in general. Moreover, employees can exercise their formal right to

appeal against project-specific feedback and ratings, as well as against their annual feedback and ratings.

5.4.2 Dominance of professional/HRM bureaucracy hybrid logics

When employees join companies, and although all those in our sample admitted to using *wasta* for their recruitment, the dominant logic that influences the PA process is that of hybrid professional/HRM bureaucracy. This was true for all cases as at the beginning of their careers, the employees stated that *wasta* was not evident in the organisation: "*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"* (A24, GPSF1). They perceived that development was mainly in terms of on-job training, although this was only true for junior positions as their work and efforts are 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 seniors questions whenever we were stuck doing a task. Your job is to learn when you are at a junior level." (A2, GPSF2)

> "Employees gloat about the *wasta*, we all know who is well connected. However, managers treat us all the same in our first year because work is relatively easy for everyone to do. Back then, we just worked on three areas." (A6, GPSF 3)

Therefore, it is easier for managers to trace junior employees' contribution to projects by using simpler descriptions. The participants in all cases indicated that they conformed to the bureaucratic HRM procedures and that at that time they perceived them to be effective. For example, they established their own annual goals sincerely in alignment with organisational strategic ones. Furthermore, they indicated that their performance feedback was in line with their expectations. The majority indicated receiving fair ratings at the end of the appraisal 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 were actually a professional in a global company." (A22, GPSF2)

> "At the beginning of the year, I sat briefly with my manager to establish my annual goals … I also requested performance feedback using the company system and I met with my manager." (A15, GPSF1)

However, in GPSF1, GPSF2, and GPSF3, some employees who received ratings below their expectations indicated that exercising their right to appeal had negative repercussions and that they were not considered seriously by management:

> "I appealed against the final rating I received to the management, and then I escalated my appeal further to the regional office after no one took it seriously here, but by doing so all hell broke loose." (A27, GPSF1)

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

5.4.3 Dominance of informal regional community logic of *wasta*

As employees succeed to upper positions, the boundaries between their levels and positions become blurred and the reality of the dominant logic of *wasta* begins to sink in. For instance, some senior level employees indicated that they did the work of junior levels and managers:

> "When you get promoted to a senior level, you get a huge number of responsibilities, and they are mainly beyond your formal job description. This is where *wasta* becomes important to reduce the workload you have." (A7, GPSF1)

> "One important aspect for your evaluations is to demonstrate that you can take more responsibilities. There isn't a clear definition of what these responsibilities are. For example, there are specific areas in the project that need to be completed by the senior manager and the partner, but I always do them." (A4, GPSF2)

Over time, in all case companies, employees find themselves segregated into two distinctive groups: powerful and powerless ones. They further perceive that this power distinction also extends to managers:

> "You must know something in terms of employees; there are informal groups in the organisation 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 belonged and they even have informal names for each group. It is ridiculous." (A21, GPSF2)

> "You have managers who are really powerful and others who are not and each has a number of unchanging employees in their groups." (A26, GPSF1)

In all case companies, when participants reflected on what made a powerful employee, they attributed it mainly to the strength of *wasta* possessed, regardless of expertise or qualifications.

In fact, they indicated that powerful employees were mainly unqualified to receive organisational rewards and that some admitted to making minimal levels of effort. For instance, the *wasta*-rich senior level employee, cited below, jokingly questioned his entitlement to rewards after making little effort:

> "… He [manager] said no, you didn't receive a promotion. Therefore, I was surprised because we were in August […] the following year, and focus on this sentence, I didn't even bother to give 30% of the performance I provided the previous year. I didn't make any effort, I didn't learn anything, and I received a promotion […] we copy and paste things from each other's feedback forms and it doesn't matter because it is not taken seriously. At the same time, I started to go to the director's office daily or weekly. I kidded around with him, I befriended him, I started to ask him about his day and so on, and we started hanging out together. Over time, our friendship grew stronger and the relationship became personal, he started asking favours and I started asking favours as well, and this is how I receive good ratings ever since." (A21, GPSF2)

> "There is always a powerful employee and a less powerful one, power is not derived from how well you perform, in our company it all relates to how strong your wasta is." (A20, GPSF3)

Power in such organisations is derived from client recruitment, blood ties, and governmental dealings. Powerful employees have many benefits, one of the most important being that they receive the highest rewards regardless of the effort they have made. To this end, *wasta* can bring varying competing logics to organisations:

> "Listen, if you do not have a strong *wasta* in the company then you are just a commoner. 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, or 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 like." (A18, GPSF2)

> "In the company, we all have *wasta* because in general you cannot join without it. However, it is different from one employee to another because some employees have strong first-degree *wasta*, such as being the son of a client or a government official for example, while others' *wasta* is second- or third-degree, which is much less important for being remotely connected. Employees with strong *wasta* act like they own the place." (A22, GPSF2)

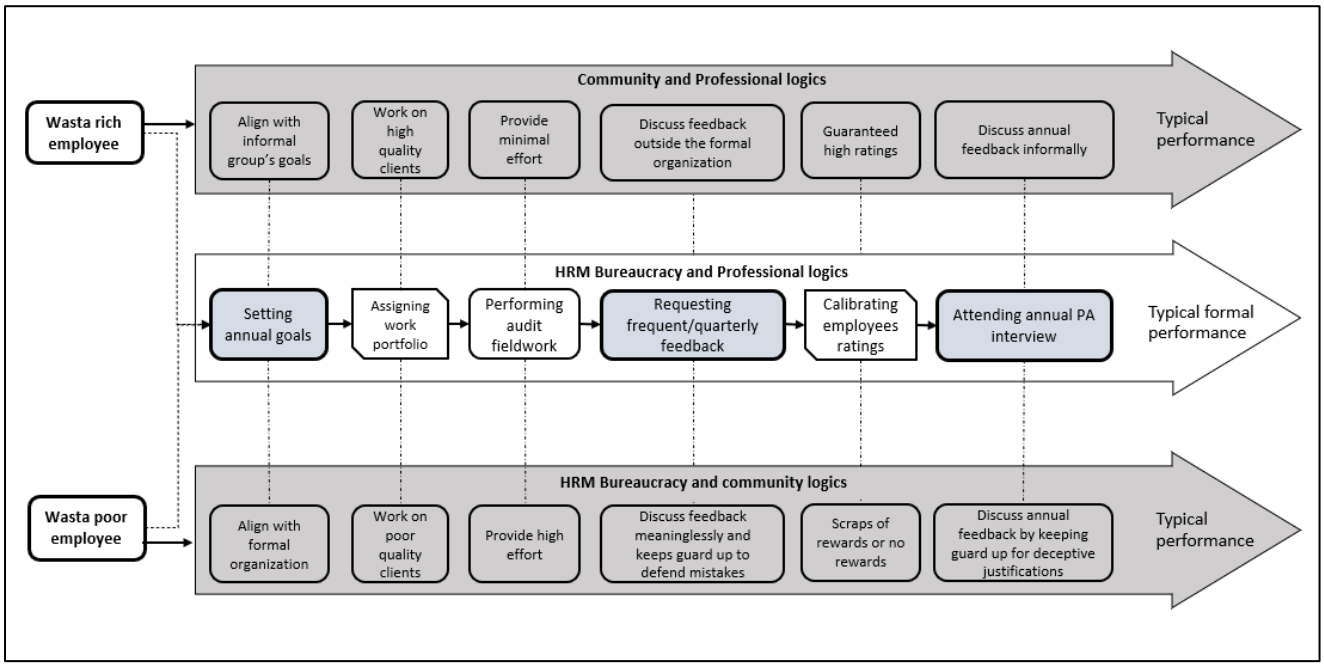
> "You must understand, the competition between these companies is very high, they need clients, and the easiest way to recruit clients is by taking advantage of an employee's *wasta*. Employees are not recruited without these calculated measures." (A12, GPSF4)

As Figure (10) below demonstrates, this unnatural arrangement forces a split in the logics that inform the PA routine in a way that the logic that informs the appraisal of powerful employees invokes a hybrid professional/*wasta* logic, while appraising powerless employees' performance is informed by community/corrupted HRM bureaucracy logic. The effect of this split in logics were observed in all case companies and can be seen in all the PA micro-level routines for each group, as explained below.

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

> "We copy and paste objectives from each other, and no one cares. The manager accepts them without even reading them." (A29, GPSF1)

Figure 10: The influence of multiple logics on replicating performance appraisal routines



> "… for example, it is common for employees in the powerful groups to engage in social drinking. I am a practising 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." (A21, GPSF2)

> "… they look for the similarity effect; that is what matters. There must be harmony in so many aspects, such as social status, religion, hobbies, and interests." (A30, GPSF1)

> "… *wasta* is a very complex concept in this company because it is very specific, you need to be from the same region, share the same religion, similar social status, etc…

these are considered the most important goals and factors that you must align with. For example, my managers and I share the same Christian religion, but because I come from a different region, I became an outcast." (A27, GPSF1)

The alignment of informal goals guarantees employees the least amount of work and the highest levels of training, development, and career progression. In fact, participants from both groups in all case companies expressed that the actual appraisal process was conducted in social outings, while the actual enactment of formal bureaucratised PA routines were simply window-dressing and less strict:

"… the formal process is just for show, we go out together and we blend business in our personal conversations" (A22, GPSF2)

"…my manager prefers to discuss work and performance after hours in a certain coffeeshop or while having dinner in a restaurant. We don't have time to do that during working hours" (A28, GPSF4).

Powerful employees can exercise their right to voice and appeal effortlessly without consequences. In GPSF1, GPSF2 and GPSF3, exercising formal rights is not necessary, since voicing their concerns is part of the informal relationship and appeals are mainly unneeded as rewards are granted informally and without question. In the rare cases when feedback or rewards are significantly below expectations, powerful employees can mobilise their *wasta* to formally voice their concerns and make a successful appeal.

"I know two employees who were able to use their *wasta* to appeal against a rating. They received an unfair 'met expectations' rating and used their *wasta* to correct this. Partners revised the work that these two employees delivered and decided to overturn the management decision and they were both promoted." (A19, GPSF1)

"If you have wasta, then your rating is mainly sorted out and predetermined. If things went in the opposite direction, these employees could take corrective measures through a phone call." (A25, GPSF2)

The most distinctive perk powerful employees receive relates to the client portfolio allocation process. Employees with strong *wasta* are able to mobilise their power to be given the best quality large client portfolios which require minimal levels of effort, and which contain further clients with global reach; in participants' words, "the best and easiest clients." This particularism in client allocation privileges powerful employees with the luxuries of time, exposure to global markets, and networking with industry leaders. Therefore, this pattern of actions resonates with a more professional/*wasta* logic whereby powerful employees reproduce a process that advances their professional and personal goals with the absence of the HRM

bureaucracy logic. For instance, this *wasta*-rich employee explains how portfolio allocation takes place:

> "I was able to mobilise a wasta in my third year here because I got engaged to a manager's nephew, by doing so I started working half the time I used to because I started to get assigned to less clients. This enhanced my quality of life in the company" (A29, GPSF1)

> "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 greatly influences the appraising process because these all contribute directly to 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 with one client, and this gives me time to learn and network, unlike other employees who must complete a project every week." (A18, GPSF2)

> "There is a well-known and powerful employee in our department who gets assigned one client for the whole year. We know the client and we worked on the project before. We know it wouldn't take a month to complete, but he gets a whole year." (A22, GPSF2)

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

> "…they [managers] only focus on mistakes, however minor they are. They like to make mountains out of molehills." (A14, GPSF1)

> "If the manager does not like a less powerful employee, he will sabotage him by spreading false rumours about his performance." (A1, GPSF2)

> "I was wronged so many times during work. I heard things about myself from other employees that I never did." (A12, GPSF4)

Powerless employees corroborate these managerial mistake mining and sabotage actions when they attend their frequent and annual performance feedback meetings, as although on paper they mainly receive satisfactory performance feedback, they are only told about 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!"* (A26, GPSF1). In some employees' words, this is a defensive managerial tactic that is employed to serve two

purposes. First, it reduces the number of reward-deserving employees competing for predetermined rewards. Second, it acts as a shock absorber that managers use during 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 can justify why we have been denied these benefits." (A16, GPSF1)

> "In my second year I received a low rating and during the annual appraisal interview I asked for a justification. My manager provided me with rubbish and vague justification to hide the real reason why I was not being promoted, which we all know. The manager promoted an employee with a strong *wasta*." (A17, GPSF3)

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

> "When I received an unfair rating in my second and third years, I appealed just for the sake of it and received unrealistic justifications. I did not 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." (A8, GPSF1)

> "I received unfair ratings last year and the year before. I stayed quiet and did not even request a justification or appeal against the decisions. I already know the justifications they are going to give me and throughout my seven years, I never heard about or seen a successful appeal. If you do not like it, you can simply quit; whether you are there or not, work is being done so they do not need you. I know many employees who resigned because of this." (A2, GPSF1)

> "…exercising appeal does not exist for employees like us, we are just meant to nod our heads in agreement with whatever decision the manager makes." (A12, GPSF4)

Powerless employees receive the worst portfolios that are not financially significant or lucrative to the company's bottom line, consisting of clients characterised by being small, complex, and time consuming, or "dirty jobs" as expressed by the majority. Therefore, powerless employees make significantly more effort than powerful ones. One of the main differences is that powerless employees receive a large number of dirty projects to be completed over a short period of time, whereas powerful ones receive a few high-quality

projects to be completed over longer periods. For instance, the participants indicated 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 the worst quality clients is burdensome, to the point that employees do the work of clients in order 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 when they are mentally exhausted. At the same time, this also creates a list of mistakes that managers can choose from to justify the loss of reward: *"the more you work the more mistakes you make."* (A23, GPSF2)

> "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 time, the quality of my deliverables is inferior, but no one cares because the projects I am working on are not profitable to the company." (A14, GPSF1)

> "In our line of industry, you receive a huge amount of work, and you are meant to make mistakes. This is why there are multiple layers of performance feedback, one during the projects and one after the project. The problem is that they do not use these to actually provide you with feedback, they only use them to accumulate the mistakes you did and use them against you when they rate you." (A20, GPSF3)

As a result, the most important influence of the *wasta* logic on the process of PA is to create a micro capitalist community within the organisations that mainly divides employees based on the richness of their symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1992; 1977), i.e., *wasta* connections, with each adhering to different institutional configurations. Employees who possess strong *wasta* are considered rich in their symbolic capital and therefore they become the bourgeois class in their organisation; receiving the highest rewards by making the least amount of effort. In line with Marx and Engels' (1848) definition of the bourgeoisie and proletariat to portray class conflict, powerful employees control the means for relationships informally in a symbolic capitalist social order, which are woven into the infrastructure of organisational 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 become more like a modern proletariat class, for whom a high level of effort is needed to take on the majority of low-quality projects, with minimal to no returns or rewards.

5.5 Discussion and contribution to theory

5.5.1 Negotiated nature of performance appraisal in the Middle East

The study was motivated by our limited understanding of how international PA of GPSFs adapts to the Middle Eastern context. In particular, it sheds light on how the *wasta* norm is deeply internalised in the process. By examining the temporally-ordered performance appraising process over time from a process-oriented perspective (DeNisi et al., 2021), the study provides a more complete picture of the enactment of the process in the Middle Eastern context at the micro-level. Most importantly, by adopting a routine dynamics perspective, it underscores the negotiated nature of PA between participants, thus uncovering a completely new conceptualisation of the process in the Middle East.

Studies examining PA in general and in non-western contexts in particular often conceptualise it from a structuralist perspective (even those taking interpretivist approaches). Within the structuralist perspective of PA, the process is conceptualised as having a deterministic impact on employees. Therefore, the majority of studies often reflect on the components of PA and employees' reactions in terms of causal relationships, in which one variable affects how another behaves (see Schleicher et al., 2018 for details of the mode of theorising that most literature adopts). This view is also not a stranger to qualitative PA studies as much of their conduct is also based on causal relationships. However, by adopting a micro-level process-oriented approach (Mohr, 1982), the findings of this study show how the meaning of PA is also negotiated among its participants. They demonstrate a process that is more oriented toward symbolic interactionism, as while employees interact with each other and the process, different meanings of the process emerge and its understanding is negotiated by actors (e.g., Mead and Schubert, 1934; Herbert, 1969).

This insight was made possible by examining PA as a routine at the micro-level and over time (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). By doing so, it enabled the observation of how participants negotiate their understandings of the process throughout their interaction with it and the other actors who are involved in its enactment. For instance, the findings show that several employees were able to change the status quo of the practice over time. While the process was performed adequately at the start of their employment, over the years and based on their power (or lack of it), some were able to negotiate its meaning so that it became an informal process that helped them advance their self-seeking behaviours without relying on HRM practices such

as PA. On the other hand, less powerful employees negotiated a different meaning of the process, as they acknowledge themselves as a political pawn within it.

The concept of negotiated understanding is not new, but is yet to be recognised in the literature, in particular in cases when actors negotiate a meaning for the process by relying on local cultural norms (as also shown in the meta-synthesis study, Chapter Four, by conceptualising the process as a social currency). Several studies have reflected on different meanings of the process that are largely beyond the scope of the definition of PA often found the literature. For instance, Yahiaoui et al. (2021) show how managers negotiate a more nuclear family-like type of PA based on Middle Eastern paternalistic management style. Similarly, by relying on local cultural Japanese authoritarian management, Vo and Stanton (2011: 3521) reflect on how many employees "considered the process as documentary requirement". Uddin et al. (2021) examined performance measurement and key performance indicators for a company in the Czech Republic, and by drawing on local cultural values that were rooted in the communist legacy, they noted that as employees made sense of performance measures, they attached different meanings to them, which extended to PA being termed as "stick instead of a carrot", "contradictory", and "unrealistic".

Therefore, by adopting a routine dynamics perspective that takes a middle position between that of structuralists and interactionists, this study extends our understanding of PA in the negotiated part of the process. To this extent, it is important to recognise that PA is negotiated, as this allows us to better understand how actors' subjectivity actually plays out in the process, and to what extent actors are able to change the meaning of the process or how its meaning changes as actors interact with it. By doing so, it is strongly recommended that negotiated understanding be added to the definition of PA, as it captures the essence of subjectivity and informal control. In this way, we will be able to stop looking at the process in terms of success or failure or in the continued debate over its effectiveness and start considering how the process is constructed and reproduced in the minds of individuals and their actions (Cloutier and Langley, 2020). This kind of understanding would restore order to the long-researched PA practice.

5.5.2 The role of performance appraisal in stability and change in the Middle East

In a more general sense, the findings shed light on the dynamics of stability and change in organisations in the Middle East, and in particular shows how *wasta* logic is important for their survivability. *Wasta* is often associated with social networks such as companies being affiliated

with powerful actors in the region (Mellahi et al., 2011). However, researchers have less often enquired about how survivability, and hence a healthy course of stability and change, is achieved beyond this claim. By examining PA from a routine dynamics perspective, the findings of this study show that it is at the core of stability and change, which is largely overlooked in related studies. It is shown that the failure of PA at the micro-level is closely linked to a corrupt process that is not merely prejudicial to employees, but also to how organisations in middle east maintain stability and change.

The survivability of GPSFs in particular is highly dependent on their achieving commercial success, which mainly involves increasing client recruitment efforts. However, in this case such recruitment is being conducted against institutionalised industry ethical and moral standards or professional integrity, with the majority of it is operationalised to accruing informal favours between actors in the organisations and their clients. These favours mainly involve the allocation of financial rewards and career progression opportunities for powerful actors who are part of this informal reciprocation contract, irrespective of their individual performance, which could be severely suboptimal. This finding is surprising, as it shows that instead of invoking a professional logic at the macro-level, companies are aggressively oriented toward a market logic only in which their status in the market is the basis of their attention and 'increasing profits' is their main strategy (Thornton et al., 2012). In light of the two PA processes, with each invoking a multiple set of institutional configurations mainly driven by *wasta* logic, the study advances our understanding of how the dynamics of stability and change in GPSFs in the Middle East are highly dependent on informal cultural practices that are mainly conducted on the backstage of macro- and micro-level organisational activities. The findings show the important role of PA as a rule-enforcing mechanism whose failure or success can influence the trajectory and moral compass of stability and change in non-western contexts in general, and in the Middle East in particular (this issue is discussed further in Chapter Seven).

5.5.3 Institutional logics: from the macro to micro

The study extends the discussion on how multiple institutional logics influence the enactment of PA practices. In particular, it considers how the enactment of global best practice PA routines in GPSFs operating in the Middle East are replicated and transformed by actors navigating professional, bureaucratic, and community logics. By conceptualising *wasta* in terms of community logic and by adopting a routine dynamics perspective to unpack how multiple logics translate into actions at the micro-level, the study advances our understanding

of how the regional community logic of *wasta* can disjoin between professional and HRM bureaucratic logics in GPSFs operating in the Middle East. With the study findings, it is further shown how, over time, multiple competing logics can be foregrounded and backgrounded as mechanisms by organisational actors in the same organisation can be performing different competing processes, each invoking a distinctive set of multiple institutional configurations. For instance, when employees join a company, the dominant logic is the hybrid HRM/professional one, while as they progress through the organisational levels, the informal *wasta* logic becomes more visible, as it disjoins the professional and HRM logics according to groups of actors. Therefore, multiple but distinct logics are invoked at the micro-level simultaneously; however, each set of these is reproduced separately. For powerful employees, HRM logic becomes largely absent and rejected, as their organisational relationships and performance are informed by the professional/*wasta* hybrid logic, while less powerful employees navigate a more corruptive version of HRM bureaucratic/*wasta* logic.

These findings contrast with recent findings on how multiple logics influence PA in GPSFs. Alvehus (2018) examined the influence of professional and HRM bureaucratic logic on GPSFs operating in Sweden and concluded that although "hybridity between conflicting logics may appear on an organisational level…a single logic dominates in everyday work" (p. 31). The findings of the current study, however, are in contrast to this, as by including the informal regional community logic of *wasta,* the study was able to show how different configurations of multiple logics can dominate everyday work in GPSFs subsidiaries at the micro-level and how each can be navigated separately. This sheds light on the importance of regional community logic for GPSFs because of its power to disjoin between other interinstitutional logics at the micro-level, which requires a new social order for stability and harmony to be maintained. More importantly, this brings back our attention to conceptualising institutional logics in terms of Swidler's (1986) cultural tool kit, which can be mobilised by powerful actors at the macro (organisational) and micro (individual) levels to advance organisational goals and ensure survival (McPherson and Sauder, 2013).

At a more macro-level, the study advances understanding of the importance and primacy of regional community logic as a tool for GPSFs operating in the Middle East. With the findings, we show how the community logic of *wasta* consists of cultural norms that can be used as a means (and therefore as a tool) and as an end (and therefore as taken-for-granted prescriptions). In this case, it is shown that the harnessing of logics as a tool (a means) at the micro-level is at the disposal of powerful participants (i.e., organisations and actors with *wasta*), whereas

invoking logics as taken-for-granted social prescriptions (as an end) is mainly involuntary for less powerful participants. At both the macro and micro-levels, the findings show that by invoking the informal regional community logic of *wasta*, actors can alleviate the navigation of the burdensome and perpetually complex institutional configurations. By mobilising the regional *wasta* logic, organisations can relieve themselves from navigating through different competing logics with different sources of legitimacy, such as market logic (e.g., by recruiting clients informally to maximise profits) and state logic (e.g., bypassing lengthy government bureaucratic procedures) (Thornton et al., 2012) with more emphasis on market logic, as illustrated in the study findings. At the micro-level, the findings show that powerful actors also harness this particular logic to alleviate the navigation between HRM and professional logics.

The findings provide more finely grained understanding of the dual role (natural configuration and as a tool) that community, bureaucratic, and professional logics play within the interinstitutional orders and suggests that the institutional environment is more dynamic than previously acknowledged. Although in this case on the primacy of Middle Eastern *wasta* logic in informing the ongoing organisational activities of GPSFs was elaborated, a similar influence of informal regional community logic is indirectly portrayed in several studies that have examined isomorphism in PA in similar collectivist cultures (e.g., Horak and Yang, 2019; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Vo and Stanton, 2011). Therefore, regional community logic is an important institutional order that influences how global practices adapt in different contexts.

Overall, the study shows the importance of examining institutions at the micro-level because of the rich and finely grained understanding it can offer to the field. The findings indicate how regional community logic is used on both macro and micro-levels to relieve the effortful navigation between competing logics. At the macro-level, it enables GPSFs to maximise profits in collectivist cultures and emerging markets by bypassing ethical morality and state bureaucracy. At the micro-level, the dominance of regional community logic disjoins, then foregrounds and backgrounds, other competing logics to inform practice, as illustrated by the formation of a micro (symbolic) capitalist community and how each class navigate separate logics.

5.5.3.1 Comparative capitalism and negative institutional complementarity

Institutional theory is rooted in the political economy field. Scholars within this stream have started to consider the influence of comparative capitalism on the practice of PA (Houldsworth et al., 2021). Recently, Wood and Schnyder (2020) criticised the current state of affairs in the

emerging market comparative capitalism literature, claiming that 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 GPSFs are headquartered) and host (where subsidiaries are located) countries share colonial roots as the latter was colonised by the home country for brief period of time; as such, the associated practices are often resisted, since they are seen as perpetuating the consumption of western values rooted in the colonial past (Klein et al., 1998). To this end, GPSFs face challenges related to legitimacy and acceptance when they expand into the Middle East. In relation to this, the international business literature posits that *wasta* is a primary mode of entry for multinational companies (MNCs) 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 professional/HRM/*wasta* community logics in the Middle East, the study was able to elaborate on the mechanisms that uncover a more backstage role for *wasta* and the institutional configurations that influence the transformation of the organisational social order from a decentralised professional hierarchy to a dual-class micro capitalist community that feeds on symbolic capital. By showing how the regional community logic of *wasta* can be used to disjoin between professional integrity and commercial success, and how powerful actors can use *wasta* logic to advance their professional goals, the study points to a concept that is largely overlooked in comparative capitalism, namely the neo-colonialism that is perpetuated by the expansion of global firms (Boussebaa et al., 2012).

The findings highlight how the logic of *wasta* is deeply rooted across all organisational levels. In addition to transforming PA at the micro-level, and to advancing individuals' professional goals unethically, the findings show that *wasta* is also used to achieve commercial success as it is heavily mobilised across all organisational levels with the sole purpose of recruiting clients, with minimal regard for the moral and ethical repercussions that are associated with such aggressive market competition between firms. The study shows how recently post-colonial capitalism has been perpetuated in emerging markets and therefore reflects on the contaminated ethical environment GPSFs are able to harness and create to exploit resources from developing

countries and emerging markets (Mellahi et al. 2011). By taking advantage of this immoral and ethically contaminated environment, GPSFs in the Middle East are more able to advance their market capitalist goals via elite actors, without having to navigate between the competing interinstitutional logics. Therefore, the findings of this study further provide nuanced understanding at the micro and macro-levels of "the preferential treatment, and access to scarce and highly valuable political resources" (Mellahi et al., 2011: 408) that MNCs enjoy by being affiliated with powerful local partners.

Moreover, this study further provides a performative illustration on discrimination in the workplace (Jones et al., 2017; Ghumman et al., 2013; Van Laer and Janssens, 2011). This particular issue is lightly touched upon in the international HRM and PA literature, and mainly taps into discrimination related to age (Schroder et al., 2009), gender (Ozturk and Tatli, 2016), and religion (Ghumman et al., 2013) in western contexts. In non-western contexts, several studies reflected on discriminatory behaviours in the workplace with less emphasis on how such behaviours can take place in organisations (Soltani et al., 2018; Alserhan et al., 2010; Shen et al., 2009). For instance, Soltani et al. (2018) examined the extent HRM practices are inclusive of employees right to participate and voice their concerns in the building construction industry in the Iranian context and their findings show that such rights for foreign employees were neglected by the management and that they "were perceived to be economically and socially inferior workforce" (p. 1044) from local workers. This indirectly shows that some kind of discrimination between foreign and local workers was in place which impacts the quality of life and work for non-elite employees. Significantly, such issues must have been addressed in the implemented HRM practices. By showing how different processes informed by dysfunctional institutional configurations for the same practice could be replicated on at the micro-level by elite and non-elite actors, this study provides a more realistic picture on how subtle and explicit discrimination can take place in organisations.

5.5.4 Routine dynamics, inflexible truces, and conflicting logics

The literature on routine dynamics mainly considers the importance of actors' actions in making routines dynamic. Within this literature, little empirical research has investigated how the enactment of routines enables actors to accomplish conflicting goals (e.g., Salvato and Rerup, 2018; D'Adderio, 2014; Danner- Schroder and Geiger, 2016). Furthermore, the highest extent of conflict that these studies examine is at the organisational level, meaning knowledge is limited to how routine enactment enables actors to cope with conflicting more higher-level phenomena such as institutions (Powell and Rerup, 2017). This study remedies this limitation

by showing how routine participants can navigate conflicting institutional logics at the macro-level by segmenting/disjoining them and reproducing multiple routines at the micro-level.

Studies that have examined how routines allow actors to cope with conflicting phenomena suggest that they are able to create multiple sets of routines (D'Adderio, 2014) or perform regulatory actions (Salvato and Rerup, 2018) to accomplish conflicting goals. Most importantly, the studies have been conducted in contexts in which every organisational actor "has a voice, and they interact to build mutual understanding" (ibid: 200). For instance, in D'Adderio's (2014) study, conflict between different groups is shown to exist, with efforts made to change the routine, although these, and the accompanying changes, did not include self-seeking behaviours or go beyond what the routine ought to accomplish as two sets of routines were created and performed by all participants at the same time. Salvato and Rerup (2018) also found that conflict between routine participants was not translated beyond the conflicting goals of efficiency and modern design, and that they implemented a single product development routine to accomplish these goals. This study extends the literature on routine dynamics regarding how actors can reproduce and replicate routines to navigate conflicting institutional logics within a single routine. However, as opposed to the contexts that engender mutual understanding between routine participants, this case study in the Middle Eastern context has highlighted the incorporation of self-seeking behaviours, divergent understandings, power, and politics in the reproduction of routines.

As opposed to the current findings in the routine dynamics literature, the evidence in this study shows that routines in fact enable actors to cope with conflicting logics. In particular, this study extends this conversation by focusing on "how front-line workers…contribute to managing conflicting demands" (Salvato and Rerup, 2018: 203). The findings of this study show that actors reproduced two sets of the same routine that were enacted by different groups of actors separately. What is different in this study is that actors were able to link the goals for each set with different institutional configurations. Hence, on the outset the two sets appear to achieve the same high-order goal, –that is appraising performance. However, by linking the routine's goals with different cultural repertoires (or ends), the reproduction of each set at the micro-level becomes completely divergent, which influences the dynamics of the routines in an unfavourable way.

Furthermore, by focusing on how powerful actors (*wasta* rich) and less powerful ones (*wasta* poor) reproduced the two competing sets to accomplish the same routine, the study sheds light

on the power and politics associated with routine enactment (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013). Explicit examination of politics and power is absent in the majority of routine dynamics research, much of whose efforts are confined to the assumption about routines that argues "that enacted patterns constitute a truce between otherwise competing parties and conflicting goals" (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018: 135). Scholars has examined truces in two main ways; the first considers them as periods of stability that precede and follow interruption and change (Zbaracki and Bergen, 2010; Nelson and Winter, 1982). The second way conceptualises truces in terms of a process, as an ongoing effortful phenomenon that is dynamic and changes over time (Salvato and Rerup, 2018). Within these two conceptualisations, conflict between routine participants might reach a level that cannot be sustained and in which truces become more susceptible to breaking (e.g., Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010). However, the main difference between the two ways is that in the former, scholars emphasise the important role of management intervention in eliminating conflict and reinstating truces, whereas the latter emphasise how conflict is resolved by participants' actions, with little reliance on management intervention. In this regard, Salvato and Rerup (2018: 201) state that:

> "the truce as process stays constantly poised between stability and flexibility, thereby remaining sufficiently inflexible so that the known pattern of the routine can be performed but not so inflexible that experimentation and accommodations cannot be used to accomplish conflicting goals."

In this study, however, truces between powerful and less powerful actors were mainly seen to be inflexible and conflict remained salient during the enactment and replication of routines at the micro-level. At the same time, and although the truces were inflexible and conflict salient between routine participants, they did not break down and the status quo for the corrupt process was maintained. Most importantly, what made the truces inflexible is how powerful actors harnessed the material and cultural norms of multiple institutional orders to inform the goals for their version of the routine and those for the version that less powerful participants enacted; thereby maintaining conflict and keeping truces inflexible at the same time. Although truces in this case were inflexible, the findings show that conflict was not eliminated or suppressed by them, similar to the findings of Salvato and Rerup (2018), and that conflict was embraced by participants, but by force rather than negotiation.

By reviewing the literature on routine dynamics, there are two studies in the routine dynamics literature that point to inflexible truces that are hard to break, similar to that revealed in this study; however, these might have escaped the attention of their authors. In particular, we can find this type of truce in studies that examine deceit in routine dynamics and its dark side, such as those of Eberhard et al. (2019) and den Nieuwenboer et al. (2017), who clearly show that conflict between routine participants is highly salient, but that somehow this conflict did not break the truce between participants as the actors complied with the corrupt version of the routine either willingly or unwillingly. The findings of this study also provide an explanation of how powerful actors can manipulate cultural repertoires, as is the case in Eberhard et al.'s (2019) and den Nieuwenboer et al.'s (2017) studies, to replicate different sets of routines, and subjugate actors into compliance. Therefore, this study also furthers our understanding of how actors can manipulate the institutional configurations in their environment to deprive truces of their flexibility, while maintaining salient conflict levels between actors.

5.6 Implications for theory and practice, avenues for future research, and study limitations

By examining in-depth the complex role of *wasta* in the Middle East in the replication of PA practices, the study provides valuable recommendations in relation to theory and practice. In terms of institutional theory for international HRM practices (Gooderham et al., 2019; Mayrhofer et al., 2019), it shows the importance of incorporating cultural norms and values into the way actors reproduce the PA process and reconceptualising them as logics, not simply taking the characteristics of the context into consideration when examining international PA. This should extend our understanding of how national cultures play a role in replicating PA and thus improve attempts to explain how and why its adoption succeeds or fails. Moreover, the study shows the value of adopting a practice and process approach to the investigation of PA at the micro-level. Employing such perspectives proved valuable in providing rich and finely grained understanding of how PA is in fact replicated, providing a shift from relying on actors' reactions to understanding the effectiveness of PA, to focusing on the actions they take during the replication of the process. Additionally, A practice and process approach is also useful in uncovering mechanisms related to the success or failure of the replication of PA that are more theoretically relevant to improving the chance of adoption success. Therefore, more studies should adopt the spirit of practice and process approaches to further advance knowledge of the long-debated field of convergence-divergence in HRM and PA. Finally, the cases

examined in this study are highly similar because they belong to the same unit and operate in the same country, future studies should adopt the spirit of this study by selecting polar cases or cases from different industries.

By examining the influence of dysfunctional institutional logics on the replication of PA and uncovering the discriminatory purposes of the process in this specific context, recommendations are made to PA practitioners regarding more serious social issues, such as how discrimination can take place in organisations, and how actors incorporate their political interests in the process, thus manipulating it. By doing so, it is important to establish a layer of control in the process design that prevents elite actors from taking advantage of competing cultural norms and using them as tools during process replication as then they might become dominant patterns as shown in this study. In this respect, hybridising PA prior to adoption to fit local cultural norms is vital and not merely a recommendation. Because actors are too knowledgeable and reflective (Feldman et al., 2015), and the greater the extent to which logics are competing, the more opportunities there will be for elite actors to exploit the cultural norms that constitute these logics (Thornton et al., 2012) to advance their self-interest at the expense of other (non-elite) actors. This in turn could lead to serious social issues, such as discrimination in the workplace (Jones et al., 2017; Ghumman et al., 2013; Van Laer and Janssens, 2011). More effort should be focused to preventing such contemporary social issues, in which PA plays an essential part.

Although the study makes valuable theoretical and practical contributions and provides avenues for future research in the PA field, it has certain limitations. First, as valuable as the insights provided by the non-managerial employees are, their perceptions of supervisors are dependent on their interpretations. Therefore, future studies should also take supervisors, managers, and key institutional actors such as the HQ into consideration. Moreover, the boundary settings for the study are confined to GPSFs in the Middle East, meaning generalisation to other contexts involving different institutional configurations is difficult. The spirit of the study should therefore be replicated in different organisational and institutional settings to advance our understanding of how PA is replicated.

Chapter Six: The role of negative emotions on replicating the performance appraisal process

Abstract

The role of feelings and emotions in actors' experience of organisations has been largely overlooked and side-lined by performance appraisal researchers in particular, and organisational and management researchers in general. In performance appraisal, feelings and emotions are examined in terms of appraisal reactions, but little is known about how their co-constituency with the process influences how actors replicate it at the micro-level. This study adopts a practice and process perspective to examine how negative emotions influence change in the replication of PA routines. By conducting interviews and collecting archival data about the enactment of such routines in four GPSFs operating in the Middle East and operationalising negative affective events that participants experienced in unfair performance appraisal treatment, the study yields valuable insights. First, it uncovers emotion regulation to be the main mechanism that contributes to change in performance appraising routines. By investigating this mechanism further, the study distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic negative emotion regulation mechanisms and highlights how actions used to regulate negative emotions intrinsically are largely covert and take place on the backstage of performance appraising routines. Through these findings, the study contributes to the performance appraisal literature an understanding of how negative feelings from injustice in the PA process influence covert change when actors replicate the process, and further highlights how the meaning of the process is negotiated by the way in which negative emotions are regulated. These findings also contribute to routine dynamics theory nuanced understanding of the changes in routines and organisations that are generated from the regulation of negative emotions. In particular, by highlighting how covert unfavourable changes take place on the backstage of organisational routines, the study unravels a plethora of changes to routines beyond those currently conceptualised in the literature.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with feelings and emotions in the performance appraisal (PA) process; in particular, how negative emotions influence the replication of PA routines at the micro-level. Feelings and emotions constitute an important part of social reality through which organisational processes are intertwined (Salvato and Rerup, 2011; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). They operate at different levels of reality, as they can be physiological, behavioural, or cultural (Turner, 2009; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). The terms 'feelings' and 'emotions' are often used interchangeably, as there is no clear distinction between them (Gross, 2008); accordingly, this chapter uses this approach. They are defined as "lived, believed-in, situated, temporally embodied experience[s]" (Denzin, 1985: 66) and include basic feelings and emotions (such as love, anger, and joy) and social ones (such as guilt and shame), as well as general affective states (e.g., anxiety and satisfaction) (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). In general, feelings and emotions in the PA literature have been predominantly operationalised in terms of appraisal reactions in order to examine the effectiveness of appraising employees' performance in different settings (see review by Levy and Williams, 2004). In particular, scholars have mainly relied on the generalised state of affect, such as satisfaction (e.g., Selvarajan and Cloninger, 2012; Kampkötter, 2017) and (un)fairness (Harbi et al., 2017), as well as acts padded in affect, such as affective commitment.

However, this overly focused view on feelings and emotions as a variable that either reflects the success or failure of the PA process shows that scholars mainly consider emotions to be ornamental to the process, rather than central. However, they are central facets of social reality (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995), and most importantly, they precondition actors' understandings and actions when they are replicating organisational processes (Baldessarelli, 2021). In this respect, it is important to move from examining feelings and emotions in terms of instruments used to determine the effectiveness of PA, to examining how they influence the replication of the process over time. In particular, such an approach to examining feelings and emotions in the literature is insufficient to understand negative contemporary organisational issues that are highly related and involved in PA, such as abusive supervision (Oh and Farh, 2017), supervisor bullying (Samnani and Singh, 2014) and discrimination (as illustrated in Chapter Five of this thesis).

Similarly, feelings and emotions in organisational studies are very underexamined and pushed to the periphery of organisational analysis (Cohen, 2007), in particular organisational routines

(Baldessarelli, 2021). Such routines, defined as a pattern of interdependent actions, are one of the building blocks of organisations and require recursion between feelings, thoughts, and actions (Feldman, 2000). Similar to PA, routine dynamics scholars have directed their attention away from feelings and emotions (Baldessarelli, 2021) as actors' actions are commonly at the centre of the analysis of routines (Dittrich, 2021; Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Within the routine dynamics literature, few studies directly or indirectly reflect on how emotions contribute to fundamental changes in routines (Salvato and Rerup, 2018, Eberhard et al., 2019, den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017). Nonetheless, within the scant body of research on emotions in routine dynamics, understanding remains limited to their role in replicating organisational routines, in particular negative ones. As argued by Baldessarelli (2021: 357), "we cannot overlook emotions in the study of lived experiences and human actions that constitute [processes]". Therefore, in lines with these insights, the following question is posed: *How do negative feelings and emotions influence the replication of the PA routine?*

The study adopts an embedded multiple case study design and relies on routine dynamics theory to address the role of negative feelings and emotions in understanding and replicating PA routines. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with 30 non-managerial employees from GPSFs located in the Arabian Peninsula and from related documentary sources. By analysing the data from practice and process perspectives, the study yielded several key insights. First, 'emotion regulation' is revealed as the underlying mechanism that explains how negative feelings and emotions influence the replication of performance appraising routines at the micro-level. Second, by focusing on how employees regulate their negative feelings and emotions, the findings reveal that selecting the situation, altering the meaning of the situation, and altering the emotional significance of the situation are the negative emotion downregulation strategies that are directly involved in participants' understanding of routines. In addition, it is revealed that distancing, working-around, and buffering are the main actions taken by employees to regulate their negative emotions during the performance of routines.

Third, the findings illustrate that different emotion regulation processes have different impacts on the understanding and enactment of routines, as some (e.g., selecting situations and altering the meaning) have a negative impact on PA routine replication, whereas altering the meaning of the situation does not contribute to a substantial change in routine action patterns. Finally, by focusing on emotion regulation in PA, the findings show that the meaning of the process and the goals associated with it are mostly negotiated by interactions with the process and other

participants over time and that much of this negotiation occurs at the backstage of routines and not meant for public consumption.

Through these findings, the study extends understanding of the centrality of emotions in the performance appraising process and provides nuanced understanding of how negative emotions resulting from unfair performance appraising practices influence the replication of the process at the micro-level (Bladessarelli, 2021). By adopting a routine dynamics perspective to examine PA at the micro-level, the study highlights the negotiated nature of PA routines across different employees, which emerge from interactions with the process and other participants. Moreover, the study contributes to the theory of routine dynamics on how emotions influence the replication of routines (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Feldman and Pentland, 2003). In particular, emotion regulation is shown to be the underlying mechanism that contributes to maintaining and changing routines. Regulating emotions during the replication of routines advances our understanding of how feelings and emotions can be both externally and internally regulated, and how emotion regulation mechanisms, in relation to negative emotions in particular, are generative of change for organisational routines, hence contributing a nuanced understanding of the role of feelings and emotions in stability and change to organisations (Nicolini, 2012). Finally, through the examination of negative feelings and emotions, the study contributes to the backstage of routine dynamics details of how some negative emotion downregulation mechanisms motivate actors to incorporate deception in their version of the routine, therefore highlighting the mechanisms for covert change in routine structures and performances (Eberhard et al., 2019; den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017).

6.2 Literature review

6.2.1 Emotions and the performance appraising process

Appraising employees' performance, that is, identifying, measuring, and developing it, is mainly conducted by the combined dyadic actions of employees and supervisors (Murphy, 2020). The dyadic relationships that are required for the enactment of the process require social exchanges between employees and supervisors that are enveloped with positive and negative feelings and emotions. The literature on PA is plentiful, with evidence on feelings and emotions and they could be presented by relying upon Ashforth and Humphrey's (1995) classification of emotions as general stable affective states, basic emotions, and social emotions.

General stable affective states attract the most attention and are amongst the most frequently drawn upon emotions in studies of PA effectiveness. Within this classification, scholars have mainly focused on satisfaction or its absence as a reaction that indicates the effectiveness of PA (see review by Levy and Willams, 2004), since if employees are satisfied, then the process will be perceived as effective. Similarly, other general stable affective states have been drawn upon, such as anxiety (Bell et al., 2020) and stress (Samnani and Singh, 2014). Basic feelings, on the other hand, are reflected more in studies which examine PA through an organisational justice lens and social exchange theory in general, and often reflect on employees' negative feelings and emotions as a by-product of resentment, outrage, and anger resulting from unfair processes (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997), with other basic emotions such as happiness and sadness are touched upon in the passing. Finally, social emotions can be found in studies that examine PA in non-western cultures in terms of shame and saving face (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2017). These indicate the coexistence of a wide range of basic, social, and generalised feelings and emotions in employee performance appraising process which warrant investigation in more detail.

This study focuses on negative feelings and emotions, since contention between employees and supervisors is one of the most frequent, yet implicit, themes in the PA literature. Several researchers have indicated that by design, PA is a process that generates contention in this dyadic relationship, and therefore becomes fertile ground for negative feelings and emotions to emerge. Much of the contention between employees and supervisors can be traced to the gathering of information and decision-making about employees based on the subjective interpretations of supervisors (Murphy, 2020; Schleicher et al., 2018).

Researchers across different disciplines discussed several shortcomings in the PA process, including supervisors' subjectivity and bias (Harbi et al., 2017; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Prendergast and Topel, 1993; Moers, 2005); supervisors' abuse (Oh and Farh, 2017); supervisors' bullying (Samnani and Singh, 2014); unreliable performance information (Murphy, 2020; DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006); feedback and rating inaccuracy (Bizzi, 2018; Kluger and DeNisi, 1996); and unfair and ineffective processes (Greenberg, 1990). Since PA process is associated with tangible and intangible rewards and sanctions (Murphy, 2020), these shortcomings can mean that employees experience a myriad of negative feelings throughout the replication of the PA process. As such, some studies have drawn upon a wider range of associated negative feelings, such as stress, frustration, and anger (Jacobs et al., 2014; Chen

and Spector 1992; Cropanzano et al. 2011, Skarlicki and Folger, 1997), and resentment, inferiority, powerlessness, and anxiety (Ivancevich et al., 1982).

The importance of negative feelings and emotions in PA stems from the way they can motivate employees to react with counterproductive and retaliatory behaviours which contribute negatively to organisational performance (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Crucially, such behaviours are largely covert and kept hidden from public display, which contributes to our limited understanding of how they influence the process from within (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Nonetheless, and although a variety of feeling and emotion classifications are found in the literature, they are mainly examined in terms of being antecedent or consequential to the process, and less is known about how they influence it from within. For instance, satisfaction is generally used as an outcome variable to assess PA effectiveness. Basic feelings such as anger or happiness resulting from the process are largely consequences that are mentioned in the passing, with social feelings such as shame considered antecedents for individuals in non-western contexts to improve their performance (Yahiaoui et al. 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2017). However, feelings and emotions are not merely antecedents or consequences of enacting processes in organisations; they are also experienced throughout the process, motivate actions, and are susceptible to change over time. By focusing on emotions as antecedents and consequences, we are limiting our understanding to their central role in the PA process. In particular, the influence of negative feelings and behaviours on the replication of the PA process is largely under-examined.

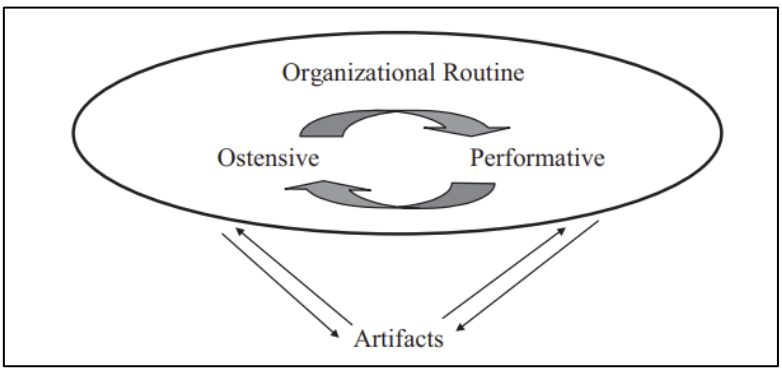
In general, feelings and emotions are considered important facets of social reality as social interactions are imbued with feelings, and they are likely to influence how people act (Baldessarelli, 2021). As explained by Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), this limited focus on emotions in management and organisational studies is attributed to scholars' beliefs "that emotion is the antithesis of rationality" (p. 98). This belief has contributed to pushing emotions to the periphery (Cohen, 2007), and to overlooking their influence on organisational practices, processes, and actors' rationality (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995), so by extension to the PA process. To this end, we still know little about how feelings and emotions influence the replication and the enactment of organisational processes in general, and the PA in particular. To address this gap, it is necessary to delve into the micro-level and examine the mutual constituency of feelings, thought, and actions throughout PA replication. Routine dynamics theory is suitable for this, as it focuses on how actors perform recognisable and interdependent patterns of actions through a recursive relationship between thoughts, feelings, and actions over

time (Feldman, 2000). By examining the replication of PA at the micro-level, we will be able to uncover the patterns through which negative feelings influence the performativity of the process. Therefore, this chapter aims to operationalise the negative feelings associated with unfairness in PA (e.g., frustration, being upset) of employees in GPSFs operating in the Middle East and to examine their influence on routinised organisational activities.

6.2.2 Organisational routines

One of the most efficient and effective ways to accomplish things in organisations is to routinise them. Having recognisable patterns of interdependent actions is essential for organisations to identify common paths for the goals they aim to achieve (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). Feldman and Pentland argue that organisational routines "arise because they are functional; they minimize cost and increase managerial control, while maximizing the legitimacy of the organization" (p. 97). As shown in Figure (11) below, they comprise two related aspects that interact recursively: the ostensive and the performative (Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013). The former embodies the abstract and generalised idea of the routine and guides, refers to, and accounts for organisational members' actions, whereas the latter embodies the actual performance of the routines, i.e., concrete actions, and it creates, maintains, and modifies the ostensive aspect (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Pentland and Feldman, 2005; 2007). More recently, researchers have started to adopt a process vocabulary to show the ostensive and performative aspects as generative, by referring to them as 'patterning' and 'performing' respectively (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Feldman, 2016).

Figure 11: Organisational routines are generative systems



Adopted from Pentland and Feldman (2005)

Through this recursive relationship between actions, feelings, and thoughts (Feldman, 2000), organisational routines are created and recreated within and through the context of joint activity (Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013). In addition to the recursive relationship between patterning and performing, the (re)creation of organisational routines is influenced by their embeddedness

in both material (i.e., artefacts) and social contexts as depicted in Figure (11). For example, D'Adderio (2014: 1347) maintains that "routines and their social and material contexts are mutually and dynamically constituted through enactment," and that the features of these contexts themselves shape and are shaped by actors' interpretations and negotiations.

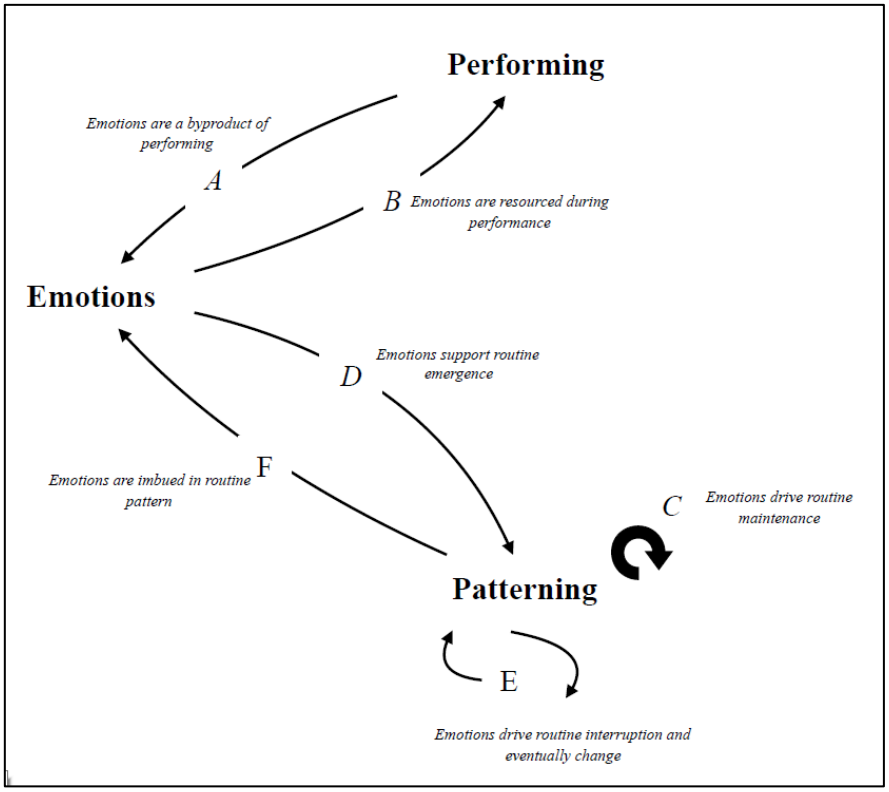
The majority of organisational routines are performed by organisational actors, so routine dynamics scholars have placed actors' actions at the centre of routine analysis (e.g., Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Since actors' cognition and action are the main instruments that organisations use to conduct their routines, their enactment is inherently subjective, and almost always produces variations in performance (Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013; Pentland et al., 2012). Nonetheless, one important goal in the design of organisational routines, and hence their (re)creation in social and material contexts, is to establish a common way among actors to accomplish tasks, as these tasks are turned "into multiple specialized routines…in such a way that, eventually, each routine contributes a partial result to the accomplishment of the overall task" (Kremser and Schreyogg, (2016: 3). This view emphasises the interconnectedness of organisational routines and the importance of their harmonious execution to accomplish goals; i.e., harmony in variation.

In general, research in routine dynamics provides us with performative understanding of how actors' actions achieve stability and change in organisations. Studies include detailed and finely grained understanding of how over time participants' actions introduce variations into routine performance, and how some of these variations are selected and retained for future enactment of the routine (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). In this way, researchers have directed attention to how several facets of social reality, such as talk (Dittrich et al., 2016); intentions (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018); roles (Eberhard et al., 2019; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013); conflict (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergen, 2010); and emotions (Baldessarelli, 2021) influence the trajectory of routine variation. Within the body of literature on routine dynamics, emotions have received the least attention from scholars in understanding their influence on routines replication. In particular, the involvement and emergence of negative feelings and emotions, as a by-product of the performance of routines, is elicited indirectly in several organisational routine studies (e.g., Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Aroles and Mclean, 2016; Bertels et al., 2016; Rerup and Feldman, 2011; Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010; Feldman, 2000). This will be explored in more detail in the following section.

6.2.3 Feelings and emotions in routine dynamics

As explained earlier, feelings and emotions are lived and situated experiences that occur within the social reality of actors who perform and replicate organisational processes. In addition to classifying them in terms of basic, social, and generalised states (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995), Baldessarelli (2021) explains that they can be classified in terms of duration and intensity. For example, anger and outrage can be intense but short-lived, whereas serenity is a low intensity emotion and can be more persistent. Feelings and emotions emerge as organisational actors subjectively respond to a triggering stimulus in the lived experience, such as interaction with other organisational members, artefacts, and events (Elfenbein, 2007).

Figure 12: Emotions in routine dynamics



Source: adopted from Baldessarelli (2021: 360)

The literature on feelings and emotions in organisational routines is at an embryonic stage, since only recently have scholars turned their attention to this under-examined aspect of social reality. In particular, this interest materialised in the recent *Cambridge Handbook of Routine Dynamics* (Feldman et al., 2021) by Baldessarelli (2021), who introduced a framework as shown in Figure 12 above for emotions in routine dynamics by reviewing "the empirical evidence on how emotional dynamics are entangled with the processes of performing and patterning" (p. 357). Her framework highlights mechanisms by which emotions influence the

patterning and performing of organisational routines. In her review, Baldessarelli shows that feelings and emotions emerge as a 'by-product' of performing or are 'resourced' when performing a routine. With regard to patterning (the ostensive aspect), she shows that emotions can maintain, create, or change routines, as illustrated in Figure 12 above that shows the influence of emotions on organisational routines. Baldessarelli emphasises that "the framework outlines how emotions "involve some change in action readiness" … that leads to the repeated enactment of specific actions and the change or interruption of others" (p. 360).

From an overall perspective, the framework illustrates how the recursive relationship between performing and patterning is channelled through feelings and emotions, as if they are the 'pit stop' of this recursion. Therefore, recreating organisational routines is laden with feelings that also influence the cognitive and behavioural elements of their recreation. Although there is little empirical evidence for the influence of feelings and emotions on organisational routines, the growing empirical research in routine dynamics explicitly suggests a direct role of feelings and emotions in patterning and performing routines (Baldessarelli, 2021), and by extension the replication of organisational practices and processes.

Since patterning and performing routines are created and recreated in the context of joint activity (Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013), and as both filter through feelings and emotions (Baldessarelli, 2021), then over time these will influence participants' intentions to recreate the routines. As such, a wide range of feelings and emotions appear in several routine dynamics studies, such as anger (Aroles and Mclean, 2016; Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010; Feldman 2000); shame (den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017); and love (Eberhard et al., 2019). In the following section, a discussion of what we know about feelings and emotions in routine dynamics is presented, and then the chapter will build on previous studies by introducing the concept of emotion regulation in organisational routines.

6.2.3.1 Feelings and emotions in the performance of organisational routines

The majority of routines are performed in a context that requires social interaction, during which routine participants perform actions, interact with others, and engage with artefacts (i.e., human-made objects to facilitate organising) (Baldessarelli, 2021). From this perspective, routines are performed in situations that generate various types of feelings and emotions experienced by its participants. This view captures how emotions can be a by-product of performing routines. For example, when studying the price adjustment routine, Zbaracki and Bergens (2010) indicated that it gave rise to *emotional issues* among its participants. Similarly,

Salvato and Rerup (2018) found that introducing efficiency into the dream factory routine conceived *frustrations* for some actors. Moreover, feelings and emotions can be purposefully resourced as a motivational force for action (Baldessarelli, 2021). For instance, in Eberhard et al.'s (2019) study of deceit in routine dynamics, they draw upon the case of the trafficking of vulnerable women and show how traffickers resource 'love' to lure them into following the traffickers' action pattern. Salvato and Rerup (2018) also show that managers resource feelings of comfort between actors in order to resolve conflict between them and maintain the effortful recreation of the 'efficiency factory pattern.' However, resourcing does not always involve positive feelings; for example, studies investigating bill collection show that collectors purposefully resource anger to help with their routine of collecting missed instalments (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1991; Sutton, 1991). This evidence shows that feelings and emotions emerge while routines are being performed and it highlights that these feelings emerge throughout interactions with each other and with the routines they work to accomplish.

6.2.3.2 Feelings and emotions in the patterning of organisational routines

The recursive relationship between performing and patterning is one way to conceptualise how feelings and emotions influence how we think about routines, "as participants take action to accomplish a routine, they simultaneously engage in both performing and patterning" (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018: 113). In some ways, the routine dynamics literature suggests that feelings and emotions act as filters that direct actors' attention towards specific actions and to avoiding others. In other words, feelings and emotions can influence how actors frame situations and therefore pay attention to situational cues that give rise to (un)wanted ones. During patterning routines, Baldessarelli (2021) explains that feelings and emotions can influence the maintenance, interruption, and emergence of new routine patterns. The logic Baldessarelli follows in her framework is simple; when action patterns and social interactions generate positive feelings, actors are more likely to seek to repeat these and therefore, they help maintain existing routines. On the other hand, when actors feel negatively about routines, they are more likely to reflect on such feelings in future performance and strive to make substantial changes to routine action patterns when they intend to avoid such negative feelings.

For example, Salvato and Rerup (2018) indicate that frustrations felt by routine participants can lead to negative relationships between them that impede solutions, which causes the routine to collapse at a certain time. In a similar vein, Zbaracki and Bergen (2010) highlight the collapse of the price adjustment routine resulting from rising emotional tensions between the interfacing parties. In both these studies, the routines needed to change (i.e., there was a

breakdown in routine pattern) in order to become accomplished effectively again. This evidence shows that when actors feel negatively about performing routines, they might change them or withdraw from them all together. Briefly, positive emotions influence the maintenance of a routine's existing action pattern, whereas negative feelings and emotions result in completely changing or withdrawing from the action pattern.

Although these insights are valuable in understanding the interplay between emotions and patterning and performing routines, we still have little understanding of the underlying mechanisms that explain how emotions influence a change in the patterning and performing of organisational routines; in particular, negative feelings and emotions. In order to understand this link, this study adopts from the psychology literature the concept of emotion regulation (Gross, 2008, 2014) to further understand the cognitive and the behavioural strategies that individuals employ to regulate their emotions, which in turn influence patterning and performing routines at the individual level.

6.2.4 Emotion regulation in routine dynamics

Although emotion regulation has been used in management and organisation studies (e.g., Oh and Farh, 2017; Grant, 2013), the concept has received little attention. Its processes refer to those "by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 2008: 500). What the concept entails is that emotion regulation processes are largely conscious and that what occurs at the cognitive level is carried out through action. Emotion theorists explain that regulating emotions is a process that mainly aims to either influence actors' cognitive understanding of situations or to eliminate the emotional significance of the event. Gross (2008) points to five emotion regulation processes that actors are likely to pursue during ongoing situations: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. By considering the definition of each strategy, it is clear that emotion regulation processes influence the way actors think and act in events and situations, as well as specifically being mobilised to downregulate negative feelings and emotions, mainly by altering the meaning of the situation and/or altering the negative emotional significance that is experienced through it. The following table summarises and provides a definition for each emotion regulation strategies.

Table 10: Emotion regulation strategies and definitions

Emotion regulation strategy	**Definition**
Situation selection	Actors select to be in situations that involve positive feelings.
Situation modification	Actors modify a negative affective situation to make it positive.
Attentional deployment	Individuals "[influence] emotional responding by redirecting attention within a given situation" (p. 502).
Cognitive change	Changing the way actors think about the situation to alter "the situation's emotional significance, by changing how one thinks either about the situation itself or about one's capacity to manage the [emotional]demands it poses" (p. 503)
Response modulation	The combined influence of "physiological, experiential, or behavioural responses relatively directly" (p. 504)

Adapted from: Gross (2008)

Emotion regulation indicates that people are somehow able to influence the emotions and the situations that they encounter in their everyday life. It suggests that when individuals feel negative emotions, they tend to downregulate them, while when they feel positive ones, they tend to upregulate them. If we apply this concept to current routine dynamics studies, it can be seen in several studies that hinted at emotion regulation processes (i.e., influencing our feelings). For instance, Baldessarelli (2021) and Collins (2004) indicate that when actors feel positive feelings and emotions during and after the enactment of routines, they tend to upregulate these by maintaining or improving routine action patterns. Similarly, studies that have examined truces in routine dynamics indicate that when actors have negative feelings, they need to downregulate these, which in some cases can lead to the collapse of the routine (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010). However, it should be noted that negative feelings are not always downregulated; for example, as indicated earlier, studies that investigated bill collection actors show that they tend to upregulate negative feelings such as anger in order to collect delinquencies (Sutton, 1991). The evidence in these studies shows that feelings and emotions are not simply intertwined with the enactment of organisational processes, but that their emergence and existence are in constant need of regulation.

One important distinction that emotion theorists stress is the source of emotion regulation, as it can be intrinsic (i.e., self-regulation) as well as extrinsic (i.e., regulation from others). An example of an intrinsic emotion regulation process is when we distance ourselves from a situation that might give rise to negative emotions, whereas making a friend feel good is an example of an extrinsic emotion regulation process (Gross, 2008). Upon closely examining the findings in the routine dynamics literature that include a role for feelings and emotions in

organisational routines, it becomes clear that the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation has been overlooked by scholars. This will hold back our efforts to understand the interplay between emotions and organisational routines because the terms 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' show that feelings in routines can be internally as well as externally determined.

If we closely examine studies that have conferred a role for emotions during the enactment of routines, it becomes clear that the relationship between emotions and organisational routines is more complex than originally conceptualised. For example, Salvato and Rerup (2018) show that participants' elicited emotions consisted of intrinsic and extrinsic regulation processes, as when some felt frustrated about the 'efficiency factory' pattern, they decided to withdraw from the performance of parts of the routine (intrinsic). Over time, and in order to eliminate feelings of frustration, management matched actors who liked and felt comfortable with each other (extrinsic). We can also see evidence on extrinsic emotion regulation in Danner-Schroder and Geiger's (2016) study of earthquake training and simulation in a high-reliability organisation, showing that it purposefully triggered emotions (extrinsic) to prepare organisational actors for real-life situations. The evidence in these studies shows that feelings and emotions can be externally determined to achieve positive routine outcomes.

At first glance, it would appear that extrinsic emotion regulation processes are used to generate positive outcomes; however, some studies in the routine dynamics literature indicate otherwise. For example, those that have examined the role of deceit in routine dynamics demonstrate that extrinsic emotion regulation processes can be used for sinister purposes. For example, managers referred to by den Nieuwenboer et al. (2017) study corruptively translated the sales routine to achieve fabricated sales targets and receive organisational rewards unethically. To do this, den Nieuwenboer et al. clearly indicate that "middle managers unleashed multiple waves of ratcheted up reinforcements, including repeated *shaming* practices, to coerce compliance" (p. 801, emphasis added) to their corrupt translation of the desksales routine. In this situation, employees were encouraged to enter fictitious sales and to engage in deceptive behaviours to downregulate the feelings of shame that managers upregulated. The managers' strategy proved to be a success for employees who aligned their performance with the corrupt version and successfully downregulated their feelings of shame.

At the same time, this posed a moral conundrum for some employees and made them feel negatively, thus downregulating any negative feelings and emotions, "[t]hese [employees]

generally stopped cooperating with, especially, the most clearly unethical behaviors, such as lying about sales work behaviors, when their managers' attention turned away" (p. 797). Similarly, in Eberhard et al.'s (2019) study, human traffickers regulated emotions extrinsically, first by upregulating positive feelings such as love to lure vulnerable women into a deceptive pattern of performance. Over time, the traffickers changed their emotion regulation strategies to the upregulation of negative feelings such as fear in order to entrap the women in deceptive performances.

This leads to another important factor to which emotion theorists consider important in determining the trajectory of the emotion regulation process, namely goals (Lazarus, 1991). For example, they explain that goals imbue situations with meanings that are associated with feelings and emotions, and as the meanings of the situations and actors' goals change over time, so will those of emotions (Gross, 2008). This important aspect allows us to further distinguish emotion regulation in terms of actors' goals and intentions; that is, whether such goals are aligned with the pre-established goals of routines, or whether they are informed externally by actors and self-interest (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018).

From this perspective, studies that highlight a role for feelings and emotions in routine dynamics show that some extrinsic emotion regulation processes can be mobilised to advance actors' self-interested goals, while others are mobilised in favour of the routine. For instance, Salvato and Rerup's (2018) study is one of the few that portrays the mobilisation of extrinsic emotion regulation in favour of routine; they explain that such a process is used to resolve conflict (by matching actors who like and feel comfortable with one another). Zbararcki and Bergens (2010) drew from a similar case, showing that when conflict between routine participants became an "emotional issue" and played a role in the collapse of price adjustment routine, management intervened and then the conflict was resolved. These studies clearly indicate a positive role for extrinsic emotion down-regulation processes, as the cases necessitated management interventions to make actors feel better when performing their routines; i.e., eliminating the negative feelings participants experienced in their enactment.

On the other hand, other studies illustrate extrinsic emotion regulation processes that are exploitive and align more with self-seeking behaviours. Recent empirical evidence demonstrates the role of deceit in routine dynamics (Eberhard et al., 2019; den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017) and shows that some actors, mainly authority figures, are able to impose extrinsic emotion regulation mechanisms upon actors at lower hierarchal levels in order to enforce a

pattern of behaviour that contradicts the formal pre-established goals of routines. For example, den Nieuwenboer et al. (2017) show that managers developed corrupt goals and mobilised extrinsic emotion regulations negatively to advance self-interested goals. Eberhard et al. (2019) report similar findings, in which negative extrinsic emotion regulation processes were used to advance traffickers' corrupt goals. These studies illustrate that deceptive routine patterns are in some way involved when actors' goals deviate from nominal organisational ones. In other words, negative extrinsic regulation processes are used to counteract the positive feelings that actors experience from being in a loving relationship (Eberhard et al., 2019) or aligning with moral values (den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017), mainly indicating that deception helped the regulation process.

The evidence above clearly shows that feelings and emotions play a greater role in organisational routines than merely being at "the periphery of the organizational story" (Cohen, 2007: 506). It demonstrates that when routines are being patterned and performed, emotions are being intrinsically and extrinsically regulated in the background. Moreover, it indicates that extrinsic emotion regulation processes in particular are used by authority figures, which can be mobilised for positive and negative purposes. However, our understanding is still limited of how negative affective events and their associated feelings and emotions influence patterning and performing routines in empirical and organisational settings. Beyond the complexity of the concept itself, our limited understanding of feelings and emotions during the replication of organisational routines can be partly explained by the institutional context itself, as it promotes or suppresses the expression of certain feelings and emotions (Baldessarelli, 2021). Similarly, at the individual level there are certain types of feelings and emotions that actors refrain from displaying to the public, such as those associated with "laxity, slippage, rule-breaking, defiance, and even sabotage" (Nelson and Winter, 1982: 108) and deceit (Eberhard et al., 2019; den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017).

Actors prefer to keep such feelings suppressed in the backstage of the presentation of self in everyday life (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, there remains much to learn about the role of negative feelings and emotions in routine dynamics. This chapter concerns the influence of intrinsic negative emotion regulation processes on the performing and patterning of PA routines. As illustrated Chapter Two Section 2.1 of the literature review, employees are more likely to feel negatively after unfair PA because of its subjective element. This study aims to understand how such negative emotions during the enactment of PA routines are regulated and how they influence understanding and enacting routines' action patterns, in particular since

scholars suggest that employees largely act upon negative emotion regulation processes covertly during the PA process (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). In light of the previous argument, the research question is refined to: *How do intrinsic negative emotion regulation processes influence the patterning and performing of PA routine?*

6.3 Methodology

6.3.1 Research context

This paper conducts a qualitative inductive multiple case study (Eisenhardt, 1989b) to provide in-depth examination of the influence of negative emotions on PA adoption and replication failure in the Middle Eastern context. This approach allows the collection of multiple comparative case data, enhances the understanding of a specific phenomenon, and is more likely to generate more accurate and generalisable theory as well as powerful explanations than single case studies (Yin, 2014). This paper follows the literal replication logic (Yin, 2014) through which the identification of empirical patterns and regularities across cases offers contextualised explanations that strongly focuses on theory, which is frequently viewed as suitable in providing more persuasive support for theory development, and thus, strengthening the robustness of the overall study (Zeng, 2022; Yin 2014). The selection of the cases followed a purposeful sampling strategy pursuing the collection of "the most relevant data about the phenomenon under investigation" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 181). This study involves cases from four GPSFs operating in a single country in the Arabian Peninsula and focuses on non-managerial professionals from one subunit/department (being the primary unit of analysis). The name of the country and the companies are omitted to protect the anonymity of the participants and their organisations.

Their headquarters are located in Europe, which have adopted standardised global PA best practice across their worldwide subsidiaries. All four companies offer a wide range of the same multidisciplinary services to their clients, including management and IT consulting, outsourcing services, and financial advisory services. There are virtually no differences between these firms as they are usually grouped together because of their similar size, workforce and revenues compared to the rest in the industry. They are highly regulated, have the same codes of professional and ethical conducts and follow the same institutional norms. Research involving these companies have shown a strong level of uniformity and consistency in their environment globally (Kalaitzake, 2019; Tara, 2014; Dambrin and Lambert, 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Inter-firm differences were not found in previous studies as

these companies have high levels of similarity in relation to their employee management practices, their organisational structure, formal and informal control systems, professional conduct, and pressures to simultaneously follow traditional bureaucracy and maintain professional standards (Alvehus, 2018; Boussebaa, 2009; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Sweeny and Pierce, 2004). Most importantly, these companies are considered to be exporters of "best" management practices across the globe, therefore they play a crucial role in the expansion of global management practices and setting global management standards (Mellahi et al., 2016; Boussebaa, 2015). Table (11) below provides additional details for the case companies.

Table 11: Background characteristics for cases

Company alias	GPSF1	GPSF2	GPSF3	GPSF4
HQ location at the time of interviews	Europe	Europe	Europe	Europe
Ownership structure	Private partnership	Private partnership	Private partnership	Private partnership
Year established in host context as per company registration certificate	2004	2010	2002	2009
Number of years in operation in host country (up to interviews date)	15	9	17	10
Number of professional departments in host country	8	8	8	8
Total Number of employees in host context	120	70	47	35
Number of non-managerial (managerial) employees in the focal department	60(9)	40(7)	30(6)	30(6)
Number of interviewed non-managerial employees in the focal department	14	9	5	2
Percentage of interviewed non-managerial employees in the focal department	23%	23%	17%	7%

This is an interesting feature in these companies as some studies indicated that employees are more likely to accept PA if it was designed by these types of companies (Mellahi et al., 2016). Additionally, the four companies promise their employees with the best professional and inclusive environment, career advancing opportunities, networking with giants, and fair equitable compensation and rewards. These claims are advertised in ideal slogans such as 'the

best working environment,' 'diverse and inclusive culture,' 'our main asset is our employees,' 'personally tailored career development,' and 'fair benefits.'

However, and crucially, professionals in these companies are subjected to difficult working conditions that are characterised by achieving deadlines, high workload and long working hours, adaptation to first-mover global standards (Alvehus, 2018; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), anxiety, navigating formal and informal controls, and 'up or out' or a tournament style career type (Alvesson et al., 2015). Moreover, these companies operate through a contradictory hybrid organisational form that combines between professionalism and traditional bureaucracy which confuses employees' enactment of formal organisational and management practices, particularly international PA (Alvehus, 2018; Alvesson et al., 2015; Muzio and Faulconbridge, 2013; Suddaby et al., 2008; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). These factors push professionals to reject the practice of PA (Alvehus, 2018), and therefore, examining these companies will enrich existing PA literature with knowledge on the sectoral and individual levels and will shed light on international PA adoption failure from companies that set global management standards.

In the single country of focus in this thesis, these branches staff nearly 200 non-managerial professionals in all their departments who have varied levels of experience to fulfil the needs of their clients. Furthermore, although they are global companies, they only hire local employees which is another reason that strengthen PA adoption failure in these firms. The thesis focuses on non-managerial professionals from one subunit/department (being the primary unit of analysis) in the four companies (with a total of 160 professionals) that provides the core service and generates the largest portion of their revenues. The Middle Eastern subsidiaries adopt a global PA process, which is important for maintaining the quality of the services they provide, since these companies have a reputation to uphold and they are financially sensitive and often include third parties (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2013). Their formal PA process emphasises the assessment and development of individual performance PA is designed to ensure employee development through formal and informal on-job coaching and frequent performance feedback. Furthermore, the information provided during the PA process is used for administrative and career progression decisions, such as salary increases, sanctions, and promotions. All of this is managed on global centralised PA software to ensure transparency and accuracy in the process.

At the same time, the PA process is also embedded in a national context that has a unique culture, the Middle East. The Middle Eastern cultural context is collectivistic (Hofstede, 1980), which emphasises informal attainment by the means of social relationships (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). These cultural norms have found their way into organisations, and employee recruitment, appraising, and rewarding best practices became influenced by the local cultural norms of favouritism, nepotism, and cronyism (i.e., appraising and rewarding friends and family more favourably than other employees), which is perceived as unfair by employees. Such unfair practices are highly generative of negative affective events during employee-manager dyadic encounters and foster negative feelings in the majority of employees.

6.3.2 Data collection

Interviews. 30 semi-structured interviews with non-managerial professionals at varying levels (junior, semi-senior, and senior) were conducted (see Appendix A for details about the participants). The researcher followed purposive sampling (Zeng, 2022) and the interviewees were approached through the researcher personal network and snowballing was relied on afterwards (Detzen and Loehlein, 2018; Dambrin and Lambert, 2008). Therefore, the first few contacts were reached out by the researcher based on his own personal network and included participants who were willing to share their negative experiences with their companies, then the researcher asked each interviewee to nominate other colleagues to be interviewed. The interview schedule was designed to identify interviewees' perceptions, understanding, and actions during the PA process and included questions about the direct influence of *wasta* logic on process performativity. Additionally, participants were probed for more detail whenever necessary. The interview questions allowed us to explore how competing logics influenced important aspects of PA 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 GPSFs are global, all the interviews were conducted with home country nationals, since when asked, the participants affirmed that their companies did not employ expatriates. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, the mother language of the professionals, and were translated and transcribed verbatim. Refer to Appendix B for a copy the interview schedule.

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 in order to better understand the activities they were engaging in and to trace changes in their global HRM policy.

Table 12: Data collection sources for chapter six

Source	Quantity
Interviews: Collected 30 Semi-structured interviews from non-managerial employees Collection period: August 2019 to September 2019 Duration: from 40 minutes to 120 minutes (average 1 hour)	400 pages
Archival documents	184 documents 2,226 pages

Similarly, we conducted a review of the HRM policies, changes, announcements, and press releases that were publicly available on the company websites and their associated social media during the same period. The second category involved a review of companies' professional and ethical codes of conducts for the same period, as well as those established by formal industry professional bodies, in order 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 such logic in social exchanges. The third category comprised a review of documents related to the global PA process, including its rules, standard operating procedures, feedback, rating grids and performance criteria. The documents provided textual data and were used to corroborate employees' accounts of the PA process, and the logics they navigated during the process. Furthermore, they revealed new details that were not available in the interviews.

6.3.3 Analytical approach

In an effort to keep the data manageable and ensure their trustworthiness, the following steps were taken. First, an audit trail was kept to manage the emerging understanding from the data, by keeping records of all the interviews and documents. Second, the data were organised on an Nvivo 12 database, which facilitated the indexing, searching, coding, theorising, and recoding of the data as patterns and themes emerged (Smets et al., 2015). Following similar studies on

organisational routine dynamics (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Bertels et al., 2016; Dittrich et al., 2016), an abductive approach to analysing the data was followed, which required a back-and-forth iteration between the study data, emergent findings and the existing literature. The researcher followed common recommendations for multiple case studies analyses by conducting within-case and cross case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989b). The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, it began by temporally bracketing (Langley, 1999) main events in the PA for each case individually described by the study participants to identify routines and process boundaries, as well as "to identify actors, actions, and artifacts that contributed to enactments of this routine" (Salvato and Rerup, 2018: 178).

By re-sequencing the participants' accounts for each case, seven sequential micro-processes were identified: setting annual goals and objectives; assigning employees' work portfolios; performing audit fieldwork; monitoring employees; requesting frequent/quarterly performance feedback; calibrating employee ratings; and attending annual PA interviews. Each micro-process is a routine embedded in a software artefact and requires face-to-face interaction between employees and managers. In this stage, the researcher conducted within-case analysis by gathering notes and writing thick narratives in order to generate concepts and preliminary theoretical explanations for each case. The focus was on analysing the interview data as well as triangulating and integrating facts from multiple data sources (Zeng, 2022). Participants' accounts and initial empirical observations were openly coded in each case separately in a line-by-line manner through "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 57), and clustered first-order codes to the corresponding event; for example, "I appealed [my rating] of course and nothing happened" and "I asked why, and my people manager justified with those rubbish replies" were clustered under the annual PA interview event. The focal routines for the case companies in this study were setting annual goals and objectives; requesting frequent/quarterly performance feedback; and attending annual PA interviews as shown in Figure (13) below, as other micro-level routines are performed by managers, they were beyond the scope of the data collection. However, the meanings and understanding participants attached to them were not neglected because they are an important part of the ecology of PA routine (Howard-Grenville et al., 2016).

The open or inductive coding used in this stage facilitated gaining "insights into the data by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data" (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 12). In this stage, it was possible to observe similarities and

Figure 13: Focal micro-level routines for chapter six

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.

differences across how employees in cases acted upon the negative feelings they experienced. A wide range of negative affective events that led participants to express feelings of unfairness were observed, as well as contradicting sets of performance and understanding of the same routine, as some performances aligned with the prescribed purpose of the focal routines. On the other hand, other performances deviated completely, to the point that some violated nominal performance standards, such as deceptive and self-seeking behaviour. Therefore, This became a main point of interest; how participants are able to incorporate such deviance into a process that is designed to counter such behaviours, divergent understanding and actions (Nelson and Winter, 1982).

In the second stage, the researcher set to identify "similarity in the apparently dissimilar situations" (Eisenhardt, 1989b: 544) that was found at the end of stage one. Negative affective events from those the participants referred to were extracted, some of which were mentioned by several participants. 120 episodes were identified that participants had drawn from to describe such events and that played a significant role in influencing their negative feelings, either personal or expressed in terms of general affective states. In this stage, it was noticed that the majority of the participants expressed feelings related to unfairness and often referred to inequity in the workplace. Consequently, participants' feelings about these events and their performance and understanding before and after they experienced them were coded and clustered each to the corresponding event.

Consistent with process approaches to routine dynamics (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Howard-Grenville et al., 2016), the researcher focused on the focal routines and on actors, artefacts, and actions. Furthermore, an open approach was adopted to identifying actors (e.g., employees, managers, councillors, and human resource personnel); artefacts used by participants to accomplish routines (e.g., feedback system, emails, mobile phones, manager's office); feelings (stress, hate, being upset, happiness, feeling worthless); and actions taken by participants (e.g., developing annual goals, filling in feedback template, appealing against unfair ratings, lying to the system). During the analysis in this stage, and in order to make sense of participants' contrasting performance, multiple strings of sequential data were arranged to trace participants' actions to their intentions. For example, it was observed that some of participants' performances were motivated by their negative emotions. For instance, one string of sequential data related to an annual PA interview event and the influence of negative emotions on subsequent performance for Kareem (all names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants), a senior level employee, revealed how:

> **(a)** Kareem (actor) received good PA in his first year in the company. By the end of his second year, Kareem received (action) a rating below his expectations through a company email (artefact) and felt it to be unfair. He became frustrated and angry (personal emotions) since his formal performance feedback forms reflected otherwise. **(b)** He tried to obtain (action) a meaningful justification during the PA annual meeting (micro-level routine) but received (action) vague explanations from his supervisor and hence expressed (action) surprise and disappointment (personal emotions). **(c)** In his third year, Kareem lowered his performance significantly (retaliatory action) and focused on forming friendships (action) with powerful supervisors in the company. By doing so, Kareem lied (retaliatory action) to the system about his actual performance in the development of his annual goals and on requesting performance feedback was able to receive positive feedback, a good overall rating, and career advancement (positive PA outcomes). Currently, and although Kareem considers this unfair, he expressed his satisfaction (generalised emotion) with how he performed the process.

The numerous strings of sequential data reflected how actors' understandings and actions shifted as a result of negative feelings from unfairness; for example, from being informed by formally prescribed PA goals to being informed by actions aiming to alleviate negative feelings in future replications. However, this partly explains the observations, as the underlying mechanisms that underpin such drastic shifts in participants' understanding and subsequent

actions are still unexplained. Therefore, the researcher started iterating with the literature on emotions in social sciences (Dewey, 1894,1895) and psychology (Gross, 2008, 2013) in order to find a link between thought, feeling, and action that could explain their interrelatedness during the enactment of organisational routines; "not to retrofit data to theory, but to explore which theory would explain what [the researcher] found" (Smets et al., 2015: 939). After some data-theory recursion, the researcher began to explore the role of emotion regulation processes to explain how negative emotion down-regulation processes "were shaped by but also shaped the social order" (ibid); in this case, organisational routines.

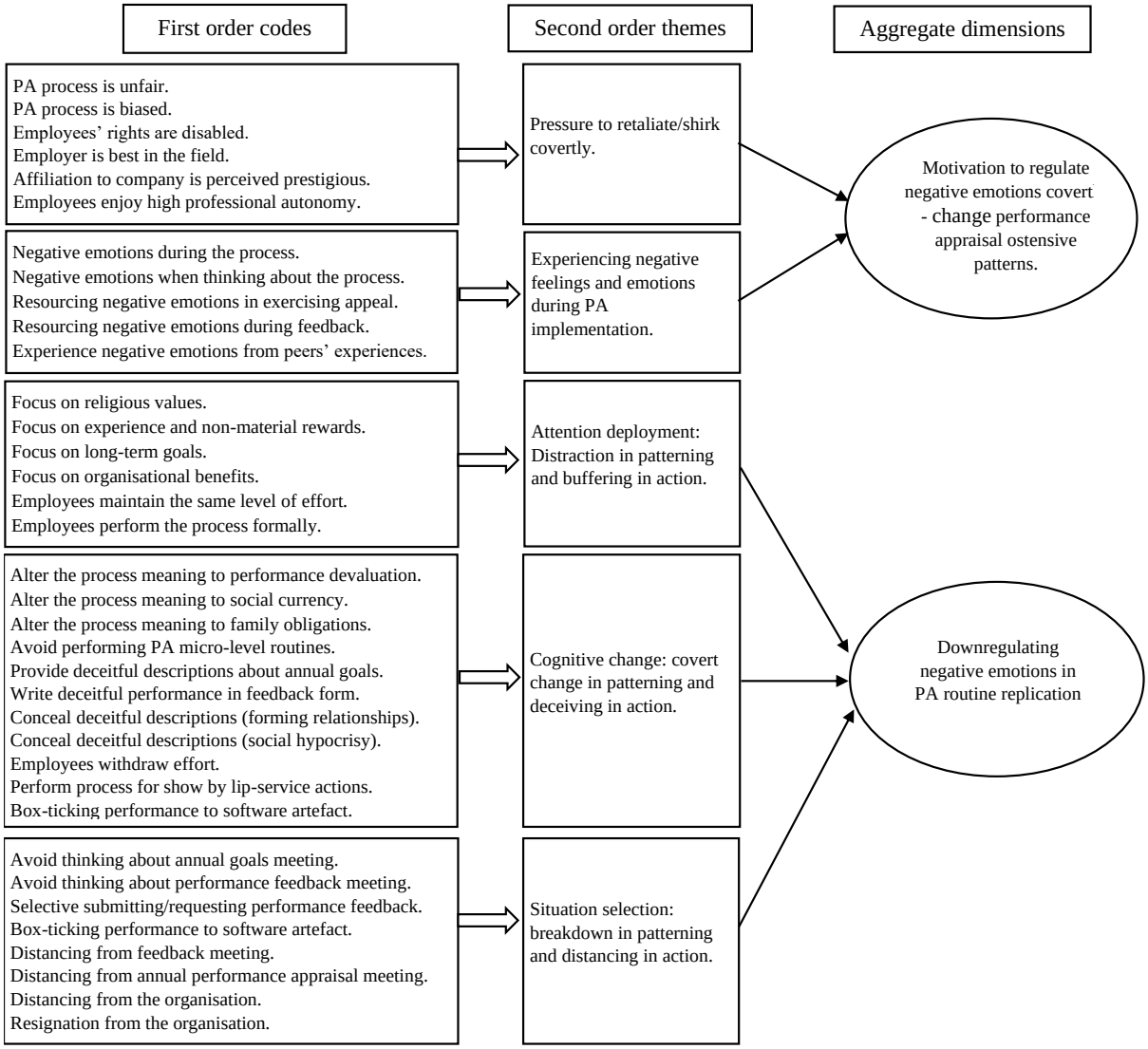
In the third stage, and as themes and relationships emerged, the researcher started to look for similarities and differences in patterns across the multiple strings developed within cases (Salvato and Rerup, 2018, Eisenhardt, 1989b) and, consistent with process theory, only the strings of data that supported the stable performances described by the participants were kept (Jarzabowski et al., 2017). Subsequently, a focus on participants' emotion regulation processes was paid and was coded accordingly. It was observed that as they expressed negative feelings resulting from unfairness in PA, they devised altered meanings (i.e., downregulating negative emotions) for the same high-order process and its micro-level routines. For example, the majority of participants altered the meaning of the PA high-order process to 'meaningless process' and 'performance devaluation.' Therefore, expressions of meaning were coded accordingly. For instance, *"managers actively look for any mistake we do"* resonated with *performance devaluation.* Similarly, "*at the end you feel that everything you did [throughout performance appraisal process] is meaningless. The process is just for show*" resonated with *meaningless process*. Other participants altered the significance of negative emotions by distracting themselves with different goals, for example, "*I am focusing on experience and not caring about ratings, I have a plan for the future that I am working on, so whatever the rating others got it wouldn't matter."* This became a vantage point from which to begin the following stage.

In the fourth stage, the researcher became interested in how negative emotion downregulation processes interact with the cognitive and behavioural (re)creations of organisational routines within individuals. The researcher started to trace the multiple strings of data that were arranged during the second stage to the emotion regulation process that participants adopted, and grouped similarities and differences; for example, participants who engaged with attentional deployment processes altered the significance of the emotion by distracting themselves with different goals, without lowering their performance. On the other hand, participants who

engaged in cognitive change and altered the meaning of the process to 'performance devaluation' lowered their performance and engaged in deceptive processes to conceal their deviant actions.

In this stage, the researcher conducted cross-case analysis by cutting across the cases to probe for alternative theoretical relationships and constructs that might be a better fit for the data than the initial emergent theory (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989b). Moreover, to identify more generalisable patterns of negative emotion regulation and their influence on patterning and performing the PA routine. The researcher initially juxtaposed cases in pairs and compared between them to identify similarities, differences, and any common dilemmas between them (Zeng, 2022).

Figure 14: Data structure for chapter six



Further iteration between theory, data, and the literature was done to refine the findings and clarify the study contributions. This step involved looking for similarities and differences across the various strings and theoretical constructs for the juxtaposed cases, however, since the case companies are highly similar and followed the same procedures, no substantial differences were found across cases, but they were found across participants in relation to the way they regulate their emotions. Consequently, participants' performances were clustered under the designated emotion regulation mechanisms and in doing so the researcher was able "to come up with logical explanations that [qualitative scholars] term "the whys" for the underlying logic of the emergent relationships among constructs" (Gehman et al., 2018: 14) and abstract second order codes into aggregate theoretical dimensions as illustrated above in Figure (14).

6.4 Findings

This section is presented following the suggestion by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) for the presentation and structure of multi-case findings. First, the researcher describes the process goals, the temporal micro-processes for PA, the competing patterns of action (global and local) that actors follow to accomplish the process, and the abundance of negative feelings and emotions that actors experience during the process. Following that, a second layer of findings is presented that is suited to explain how professional regulate their negative feelings and emotions and how this in turn influences patterning and performing the PA routine. This section aims to balance between "conveying both the emergent theory that is the research objective and [presenting] the rich empirical evidence that supports the theory" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007: 29).

6.4.1 Unfairness in the performance appraising process: typical versus actual pattern of performance

Across all case companies, the PA routine is a key process for organisations because it is important for controlling and developing employees' behaviours, as well as maintaining service quality. Based on the participants' accounts, they indicated that they complied with PA routines mainly in pursuit of two goals: (1) to satisfy the eligibility criteria for promotion; and (2) to maintain a for show performance to the formal process. These goals were different from those ascribed to the formal process itself; that is, developing and controlling employee performance. In this analysis, a focus is paid to the following micro-level routines: identifying goals and objectives; requesting performance feedback; and attending the annual PA interview.

The enactment of these micro-level routines is important for ensuring that employees' goals are aligned with those of the organisation; for ensuring that employees' performance is communicated and developed; and for communicating annual performance and associated ratings and rewards. In addition to face-to-face interactions between employees and managers, these micro-level routines are partly enacted using a software artefact. In the following, a description of the typical performance of such routines is provided.

At the start of the performance appraising process, employees meet with their managers to discuss the annual goals they aim to establish. Data on which are then entered onto the annual goals plan system to be approved by the manager. In essence, employees must establish goals that are aligned with organisational ones, such as taking on new roles, obtaining professional certificates, and being more engaged with team members.

> "At the beginning of the process, they make you set a goal or a target for yourself. For example, to get promoted, to obtain a professional certificate, or to develop weaknesses that supervisors pointed out in the previous year." (A12, GPSF4)

After employees have submitted their aligned goals, the manager reviews and approves them. The next micro-level routine is to request performance feedback, for which there are two different interdependent ways that employees must follow. First, they must request feedback after submitting their field working papers, a type which relates particularly to a certain project. Second, employees must meet frequently with their managers to discuss their performance and receive more general feedback that relates to several projects. This feedback is important because it highlights employees' strengths and areas for development, as well as being a controlling tool to maintain the quality of the services employees provide. Furthermore, employees do not just use such feedback to develop their performance; they also use it to build expectations about year-end ratings and rewards. For example, if an employee has good performance expectations in most of their officially requested feedback, then the annual rating, feedback, and rewards should reflect this when they attend the annual PA interview.

> "…the equation is simple, if you receive a good rating in the majority of performance feedback forms that that you submit on the feedback system, then you would expect the annual rating to reflect that." (A22, GPSF2)

Finally, at the end of the year employees meet with their managers to discuss their annual performance, as well as the associated ratings and rewards. This micro-level routine requires the setting up of a meeting with the manager, engaging in a discussion about performance, and

receiving communication about rewards. By the end of the interview, the meeting outcomes are submitted to the feedback system and employees either accept or appeal against the decision. This routine is particularly important for employees who receive ratings below their expectations so that they can receive a proper and objective justification in order to adjust their expectations.

> "When I received a rating below my expectations, I went to the meet with my manager for the annual appraisal interview to investigate the reason." (A17, GPSF3)

However, in all case companies, the process is not being performed as it is typically described. There is incompatibility between the goals of global PA practice and the local cultural norms. For example, the local cultural context is collectivist and places more emphasis on achievement mainly through informal relationships, rather than following formal rules. From this perspective, employees who enjoy a relationship with the management are able to advance their goals informally.

> "In this country in general, you mainly get promoted if you have a strong personal relationship with someone from the management. Also, if you are, for example, related to a client, or related to a powerful person in the government, then your high rating is sorted regardless of your performance." (A2, GPSF1)

> "You would get the best appraisal treatment and criteria only if you are very well-connected informally. For example, if you are related to the manager or if the manager is your friend." (A20, GPSF3)

As a result, the PA process and its outcomes are biased towards those employees who enjoy a relationship with managers, and as such, in addition to high ratings and rewards, they receive preferential appraisal treatment regardless of their performance.

> "…it is because the manager is a friend or sibling to this employee, he gets to do whatever he wants. He takes as much leaves as he likes, he comes and goes whenever he pleases, he is allocated very minimal engagements, and he receives one of the highest ratings in the company. This is how the story goes for employees in a similar situation." (A22, GPSF2)

However, the participants in all case companies strongly agreed that the performance of those who received preferential treatment and high ratings did not justify the high rewards they received. In fact, some participants explained that since their ratings were guaranteed, they made minimal effort. They also indicated that since rewards were predetermined, the process became focused on devising justifications for why the remaining employees would not receive rewards as per their expectations. For example, identifying goals and objectives became

unimportant and both managers and employees performed it through box-ticking *"the manager clicks 'agreed and discussed' without even discussing anything with me"* (A17, GPSF3), and monitoring employees became a routine for managers so they could find mistakes to use against them.

> "You feel that the manager just wants to find any mistake you make because he wants something to talk about in the performance appraisal meeting. They never reflect on your strengths; you only hear about weaknesses and mistakes." (A13, GPSF1)

Moreover, case companies' employees mainly receive positive performance feedback when they request it on the feedback system, but in face-to-face communications only weaknesses are pointed out. Finally, the annual PA interview (if conducted) takes place to provide employees with deceitful justifications for why they will not be receiving rewards. Not only are employees subjected to an unfair process, but their voices are also unheard by the management at all (except those with personal relationships):

> "…it is a cultural thing [suppressing voices]. We cannot express anything throughout the process; in theory you are able to participate in the process, but in reality, our voices are not heard at all." (A2, GPSF1)

and they are further unable to appeal against any management decision, even if they have objective evidence to present:

> "Appealing a decision is non-existent in the company, if you decided to appeal or a manager for example knew that you didn't like the rating, they will make your life miserable in the company. I have never witnessed anyone appeal against his/her unfair ratings." (A19, GPSF1)

These cultural demands resulted in negative feelings for the majority of the study participants, as their expectations were constantly violated. Therefore, they expressed a wide range of negative feelings and emotions that they experienced during the performance appraising routine, which need to be regulated at the individual level in the process. Moreover, it should be noted that the majority of employees were frustrated and upset while the interviews were in progress.

6.4.2 Expression of unfair feelings and negative emotions

Over time, the negative affective events that were directly associated with violated expectations led to the emergence of many negative feelings amongst the study participants during the PA micro-level routines. For the least, participants constantly felt unfairness throughout this whole social exchange. Additionally, they experienced several other negative personal feelings and

negative affective states as a by-product of these routines, such as feelings of dislike for the company, being upset, decreased self-worth, fear, demotivation, dissatisfaction, disappointment, surprise, and frustration. One participant even expressed disgust to describe how he felt toward this unfair environment.

> "I have been through many unfair situations where I felt disgusted." (A8, GPSF1)
>
> "… this feeling of unfairness makes me feel that I don't want to continue with them. I don't know what to say. I feel very frustrated from this unfairness." (A9, GPSF1)
>
> "I felt really bad after receiving an unfair rating for my first year working there. I struggled very much to be assigned to work because the manager ruined my reputation and I felt fed up because there was no work for me. No one wants me there, there is no appreciation, they do not appreciate me, I am making a big effort but in the end, it is all for nothing." (A27, GPSF1)
>
> "… it upsets me when I compare myself with this other employee; I am making a lot of effort and he doesn't lift a finger but receives the best rewards." (A17, GPSF3)
>
> "…of course I get frustrated when I a colleague of mine works much less than I do and gets rewarded and evaluated preferentially." (A12, GPSF4)

These feelings were experienced as a by-product from the enactment of the performance appraising high order routine and it is clear that the participants recalled these when they thought about the routine as when they feel negatively about the performance of routines, previously implicit ostensive patterns become explicit (Rerup and Feldman, 2011). From this perspective, when negative feelings and emotions are associated with the action pattern of the routine, then employees are likely to introduce changes to the patterning in order to avoid such feelings in future replications (Baldessarelli, 2021). Moreover, because the relationship between performing and patterning is recursive, then the performing aspect is also bound to be influenced by the new ostensive patterns that participants (re)create to avoid further negative feelings, a process called *emotion regulation*, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

6.4.3 Emotion regulation in performance appraisal routines

6.4.3.1 Emotion regulation in patterning

Patterning routines involve abstract understanding of the routine goals and the typical pattern of actions that accomplish them. However, such understanding is updated when routines are performed. Since emotions are a central part of social reality, then the negative feelings and emotions that actors experience during the performing of routines will become part of their

understanding about them. However, since the majority of employees have nowhere else to go, then these negative feelings in particular need to be downregulated in future performances, which will generate a prospective change to routine action patterns.

Situation selection and patterning

Actors sometimes have the ability to avoid feeling negatively in a situation by simply avoiding it. This could include interacting with other people, engaging with organisational artefacts, or doing both (Baldessarelli, 2021). This strategy requires their anticipation of negative feelings in future performances that are likely to be created through personal experience or by learning from the negative experiences of others. As such, some participants indicated that they actively avoided performing parts of the process that required face-to-face interactions, while others said that they avoided certain parts of the process if they felt that the outcomes would go against them. One of the clearest examples of this was the avoidance of performance feedback meeting.

> "…the problem is that if I decided to meet with my manager to discuss my performance, he would only discuss my weaknesses, and this became very upsetting. This was the case in my first and second years, therefore I decided that it was always better to stay away from such encounters because first I would avoid feeling bad, and second, I would save myself some time." (A6, GPSF3)

> "I will tell you something; we don't meet to discuss feedback because the feedback meeting is not designed to develop your performance. The manager will sit there, and he will either be playing on his phone, lose you in the discussion, or just focus on weaknesses. They will make you feel worthless and all of us in the company know that." (A26, GPSF1)

> "…I don't have a problem talking about weaknesses, but not all the time. It is not just weaknesses, they also fabricate situations, you will hear things about yourself that you have never done. This will make you feel angry because it is unfair, especially when you have no power to turn things around. This happened to me in my first year and the problem is that when I get angry, I may act upon it, so now I distance myself from feedback meetings as I don't want to make things worse with my anger." (A17, GPSF3)

These examples show that the participants who felt negatively during the face-to-face performance feedback routine decided to avoid the encounter all together. In other words, they reflected about the negative feelings they experienced and decided to avoid taking part in an important part of the routine; that is, face-to-face meetings. Similarly, some employees explained a different kind of situation selection in which they only requested performance feedback from managers who would guarantee to provide them with favourable comments, or with ones with whom they had a personal relationship.

> "For me, I honestly request feedback only from those who will provide me with good feedback. This is a bit tricky because you must request feedback for at least 85% of the budgeted hours you work in the field, but it works sometimes. This makes me feel better about what I did." (A22, GPSF2)

> "Listen, when I started receiving ratings below my expectations after my third year here, my strategy became like this: If I know that the manager will provide me with negative feedback, then I refrain from requesting the feedback all together. This does not make me happy, but at the same time I don't feel bad. This is only fair based on the culture here." (A2, GPSF1)

These examples clearly indicate that when participants experience negative feelings when performing routines, they reflect on them and avoid situations that wholly or partly involve these in future performances, which indicates a breakdown in the routine action pattern. In this context, the carelessness of managers further facilitates such breakdown, as the majority of the participants stated that managers were not concerned with providing face-to-face feedback or setting up feedback meetings, indicating an implicit mutual acceptance between both parties.

> "…managers here, and based on our culture, don't care about your development and will never say thank you or well done. You will never know your actual performance levels from them. As I explained earlier, the mentality here is when you become a manager then you just give orders, and you expect employees to abide with your wishes." (A1, GPSF2)

The impact of situation selection on the performance appraising routine is negative, as it affects the efficiency and effectiveness of the practice. In this case, requesting performance feedback and establishing annual goals, for example, are used to generate artefacts (records) about employees' goals and performances for decision making and service quality purposes. What some participants indicated shows that such situation selection as a negative emotion regulation strategy led to a breakdown in patterns (i.e., avoidance of parts of the routine all together) when participants reflected on these negative emotions.

Cognitive change and patterning

Another emotion downregulation strategy observed was cognitive change, which refers to "alter[ing] the situation's emotional significance, by changing how one thinks either about the situation itself or about one's capacity to manage the [emotional] demands it poses" (Gross, 2008: 503). As such, some participants who experienced negative feelings during the PA process engaged in cognitive change, whereby they altered the meaning of the process and its associated micro-level routines in order to downplay the array of negative emotions that they were likely to experience in future situations as they would be anticipated. By using this strategy, the participants redefined their routines to match the emotional significance of the

situation. For example, some who felt negatively altered the meaning of the process so that it became ‘meaningless’ or ‘for show’ because it was not actually being followed, which is by itself a trigger for negative emotions.

> “...These [feedback] forms must always be submitted because this is a policy in the company. They make you feel that it’s only a checklist item that needs to be checked, the performance appraisal process is just for show.” (A2, GPSF1)

> “…so, you find this [PA process] there, but it is a formal picture, there is a process, there is evaluation, and performance feedback but they are there just for show.” (A4, GPSF2)

Others changed the meaning of the process to ‘performance devaluation’ as they believed that managers were only looking for mistakes or wanted to spread bad gossip about their performance. They believed that managers did this to minimise their reward opportunities and to keep opportunities open to others (family and friends).

> “They look at employees’ weaknesses deliberately; they only talk about the weaknesses. {laughs} The process became targeted to devaluate your performance, not to evaluate it.” (A19, GPSF1)

> “… he [the manager] only talked about weaknesses and mistakes that he heard about me from others...He is supposed to help me but expressed explicitly that he could not help with this or that in order to support and develop me. However, there was not any development or support whatsoever…the bigger problem is that he hears from others about me, but he never discusses anything he has heard with me. On the contrary, he accumulates things and then he asks for a meeting before the rating and starts only talking about weaknesses. Why didn’t you [the manager] talk to me from the beginning?” (A22, GPSF2)

In the same vein, some participants who received unfair ratings altered the meaning of the PA interview to ‘deceptive defences’, in which managers provided employees with deceptive or vague justifications in order to convince them why they were not being rewarded.

> “When they [managers] decide that there are qualified employees who they must sacrifice in order to promote other unqualified ones, they will use this excuse [the budget] as a justification to convince the employee that he did not provide quality deliverables. Based on that he doesn’t deserve to get promoted, so they use those external limitations as deceptive ways to justify why you’re not getting a promotion. The evaluation interview is just there to deceive you on why you are not being rewarded.” (A16, GPSF1)

> “The justification they give me is always based on their wrongdoings; they know that you deserve a certain rating, but politics interfere and they can’t give the deserved rating, so the justifications they provide revolve around hiding the real reason, which

is their informal politics. It does not relate to what really happens. Can you imagine the frustrations that we go through?" (A22, GPSF2)

"What makes me feel worse is that I was promised that when I had completed three years in the company with a certain performance they would promote me to a senior level, but I found out that they had promoted someone with two years of experience. Their excuse is that they have limited promotion spots. I have a sufficient idea on what happens informally in the company, and I know what their mentality is and how they lie. They design the meetings to lie to us. They literally lie. They think that we are naïve." (A17, GPSF3)

This evidence shows that negative emotion downregulation processes caused by the experience of frequent unfair events influence a change in what the routine means and therefore also changes its externally-determined goals. As a result, and over time, these actors update their ostensive patterns in line with the new meaning in the accomplishment of their new goals. This is crucial to the dynamics of routines (as interdependent patterns of action) in general are designed to accomplish externally-determined organisational goals. Emotion regulation through cognitive change shows that the goals of the routine shift from being externally determined to being determined by actors, which is more likely to make their actions become unaligned with the formally prescribed goals (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). This will also influence changes to routines when participants update their understanding (i.e., patterning) about them.

Attentional deployment and patterning

Some participants regulated their emotions by using a different emotion regulation strategy that relies on distraction, known as attentional deployment, which refers to "influencing emotional responding by redirecting attention within a given situation" (Gross, 2008: 502). Generally, distraction implies looking for positive feelings elsewhere; i.e., individuals eliminate the emotional significance of the situation by focusing on a different goal. In contrast to cognitive change, which relies on altering routine goals, this strategy involves backgrounding formal routine goals. From this perspective, some of the participants distracted themselves by focusing only on immaterial rewards, such as gaining an experience that would help them immensely in their career path, instead of material rewards such as promotions, salary increments, and bonuses.

"When I first came here, I was bedazzled by the environment, the material rewards, the process, and the company in general. However, after I received ratings below my expectations in the first and second years, I started to work only to obtain experience. I didn't care about rewards that much. I understand that it is unfair, but if you keep

looking at material rewards then you will never feel good about what you are doing." (A28, GPSF4)

"Well, these companies are known for the excellent experience they provide, so I don't really care about the process because I am not here to receive a good salary. I am here to learn and to improve my skills; maybe I will start focusing on material rewards when I become a manager or leave to work for another company." (A13, GPSF1)

"I have a mission here. I am only focusing on experience, and I do not care about any of those things we mentioned [financial rewards] … I am working towards gaining experience and I don't care about how the process is conducted or the ratings others receive." (A12, GPSF4)

Other participants distracted themselves with their religious and moral beliefs.

"Look, I accepted the status quo therefore I don't care if the process is conducted or not, or if it is fair or not. I don't like to sleep uncomfortably, and this is why I don't like to do a sloppy job. Religiously, I have to do everything required from me to earn my salary in order to sleep with a clear conscious. This is the only thing I look at [my religious beliefs]. Therefore, if I feel that I am slacking, I will feel uncomfortable, and this will make me work on myself. Then I would sleep comfortably." (A24, GPSF1)

Situation selection, cognitive change, and attentional deployment were the most observed emotion downregulation processes that the participants engaged with. In summary, the evidence shows that those who used situation selection as a negative downregulation strategy experienced a breakdown in patterning (i.e., they avoided performing the routine to avoid negative feelings). On the other hand, cognitive change altered the meaning of the routine and shifted the routine goals from being externally determined to being determined by the participants themselves. As a result, they updated their understanding of the routine with ostensive patterns that were unaligned with their formal goals. The participants who distracted themselves altered the emotional significance of the situation without a significant change in meaning, simply by focusing on different goals. Emotion theorists (Gross, 2008, 2010) have made clear that such emotion regulation processes are central to how we approach most situations, and hence they influence the way routines are (re)created cognitively. This was clear in how the employees selectively chose to avoid performing a routine all together or parts of it, transforming it into an "artifact of routines that are no longer performed" (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 108), or when some altered the meaning of the situation to match its emotional significance (cognitive change), which influenced a shift in routine goals from being externally determined by the organisation to being determined by the actors (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Alternatively, some participants altered the emotional significance of the situation by focusing

on different goals, moving the routines themselves from being central to the accomplishment of organisational goals to the periphery.

Since routines are mainly performed through a recursive relationship between patterning and performing, then a change or a breakdown in routine patterns will occur during routine performance. In the following section, the influence of negative emotion downregulation processes on PA micro-level routines is discussed.

6.4.3.2 Influence of emotion regulation on routine performance

Situation selection and performance of routines

As participants sought to downregulate their negative feelings and emotions through situation selection, cognitive change, and attentional deployment strategies, they needed to bring the new meaning of the routine to life. Out of these three strategies, the influence of situation selection on the performance of routines is the clearest as it entails distancing oneself from the routine all together or just parts of it. It is less complicated, as in real life such selection occurs before people engage with situations likely to induce negative feelings and emotions. Therefore, the main action employees undertake is *distancing* themselves from replicating the routine completely or partially. This influences their performance because routines are composed of interdependent pattern of actions, so when people avoid performing a whole routine this is certain to influence the enactment of temporally interdependent micro-level routines. For example, participants who avoided face-to-face interactions with managers had to rely on lip service and box-ticking actions when performing the PA routine using software artefacts, since actual meetings did not take place.

> "What actually happens is that I enter my goals at the beginning of the year on the feedback system and the manager accepts and agrees. I doubt that he actually looks at them. I don't need their [formal organization] goals, I know my path here and I am following it … It is not that I don't want to meet with my manager to receive performance feedback, but it is easier to copy and paste feedback descriptions from others because the manager just accepts. What is funny is that the manager actually writes something, but he doesn't meet with me and he doesn't know what I worked on, I honestly don't know how they do that but this is how things are." (A6, GPSF3)

> "…it is not unusual in the company to request performance feedback only from those you trust because managers do not review your work, they only hear about your performance from others. In a sense, it is in their best interest to provide negative feedback for you because they want to minimise your chances of receiving rewards. I can avoid a lot of frustration by doing this." (A26, GPSF1)

Another important micro-level routine that participants surprisingly admitted to distancing themselves from was the annual PA interview. This micro-level routine is maybe considered the most important for employees because they are given their annual feedback and rewards. Moreover, they are able to negotiate what they are told and exercise their right to appeal if they reject the meeting outcome (Aggerholm and Asmuß, 2016). However, as explained earlier, employees are unable to exercise their rights.

> "In my whole career [7 years] I have only met with my manager three times. The first was when I joined, the second and third were for the annual appraisal meeting in my first and second years. Simply, I found out that it is all bullshit. The manager talks and talks and he doesn't even know what he is talking about. What is worse is that you cannot defend yourself at all and this is why I am more comfortable with not attending it." (A22, GPSF2)

> "I don't really care about the annual meeting. I know myself and I know how I performed. You should know how to evaluate your own performance, and this is what is important. If you attend the annual meeting then it will be held against you and they will only talk about your weaknesses, they will make you look like you didn't make any effort, and this is unfair. There are many employees who avoid this meeting all together and I am one of those." (A18, GPSF2)

> "I am happy to conduct the annual performance appraisal meeting over the phone because it is emotionally intense, you start to anticipate the bad things the manager is going to say, then you start making up scenarios in your mind. Moreover, the worst thing is that you don't know when you made a minor mistake or if anyone saw it or to what extent it will be used against you…if the meeting is on the phone, it is short, simple and you can avoid uncomfortable and intense reactions." (A8, GPSF1)

> "…this meeting is not conducted to communicate or develop your performance, and at the same time, there is no way to win with them and you cannot even defend yourself. This feels extremely unfair. Why should I put myself in this situation? This is why halfway during my career here I started going incognito when it is time for the annual meetings." (A2, GPSF1)

However, not all participants said they distanced themselves from performing the routine. Some whose expectations had been violated repeatedly felt the need to investigate the reason, even though they preferred to distance themselves from the meeting in previous years. In other cases, participants took distancing to the extreme and decided to resign because they were no longer able to downregulate their negative emotions.

> "It is hard to stay in this company with this unfairness in the atmosphere. It is just too stressful and depressing to provide effort and receive nothing in return while another

employee does not lift a finger but receives the highest rewards. I feel more comfortable now working elsewhere because I do not have to deal with this anymore." (A24, GPSF1).

"…I couldn't take it anymore. I became very unhappy with the situation and it started to affect my life after work negatively and this is why I resigned. The justifications I always receive are just irritating, they all involve hiding the reason because the manager knows someone and he wants him to get promoted. I know that I deserve better." (A8, GPSF1)

Cognitive change and performance of routines

However, the influence of cognitive change is not as straightforward as that of situation selection. The main action that employees take when cognitive change is used to downregulate negative emotions is *working around,* in a more unfavourable than favourable way. Altering the meaning of the process and its associated goals in order to regulate negative feelings in future performance requires a change in the ostensive patterns, which can only be materialised through action. If substantive action is not taken, then according to Dewey (1939), changes in routine patterns can only be considered "an idle fantasy [or] a futile wish" (p. 35). However, since the organisational context constrains employees from displaying certain feelings and emotions, and the majority of employees have nowhere else to go, then the substantive actions that participants take are largely covert; i.e., hidden from public consumption. As one participant put it: *"I write and do whatever I want in the performance feedback, and no one will know because what I show there is different than what I actually do"* (A16, GPSF1). This was the case for the majority of employees, who altered the meaning of the process in order to match the emotional significance of the situation.

This type of action was salient, because unlike situation selection, employees who altered the meaning and goals of the process expressed a need to lower or withdraw their efforts in order to match them with the minimal rewards they (will potentially) receive. As a result, participants' workarounds needed to be concealed and hidden from public display because if their reduced effort was discovered, then their chances of staying in the company would become slim. This was stated by one participant when expressing his dissatisfaction with taking part in appraisal routines:

"…this is how things are here; if you don't do these things [workarounds] then you will be lost. At the same time, the environment here is much better than in local companies, thus I need to stay here." (A29, GPSF1)

Working around involved participants taking advantage of vulnerabilities in both material and social structures. For example, those who altered the process meaning to 'performance devaluation' started believing that they needed to avoid being seen making mistakes. As a

result, they aimed to do as little work as possible in order not to make mistakes that supervisors could point to. Therefore, they worked around the routine's action patterns by engaging in deceptive processes, such as giving the impression that they were working, always looking busy, and lying to the system about their performance, together with deceptive social hypocritical behaviours that aimed to deflect managers' attention from discrepancies between the fabricated and the actual performance, i.e., replacing formal monitoring with trust. Such deceptive processes were employed to ensure a reduced detection by managers to their withdrawn effort or mistakes in professional performance. This was expressed by the following account given by a participant who received a rating below his expectation in her third year at the company:

> "if you know what you are doing, you can actually get away with many things if you become a social hypocrite [i.e., the manager's pet]. Hence, I do not provide adequate levels of performance because it is all for nothing; at the same time, I receive positive feedback on paper because I laughed for example at an employee who the manager made fun of, or I ask him if he wanted coffee or tea on my way to the company kitchen. In reality, I don't like doing these things, especially the former, because it is demeaning, but managers like such things and make them overlook the gap between my actual and written performance." (A17, GPSF3)

This account shows that in order for this participant to bring the new meaning of the routine to life, that is, performance devaluation, she had to lower her performance because her expectations would not be violated if she did not receive rewards because of the lower effort made. In order to conceal this, she took advantage of material structure vulnerabilities by taking lip service actions and concealing these by gaining the director's trust. At the same time, her efforts remained low. This sequence of actions represents how the employee deceptively worked around the process to achieve the desired outcomes (shirking work and (does not) receive rewards).

A similar pattern of actions was also detected in the accounts of other participants, who altered the meaning of the process in addition to providing incorrect information on software artifact deceptively (i.e., by lying about their actual performance):

> "…things are now different for me. I changed a lot during the past year because I used to follow the process, but I am not getting anything in return. I was a fool to think that if I performed well, I would receive a good rating. I will not lie to you, but I became depressed with how things are here. It turned out that I needed to maintain a personal relationship with my manager. Now, I receive a good rating for half the effort that I used to make last year." (A19, GPSF1)

> "One of the most important things to do is to be socially hypocritical. They love that here. If a manager makes fun of someone, then you laugh, if a manager asks you to run a personal errand, then you do it. When I joined this company, I was shocked to see some employees, for example, bring nuts to managers, and funnily enough, someone once brought a mixer to the manager, and I know someone who massages the manager's shoulders whenever he visits his office; who does that? However, it works. As a result, my approach became to stand beside the manager as a personal butler and as they say here, if you work less then you can only make fewer mistakes." (A23, GPSF2)

Findings in the routine dynamics literature illustrate that changes resulting from the experience of negative feelings in routines are explicit (e.g., Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergerns, 2010). This shows that changes in routine performances as a result of negative feelings can be implicit and largely undetectable, and that the new patterns of actions that require workarounds interact recursively with emotion downregulation processes that are external to the routine, instead of interacting recursively with organisational high-order processes (e.g., the PA process). As a result, working around is a type of actions that allows employees to regulate negative emotions in action and bring their unrelated personal intentions and goals into the routine without being detected.

Attentional deployment and performance of routines

Participants who distracted themselves using attentional deployment emotion regulation strategies and focused on different goals altered their emotional response to the situation. Some who adopted this strategy to downregulate their negative emotions focused on the experience they were gaining, rather than material rewards. Therefore, some of the participants took part in the process meaninglessly, without actively lowering their performance. As such, the routine's ostensive patterns did not need changing; instead, the goals of the routine themselves became unimportant to the participants, which was reflected in their replication of the process. Whenever participants who distracted themselves with other goals experienced or witnessed a negative affective event, they reconciled themselves by looking at different long-term goals or by reminding themselves that such negative emotions would not last, as most intended to leave the company in the future. As a result, the professional efforts made by them were maintained because they simply did not care about material rewards.

> "The effort you give is much more than the salary you get. The salary is decent, but you can see others making less effort and receiving a relatively higher salary than you for example, and I feel that this is beyond unfair. But you try to compensate for this feeling with the experience you are building." (A12, GPSF4)

The participants did not underemphasise the importance of material rewards, but were delaying them for the future, and they are considered few if they were compared to participants who cognitively changed the meaning of the process.

For example, a junior employee (A14, GPSF1) experienced a high intensity negative event when he asked for a justification of his rating,

> "…he [the partner] asked me what the problem was, and I told him that I was not convinced about my rating. I involved my councillor and his superior and, in the end, he [the partner] started screaming at me on the phone. He said this is what we have, and they told me that they knew better about my situation. Hence, I didn't do anything further, told them that I liked that, and hung up."

The participant further maintained the same performance level that he usually provided by distracting himself with another goal: *"my performance remained the same because it is required from us religiously and the contrary is prohibited."* Moreover, he diverted his attention elsewhere when it came to the material reward process: *"I just want to get experience because I will leave the company in the end; I will not remain here."*

When the participants are told about their rewards and ratings in the annual PA interview, they feel negative only temporarily because the material rewards and the performance appraising process in general have started to hold less emotional significance for them. As a result, this distraction mechanism eliminates the negative feelings that are associated with the routine and therefore there is no need to implicitly change the routine for further negative emotion downregulation:

> "In my third year, I got an increment of around £20 on my annual salary. You cannot get a decent box of chocolates for that. I felt bad and disappointed temporarily, but I looked at the bigger picture in the end. I took this as a career and I stayed…I don't care about the process. I get my satisfaction from comparing the experience I receive with other employees." (A25, GPSF2)

However, when the other goal they have focused on becomes less operational, i.e., when they feel that they are not receiving proper development and experience, they start feeling negatively and some start engaging with other negative emotion downregulating processes such as cognitive change. Therefore, the influence of attentional deployment on organisational routines is one of *buffering* actions (i.e., delaying negative emotion downregulation strategies to the future). For example, this senior employee felt demotivated after his distraction strategy (focusing on experience) failed, so downregulated his demotivation by resigning from the company and trying his luck elsewhere:

> "I am only here to obtain experience … as a person, I feel that I have a greater potential for the company, greater than the work they allocate for me. Therefore, this made me feel demotivated…I started to feel that my learning curve had stabilised. It is not increasing, and I am not gaining new experience. I am now in my second year as a senior. During the first levels while I was a junior, there was exposure and my learning curve went up and the following years it also did, but then I got fed up…I reached a second-year senior position and then I left for the industry, to try it." (A18, GPSF2)

Out of these three emotion regulation processes, the majority of participants mainly relied on cognitive change to downregulate their negative emotions. This shows that negative emotion regulation processes can result in a breakdown or change in routines patterns, as well as a change to the goals prescribed to the routine, which in turn materialise through performance. However, these changes are not favourable, because they interact recursively with emotion regulation processes that are external to the routine and need to be hidden through distancing, working-around, or buffering actions. As such, the changes to routine patterns and goals feed into the high-order PA process largely undetected and therefore do not become formally institutionalised in routines.

Furthermore, it is important to note that individuals in all case companies do not just employ one emotion regulation strategy to downregulate negative emotions. The literature on emotion regulation suggests that participants can employ several strategies, sometimes together, to deal with negative affective events (Gross, 2008, 2010). However, in order to present the findings more clearly, the researcher opted to elaborate on each strategy separately. For instance, the same participants can distance themselves from the process (i.e., employ situation selection) and at the same time distract themselves with future delayed rewards (i.e., attentional deployment). Similarly, some may use the three strategies in different situations and times during their professional career. With emotion regulation mechanisms, the influence of emotions on routines produces more idiosyncratic and covert changes than currently conceived and portrayed in the literature.

6.5 Discussion and contributions to theory

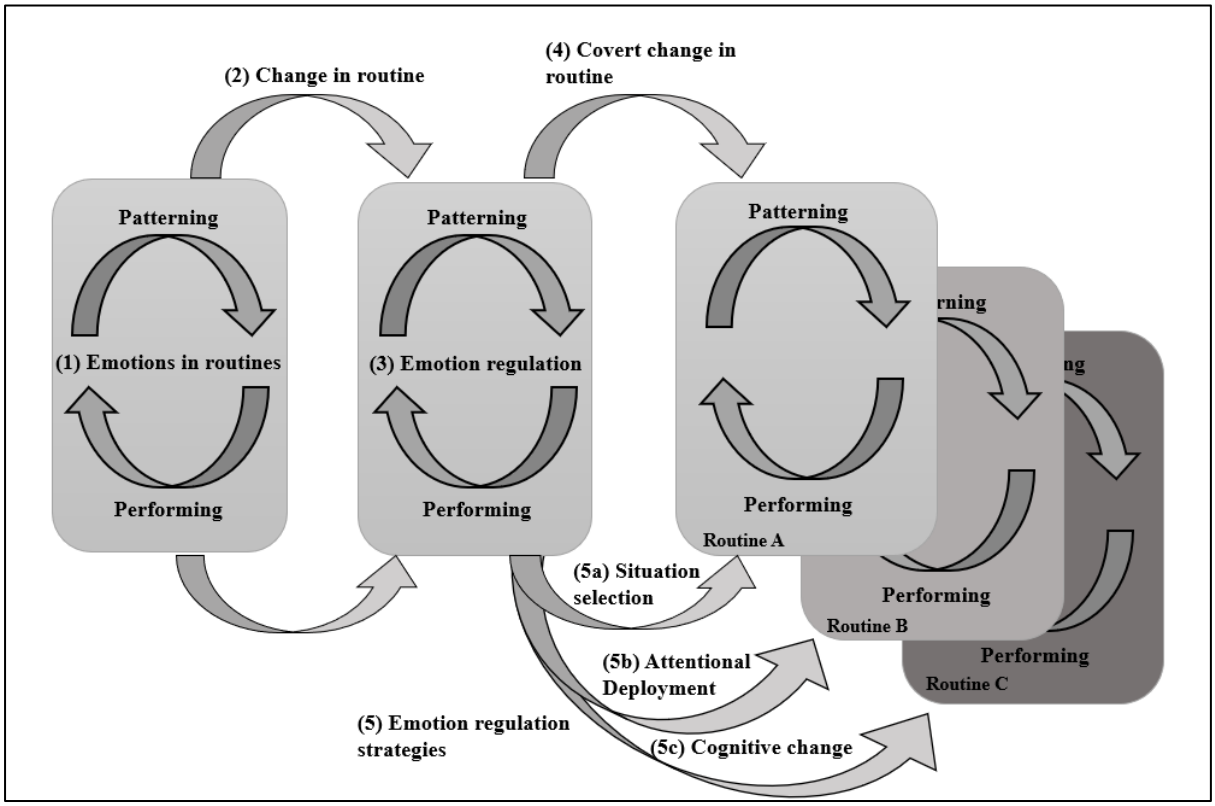
6.5.1 Regulating negative emotions in organisational routines

The study was mainly motivated by recent calls to examine the role of feelings and emotions in organisational routines (Baldessarelli, 2021; Howard-Grenville et al., 2016; Salvato and Rerup, 2011), in particular negative ones. It provides nuanced understanding of the dynamics of negative emotions on the patterning and performing of such routines (Baldessarelli, 2021).

In the study, emotion regulation is demonstrated as the underlying process that influences participants' replication of organisational routines. Emotion theorists suggest that individuals in general are motivated to avoid negative feelings and to seek pleasant ones (Gross, 2013). From this perspective, actors actively reflect on their feelings and emotions, whether positive or negative, to appraise the likelihood of experiencing them in future routine performance.

Figure (15) below illustrates how routines change from how emotions are regulated by its participants. Regarding the (re)creation of ostensive patterns, actors experience negative feelings as a by-product of performing routines, as they recall such feelings when reflecting on routines and recreating their ostensive patterns (path 1 in Figure 15). During the process, actors are actively thinking about implicit performance solutions that can alleviate the recurrence of negative feelings in future performances of routines (path 2 and 3 in Figure 15). Cognitively and in action, employees do so covertly (path 4 in Figure 15) by either breaking down the routine pattern (situation selection) (path 5a in Figure 15), backgrounding routine goals (attentional deployment) (path 5b in Figure 15) or changing routine goals (cognitive change) (path 5c in Figure 15).

Figure 15: The influence of emotion regulation on routine replication



These strategies are undertaken through distancing, working-around, or simply buffering the regulation of negative emotions. From this perspective, changing and creating new ostensive patterns are active ways to downregulate negative feelings and emotions., when actors experience negative emotions, multiple and different patterns and performances to the routine emerge as actors employ different strategies to down-regulate negative emotions. With these findings, the study empirically shows how routine replication is impacted by the recursive relationship between routines and emotions, through which routines influence the emergence of emotions, and on the other hand emotions are regulated through maintaining and changing routines. This shows a dynamic interplay and interdependency between emotions and routines, in which a change in one could lead to a change in the other (i.e., the dynamics of emotions on the dynamics of routines and vice versa).

Some studies in the routine dynamics literature have highlighted the role of feelings in routine dynamics but not made a clear distinction between whether emotions are intrinsically or extrinsically resourced to routine performance, with researchers conflating the two (Baldessarelli, 2021; Eberhard et al., 2019; den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017). Additionally, scholars examining the role of feelings and emotions in routine dynamics have overlooked the underlying mechanisms that connect them to patterning and performing. For example, Grodal et al. (2015) suggest that positive emotions such as 'humour' facilitate the maintenance of routines, whereas Zbaracki and Bergen (2010) suggest that negative emotions facilitate the interruption of the price adjustment routine.

However, the majority of authors in the related literature have mainly overlooked the influence of emotions on replicating and transforming routines. Such studies clearly indicate that when actors experience positive feelings, they tend to upregulate these in future performances and therefore maintain the ostensive patterns of routines. On the other hand, such patterns are interrupted when actors have negative feelings (Rerup and Feldman, 2011; Zbaracki and Bergen, 2010). By uncovering the emotion regulation mechanisms, the current study shows how changing and creating new ostensive patterns becomes encouraged to down-regulate negative emotions in future performance (e.g., Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Christianson et al., 2009). By focusing on how employees intrinsically regulate the negative feelings and emotions they experience when enacting routines, this study demonstrates emotion regulation, consisting of up and downregulation, to be the underlying mechanism that explains how such feelings and emotions influence patterning, and how in turn patterning guides action. Emotion regulation

contributes to "a better understanding of the emotional dimension to organizing" (Baldessarelli, 2021).

As for the influence of negative feelings and emotions on organisational routines, the literature explains that such feelings can have a positive effect if they lead to positive changes. For example, Feldman and Quick (2009) and Feldman (2000) show that feelings of anger led study participants to improve their routine. Similarly, Salvato and Rerup (2018) and Zbaracki and Bergen (2010) demonstrate that negative emotional issues between routine participants led management to intervene and improve the routine. However, improvement in the routine is not always the case when participants feel negatively. For instance, den Nieuwenboer et al. (2017) show that managers ignored the negative feelings that lower-level employees were experiencing. Moreover, the emotion regulation mechanisms discussed in these studies were mostly extrinsic, i.e., feelings influenced by others (e.g., management or the community). By focusing on intrinsic emotion regulation on the other hand, this chapter has revealed how negative emotion down-regulation processes lead to multiple replications of routines ostensibly different from one employee to another. In particular, the findings show that negative emotion downregulation strategies are themselves multifaceted and differ between employees, adding more to the idiosyncrasy in the generative change associated with the recursive relationship between patterning and performing (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Dittrich et al., 2016). This was clear by how actors used different emotion regulation processes that influenced the trajectory of change in organisational routines, such as a breakdown in the routine patterns (via situation selection), changing routine goals (via cognitive change), or backgrounding these goals (via attentional deployment).

The study findings show that we still have much to learn about the role of feelings and emotions in organisational routine. They illustrate how negative feelings influence the transformation and replication of several substantially varying versions of routine at the micro-level. Crucially, much of this replication and transformation is conducted covertly in the backstage of organisational routines, but at the same time, and as the findings illustrate, the changes feed into the performance of formal organisational routines mainly through deceptive actions, such in cases of situation selection and cognitive change. Finally, not all negative emotions encourage a change in routine patterns, contrary to what has been observed previously (e.g., in studies on truces see Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergen, 2010). This was clear in the attentional deployment strategy that eliminated the emotional significance of the whole routine, which enabled employees to background formal and informal routine goals in

patterning and buffer regulation in action for the future. With these findings, the study contributes more refined understanding of how negative feelings and emotions, as an important part of social reality, are central to how routines are (re)created.

6.5.2 Deception in organisational routines

Moreover, by showing how emotion regulation processes influence undesirable workarounds, the study contributes to the routine dynamics literature by showing how participants use organisational routines to deceive the way they regulate their negative feelings. This was clearly evident from how some participants engaged in unfavourable workaround behaviours when regulating their negative emotions by relying on cognitive change mechanisms. A workaround is:

> "a goal-driven adaptation, improvisation, or other change to one or more aspects of an existing work system in order to overcome, bypass, or minimize the impact of obstacles, exceptions, anomalies, mishaps, established practices, management expectations, or structural constraints that are perceived as preventing that work system or its participants from achieving a desired level of efficiency, effectiveness, or other organizational or personal goals" (Alter, 2014: 1044).

In this case, workarounds were unfavourable. The findings show that deception emerges as actors regulate their negative emotions by employing situation selection and cognitive change strategies. The nature of these particular strategies means actors engage in deceptive behaviours, since organisational contexts constrain them from publicly regulating negative feelings (Baldessarelli, 2021). The evidence clearly shows that when participants feel negatively when taking part in the PA process, they are bound to suppress such emotions in fear of negative future repercussions. Therefore, they become inclined to regulate the negative emotions covertly, meaning their efforts for doing so must be concealed. From this perspective, deception can also be considered to be a means to counteract negative feelings and emotions in organisations.

By focusing on actions performed through different granularities (i.e., high-order and micro-level) and by tracing these actions to the emotion regulation strategy employed, we can begin to understand another nature of the engagement in deceptive actions that relates more to balancing emotional conflict and freeing oneself from the shackles of power subjectification. Unlike the current portrayal of deception in studies that trace its conception to the upper echelon of organisations, which aim to maximise their rewards and goals by self-seeking

behaviours (e.g., den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017), the findings of this study reveal another face of deception that is operationalised by lower-level employees to mitigate negative emotions. With this finding, this study also contributes to the literature on deception in routine dynamics (Eberhard et al. 2019; den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017) by showing nuanced understanding of deception as a mechanism for regulating negative emotions from the perspective of employees at lower hierarchical levels, who arguably possess the least structural power in organisations.

6.5.3 Regulating emotions in the performance appraisal process

Emotions in performance appraisal

This study was also motivated by the limited understanding we have of the role of feelings and emotions in PA (Oh and Farh, 2017). The findings show that feelings and emotions in the PA process are not simply antecedents or consequences but are an important part of its success or failure. The study recognises a much more central role to feelings and emotions than that currently recognised in the literature. By identifying the central role of emotion regulation in determining how employees react to the process, our understanding of how emotions contribute to the replication and transformation of PA at the micro-level is advanced. In doing so, the study unpacks how emotions influence the process from within and over time, as opposed to how they are currently conceptualised in the PA literature.

The findings show that as participants experience negative emotions, they engage in intrinsic emotion regulation processes such as situation selection, cognitive change, and attentional deployment to downregulate them. What is important for the PA literature is how these emotion regulation strategies can shift the process goals from being determined by the organisation (or the routine) to becoming determined by the actors themselves and therefore explain how self-seeking behaviours and subjectivity (Murphy, 2020) are brought into the process. For instance, the generally prescribed goals of the process are to identify, measure, and develop employees' performance (Schleicher et al, 2018). These inform the interdependent tasks of the micro processes which, by being accomplished in temporal order, constitute PA. The study shows that while participants were regulating their negative emotions, these goals shifted and became more personally determined. For example, it is clearly illustrated that those who employed cognitive change as an emotion downregulation strategy (i.e., by altering the process meaning to performance devaluation) conceived deception as a new goal of the process, conducted covertly through undesirable workarounds (e.g., showing off, lying to the system, or displaying socially hypocritical behaviours).

On the other hand, participants who directed their attention elsewhere (i.e., distraction) backgrounded the formal process goals and ceased caring about the process all together. These changes to process goals are covert and hidden from public display; however, they feed into the formal PA process and have a negative influence on the rational use of the practice. For example, as illustrated in the findings, the participants who altered the process meaning to performance devaluation relied heavily on undesirable workaround actions to conceal their withdrawn effort (i.e., deception), and indicated that they lied to the system when developing their goals or requesting performance feedback through the relevant system. In other words, they contributed to deceptive artefacts (feedback forms) that are generally relied on by supervisors to develop and reward employee performances. Similarly, several participants stated that they distanced themselves from formal frequent and annual feedback meetings, which indicates that they did not utilise the informal controls that PA scholars argue are important (Schleicher et al., 2018; Merchant and Van der Stede, 2007). The findings illustrate that the emotional significance of the PA process goals is dynamic and changes as actors regulate their negative feelings throughout their careers. This perspective allows us to reconceptualise the role of emotions in the PA process as dynamic and recursive, rather than simply a measure to examine the effectiveness of the process.

6.5.4 Acting upon unjust performance appraisal: backstage retaliation

The research on fairness in PA suggests that when employees perceive unfairness, they are likely to respond in two ways, either lowering their performance and engaging in counterproductive behaviours, or becoming temporarily upset and subsequently doing nothing (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Many of the explanations are attributed to social exchange theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017), which considers the employment relationship in terms of social reciprocity and can be traced to Adams' (1965) work on inequity in social exchanges. The basic premise of this theory suggests that actors actively compare rewards (output) relative to their efforts (input), as well as comparing their rewards and efforts with those of others. If equilibrium in this comparison is reached, then employees will perceive the exchange as equitable; otherwise, they will work to restore equity. Research in this area suggests that when actors perceive fairness in the social exchange, this reflects on their feelings and emotions and translates into favourable behaviours, such as exhibiting organisational citizenship or affective commitment (Morrison and Robinson, 1995; Greenberg, 1993). On the other hand, the perception of inequity in social exchange translates

into counterproductive and sometimes retaliatory behaviours, such as theft or aggression (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Greenberg, 1993).

The study advances our understanding of how employees' covert counterproductive and retaliatory behaviours following unfair performance appraising practices unfold and influence PA at the micro-level. It extends the research on fairness in PA by identifying the underlying emotion-related psychological mechanisms that explain why actors choose to retaliate or not during PA in an unjust process climate. By considering situational selection, cognitive change, and attentional deployment, it is shown that those who employ situational selection and cognitive change to downregulate their emotions are most likely to engage in counterproductive and retaliatory behaviours resulting from unfairness, whereas those who distract themselves and direct their attention elsewhere are most likely not to do so. To some extent, the interplay between unfairness and negative behaviours mainly takes place while emotion regulation mechanisms are operating in the backdrop of organisational activities. Social information, interactions, and personal dispositions generate a myriad of feelings and emotions that needs regulation at the individual level, which in turn encourage employees' reactions in terms of exhibiting retaliatory or counterproductive behaviour.

In general, the findings shed light on the negotiated nature of PA as participants took part in different interactions during the process, which held different negotiated meanings from being subjected to unfair interactions. Moreover, such negotiated understanding between the participants and the process changes over time (Monin et al., 2013; Umphress et al., 2000; Mitrano, 1997). By harnessing the analytical power of practice and process approaches to examine the role of feelings and emotions in PA, the study contributes to the PA literature a more refined understanding of PA, which takes a middle position between the structuralist and the interactionist approaches. Therefore, it also reflects on the negotiated nature of PA and actors' constructions to unfair perceptions and differentiated reactions to them.

Including emotions in the study of PA allows us to revise the critical assumptions around the control and development of employees' performance, as well as the general role of emotions in the practice. Although scholars have mainly avoided the study of emotions, considering them to be the antithesis of rational actions, this study suggests that precisely for this reason we should include them in future PA studies to identify the full spectrum of subjectivity in the process, made possible by practice and process approaches.

6.6 Implications for theory and practice, avenues for future research, and study limitations

This study advances our understanding of how regulating negative emotions when replicating organisational routines contribute to change in the organisation. In particular, the findings contribute to unpacking the full spectrum of agency (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Feldman, 2016) by highlighting the role of emotions in routine change. For this reason, for organisations to become more effective, practitioners should take how actors regulate their negative emotions into consideration to limit the influence of actors changing the organisation covertly. This study is valuable for advancing our theoretical contributions to routine dynamics, as it uncovers a completely new aspect of change in organisations that was largely untouched upon in previous theorising efforts in routines. Following this valuable contribution, future studies should incorporate emotions more in their analysis of routines and organisations to unpack the full spectrum of stability and change in them. In this study, the natural course of stability and change is undoubtedly questionable by how actors make highly idiosyncratic and self-seeking changes in the backstage of routines, while preventing such changes to leak onto the front stage of routine (re)creations and replications.

Furthermore, the notion of front and backstage routines coined by Eberhard et al. (2019) that is based on Goffman's (1959) distinction of how actors present their daily conduct, is also valuable in showing that much of the front stage presentation is mainly performed theatrically, whereas conflicts, disputes, and instability largely take place in the backstage of routines. Future studies should clarify the distinction in the interaction between front and back stages of routine since they are proven to be crucial in how stability and change are achieved in organisations. This study further distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation mechanisms related to how change is brought about in routines. Additionally, it highlights how the two types of emotion regulation processes can provide alternative motivators for powerful actors to coerce alternative versions of a routine or motivate less powerful actors to resist coercion covertly. Since this study focused primarily on intrinsic negative emotion regulation, future studies should examine the role of extrinsic ones that could be indiced by managers on routine multiplicity and replications as well as focusing on the change in routines that results from the regulation of intrinsic positive emotions. More studies in the routine dynamics literature should focus on how rule-enforcing mechanisms are enacted in organisations, as this study highlights how involved they are in maintaining stability and change.

The findings of this study also highlight the highly idiosyncratic and negotiated nature of PA. They demonstrate the interplay between emotion regulation mechanisms and actors' constructions and reactions to perceptions of justice in the process, such as how regulating negative emotions through distraction does not pressure actors to retaliate, whereas cognitive change and situational selection are followed by retaliatory and deceptive actions. Future studies on PA and organisational justice should pay more attention to emotion regulation mechanisms, as they are closely linked to how actors construct and act on their perceptions of justice. Moreover, as illustrated in this study, the extent of change and subjectivity in PA is much greater than currently conceptualised in the PA literature. This poses the question as to the extent it is appropriate to deduce explanations for the process by solely relying on employees' reactions to it and whether this overly-focused view of structural determinism actually reflects its effectiveness. Therefore, more studies are needed that consider the negotiated nature of PA and adopt practice and process perspectives to examine its replication in different organisational settings. Finally, since the multiple cases in this study are highly similar, future research could select and replicate the findings of this study to multiple or polar types of cases or from different industries (Eisenhardt, 1989b).

The way actors regulate their feelings intrinsically in the backstage of PA feeds into changes in organisational processes and activities that are mainly undetectable by the management, practitioners, or organisations. It is unquestionable that the display of feelings and emotions in formal organisational contexts is universally constrained. Employees majorly check their feelings as they step into the organisational boundaries fearing that displaying them will reveal much more than they intend to share publicly or that they become labelled differently than they wish to be. In more extreme cases, this could nurture psychopathic behaviours in organisations (Boddy, 2006) which could help in destroying much of what was built. The organisational context in the Middle East and non-western contexts in general is not open for venting negative emotions or nurturing positive ones. Therefore, much of organisational feelings whether positive or negative are suppressed and dealt with covertly at the backstage of organising and this might be more of a status quo that will never change. In this regard, PA practitioners, should pay more focus to negative feelings that employees experience from unfair PA practices and take these feelings into consideration while designing and implementing the practice in organisations. In particular, they must reflect on how the negative emotion downregulation strategies of 'situational selection' and 'cognitive change' can change and breakdown the

formal PA process covertly and aim to prevent them from being mobilised by actors by implementing fair PA practices.

Moreover, organisations can harness the benefits of extrinsic positive emotion regulation strategies in order to counter-balance the unfavourable effect of potential negative feelings on the organisation. First, managers and appraisers should be educated and trained about how to deal with emotional responses that unfold during the PA process and made aware of the impact of these multiple hidden emotional responses that could be experienced throughout the process on the backstage of the PA process. Being aware of the emotions that actors experience throughout the process and learning how to deal with how they respond could be the first step in reducing the influence of incorporating unfavourable changes to organisations and their processes because of experiencing negative emotions. Moreover, organisations and the management should recognise and engage in extrinsic 'response modulation' strategy for emotion regulation.

Response modulation refers to attempts to change negative feelings after they have been fully experienced such as how physical exercise is used to decrease aspects of negative emotions that might have been experienced earlier (Gross, 2008). Similarly, organisations should employ parallel strategies to the traditional forms of organising where employees adhere to a chain of command and authority moves upward within the organisation. They should implement more leisure activities for employees, sympathetic forms of PA, teamwork building exercises, tangible training and development opportunities, employees emotional well-being care programs, and adopt open and healthy communication channels. Response modulation is important for organisations as an extrinsic emotion regulation strategy because it is unlikely that organisations, management, or practitioners will be able to detect employees' negative emotions and deal with them as they unfold but by operationalising response modulation strategies, their unfavourable impact could be reduced.

One limitation of the study is that data were collected from one source, namely appraisees. Although they proved valuable for uncovering insights into the process of PA and the emotions employees experience, focusing on appraisees and non-managerial employees in general can only shed light on intrinsic emotion regulation mechanisms. A fuller picture of how emotions influence PA routines could be gained if supervisors and managers were also interviewed. Moreover, the data were collected from employees in GPSFs in the Middle East, while there are233videnrences between PA processes across industries, organisations, and regions. For this

reason, perceptions of unfairness and employees' replication of processes may or may not be influenced by these factors; therefore, following the spirit of the study and examining the influence of emotions on PA in different organisational and regional contexts would further help to clarify any differences in how emotion regulation influences process replication. Finally, the data were collected during the summer of 2019 and reflect employees' temporal understanding of the process in general. More information on real-time performativity of the process could be obtained if future research relied, for example, on ethnography in its data collection.

Chapter Seven: Thesis discussion and conclusion

The studies in this thesis provide valuable insights by advancing our understanding of how the international PA process fails to be replicated at the micro-level in non-western contexts in general and in GPSFs operating the Middle East in particular. In the following sections, a discussion is presented which integrates the three studies (one qualitative meta-synthesis and two empirical studies) in tandem with contributions to international PA literature, theory, and practice.

7.1. International PA adoption failure in in non-western contexts: the Middle East

In general, because the institutional and cultural distances between western and non-western contexts are too large, studies that examine the adoption of international PA in the Middle Eastern and non-western contexts in general for global firms suggest that the practice is bound to be adopted ceremonially. In other words, the PA process fails to be adopted as intended. This thesis extends the existing literature with the multiplicity of PA at the micro-level. By uncovering the underlying mechanisms that lead to adoption and replication failure at the micro-level for how actors (1) integrate and navigate the expectations of multiple organisational, societal, and personal roles, (2) foreground and background certain institutional arrangements, and (3) regulate the negative feelings and emotions they experience during the enactment of the process, the thesis unravels the adoption and replication of multiple and heterogeneous PA processes at the micro-level. Crucially, these processes are composed by different patterns of actions that are enacted by different groups of actors.

Ostensibly, at the organisational level, the findings are generally in alignment with the current assumptions in the literature (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Alvehus, 2018; Vo and Stanton, 2011) as, at the outset, the process in the examined global subsidiaries was adopted ceremonially and informed by local cultural norms and values since no formal and professional development, formal feedback communication, formal performance criteria, formal career progression, or fair rewarding opportunities are in place. However, as this thesis incorporates actors' mindful and self-interested agency to examine the performative adoption and replication of the international PA process, it uncovers a micro-level layer of adoption failure that is driven by actors' exploitation of institutional, cultural, and structural incompatibilities. Crucially, as the findings show, Middle Eastern actors possess varying levels of power in organisations relative to the strength of their *wasta*, and they mobilise this power to translate the process informally to their advantage and appropriate and deplete the process from its rewarding outcomes. To this end, the evidence in this thesis demonstrates that the stronger the *wasta*, the more corruptive the translation and replication of PA. By doing so, the

formal international process remains replicable to less powerful employees, but its procedures are unfair, and its outcomes are not rewarding. These findings show that at least a lenient and a rigid approach to PA become institutionalised and adopted at the micro-level when the process is adopted ceremonially, and these processes are contingent upon the social statues and skills of actors replicating it. These findings contrast with existing literature (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Alvehus, 2018; Harbi et al., 2017) as they show a more dynamic and differentiated replication of PA at the micro-level instead of one process that applies to all employees. These findings provide a more in-depth and finely grained understanding to the literature of PA adoption failure as they emphasise that failure occurs because of the purposeful adoption and replication of multiple flawed processes in organisations. Therefore, they bring us closer to understanding failure of the most difficult practice to adopt in organisations.

Crucially, one important distinction between the studies of this thesis and studies in the existing PA literature is highlighting the front and backstage of the PA process, which distinguishes between behaviours meant for public consumption and those meant to be hidden. This distinction escaped the attention of scholars because the methodology they employ in their studies majorly focus on one level of analysis, either at the macro or micro, and mainly rely on one level of analysis such as employees perceptions or interpretations of the process and the local context where the process is embedded (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Vo and Stanton, 2011). However, by adopting the practice and process perspective, this thesis pays empirical attention to multiple levels of analysis simultaneously such as actors actions, understandings, and the material structure and social settings where the process is embedded, which proved more useful to trace front and backstage behaviours as these are difficult to trace solely from perceptions and interpretations. Illuminating the front and backstage of PA is important to understand why and how the process fails because it highlights a deep structure for the process through which unaligned self-interested behaviours and national cultural norms can become incorporated in the process. This thesis shows that these norms and behaviours take place in the backstage of PA while behaviours in the front stage are meant to provide the illusion that the process is being replicated as intended.

This was the case in the findings as this thesis shows a front stage process that is replicated just for show by powerful employees whereas in reality the actual replicated process that is linked with rewards and sanctions is a social currency, discriminatory, and deceptive and most importantly, it is being performed in the backstage of PA. Therefore, this distinction allows us to revise and question the extent to which employees' perceptions or interpretations and the

social context of PA (Levy and Williams, 2004) are suitable to examine PA success and failure, and whether they actually provide a realistic picture for the difficulty of adopting this highly complex and social practice.

Moreover, the assumption that the adoption of international PA process in organisations is structurally deterministic is dominant in the existing literature, which assumes that the successful adoption of PA is advantageous to the performance of employees and organisations (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). This thesis challenges this assumption and provides supporting evidence that the influence of adopting international PA particularly at the micro-level is more selective, complex, negotiated and indeterministic than currently conceptualised in the literature. By uncovering the front and backstage of multiple heterogeneous replications to PA processes, the findings of this thesis shed light on the dark side of embedding PA in organisations. As although the process is purposed to managing, identifying, measuring, and controlling employees performance, the thesis shows that this is not the case in its empirical studies.

The238videncee shows that embedding the process is at the heart of contemporary social issues that it aims to negate in the first place, such as discrimination between employees and unfairness in organisations. Therefore, with these findings, the thesis suggests that the influence of embedding the international practice in organisations is not structurally deterministic as assumed in the existing PA literature (e.g., Yahiaoui et al, 2021; Mellahi et al., 2016). The structural deterministic impact for embedding international practices might be true for the adoption of PA in organisations operating in western contexts (e.g., Jentjens and Yang, 2021) or for international practices that do not require social interactions between actors. However, the PA in particular is a process that is linked with effort, incentives, rewards, sections, and career progression. Additionally, by examining its adoption from multiple sociological and psychological theoretical lenses the findings of this thesis show that the process is laden with high psychological effort that actors must navigate and reconcile such as balancing between competing organisational and personal role expectations and balancing between multiple frames of reference for action or alleviating the negative feelings and emotions they experience during the process.

Therefore, as this evidence shows, embedding the international PA process in the Middle Eastern context at the micro-level provokes actors hedonistic nature and behaviours even in global organisations and institutionalised industries that are governed by rules, regulations and

tightly coupled control mechanisms (Alvehus, 2018; Empson et al., 2015; Merchant and Van der Stede, 2007). Actors in the Middle Eastern context are more inclined to take the easy way out irrespective of ethical considerations or bureaucratic structures. As appraisers replicate a lenient process for employees whom they have relationship with to alleviate the burdens of interpersonal role expectations, powerful employees replicate a process that advances their self-interest and maximises their rewards, and less powerful employees replicate deceptive processes and take workaround actions to rid themselves of negative feelings in future appraisals. All these instances show that organisational actors replicate the PA process selectively and idiosyncratically to maximise their pleasure (i.e., hedonism) and in pursuit of achieving that, the PA process becomes fertile ground for the social production of contemporary social issues in organisations. Most importantly, this production of social issues warrants us to shift away from PA as structurally deterministic to PA as performatively replicated and emphasise on actors' translation efforts where they take advantage of material and social structural vulnerabilities to replicate front and backstage processes that maximises their pleasure, minimises their pain, and advances their self-interest.

With these findings, the thesis contributes to the highly under researched area in the international PA a micro-level perspective on PA adoption failure for global firms operating in the Middle Eastern context. It unpacks the black box of PA and uncovers the underlying mechanisms of change that explain how the process fails to be adopted as intended, and therefore, uncovers different dynamics and factors for PA adoption failure in the Middle East beyond those that are commonly used in the literature (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). The Middle East proved to be an extreme context to inform the western derived literature on the adoption and replication of PA as it illuminated actors' purposeful efforts to replicate a corrupt PA at the micro-level instead of that intended internationally. The thesis further contributes to existing PA on the dark side of implementing the practice in organisations (Bizzi, 2018; Longenecker and Gioia, 2000) by distinguishing between the front and backstage of the process and highlighting performative mechanisms to contemporary social issues that relate to discrimination and unfairness in the workplace. Crucially, these mechanisms provide a nuanced understanding that shows how actors take advantage of material and social structural vulnerabilities to advance their self-interest and incorporate self-seeking behaviours. Significantly, the contributions of this thesis extend in the management accounting field (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018; Graf et al., 2019; Hood, 2006; Jensen, 2003) into the micro-level as they are also helpful in explaining how non-managerial actors are also able to

circumvent management controls, game performance measurements, and incorporate their subjectivity into the process in its front and backstage. Finally, the thesis contributes to the PA literature (Murphy, 2020) and its international scholarship (DeNisi et al., 2021; Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Horak and Yang, 2019; Vo and Stanton, 2011) by advancing our understanding to the negotiated nature and indeterministic impact of the process as multiple meanings become socially constructed when actors interact with each other and with the material structure and social context where the process is embedded.

These novel contributions provide several theoretical, practical, and methodological implications as well as new directions for future research. Adopting a practice and process perspective to examine the adoption and replication of international PA at the micro-level is very useful to uncover performative mechanisms that explain the *how* of PA adoption. This approach is not just a theoretical lens but is also a methodological approach that can be used to address researchers' recommendation of examining the process as a whole and not in parts as currently examined in the literature since, as illustrated, this perspective recognises PA as a process that is composed of interdependent and temporally ordered micro-processes and that the accomplishment of these micro-processes contribute to the accomplishment of PA as a whole. Moreover, this approach has a strong explanatory power as it looks at multiple levels of reality (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011) and provides a more in-depth and contextualised understanding to PA adoption that cannot be achieved alternatively because it recognises the process as sociomaterial -that is, a process that is embedded in multiple social and material contexts. Additionally, it centres actors' actions at the heart of its empirical analysis "to uncover that behind all the apparently durable features of our world there is always the work and effort of someone." (Nicolini, 2012: 3). To this end the following are recommendations for researchers and avenues for future research:

it is important that researchers employ the practice and process perspective in future PA adoption studies and recognise the adoption process as performative, effortful, multiple, selective, and translated by actors. This can be done by moving away from the structurally deterministic approach to process adoption to a more dynamic examination to how the process and social phenomena co-evolve and influence change in one another. International PA researchers should shift their empirical attention to actors' actions and understandings instead of solely focusing on perceptions and interpretations in order to unpack how different meanings become constructed for the process. Moreover, they should focus their attention to uncovering the underlying mechanisms that explain the success or failure of adopting this complex and

social practice in organisations across the globe. Significantly, in order to unpack the full spectrum of international PA adoption in global organisations, future research should pay more attention to tracing actors' mindful and self-interested agency in carrying out the PA process both at the front and backstage. Without doing so, we would only be looking at theatrical adoption and replication for the practice and also be prevented from understanding how contemporary social issues materialise in organisations from adopting the practice.

As for the influence of national cultures on practices, researchers and future international PA studies should recognise distinct cultural norms for non-western contexts such as *wasta* in the Middle East (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021) and *guanxi* in China (Gu and Nolan, 2017) as an important frame of reference for action that co-evolves with the process and shapes the course of its adoption. A final recommendation to researchers would be replicating the spirit of this study in different non-western contexts to better inform the western derived PA literature and refine its assumptions on the workings of the practice and its adoption in contexts with fluid institutional configurations and high value cultures.

7.2 The complexity of institutional configurations in the Middle East at the micro-level and PA adoption

A central assumption of institutional theory maintains that actors who are affiliated with a professional group will closely replicate and adhere to the primary logic of that group (Alvehus, 2018; McPherson and Sauder, 2013). The findings of this thesis challenge this assumption by showing that actors knowledgeably invoke and manipulate available logics to inform the actions that they use to replicate the PA process in the Middle Eastern context and often employing the informal regional community of wasta. Moreover, the thesis shows that logics in this organisational and local context are comparable to both tools and taken-for-granted social prescriptions, tools that can be picked up by powerful actors and used to achieve self-interested individual and organisational goals, and taken-for-granted social prescriptions that are navigated by less powerful actors. Additionally, the thesis showed that powerful actors can exercise a great deal of discretion in how they use and employ logics for self-interested purposes, whereas less powerful actors navigate these logics on the frontstage of practices while they dissociate them from institutions in the backstage. Demonstrating powerful actors discretion and less powerful actors disassociation efforts provides a more refined understanding to the "mediating role of actors in translating logics into actions in local settings" (McPherson and Sauder, 2013: 182) and brings us closer to understanding the embeddedness of agency in institutions (Lok and Willmott, 2018; Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009).

These findings highly differ in showing the institutionalisation of PA in global firms operating in the Middle Eastern region and non-western contexts in general. Whereas current studies exclusively adopt the structural similarity principle, the coercive force of isomorphism, and singular adoption behaviours to examine the adoption of international PA practice in MNCs (Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Vo and Stanton, 2011), the thesis adopt the institutional logics framework that recognises institutional heterogeneity (Thornton et al., 2012) and examine how practice adoption and replication is achieved through agency at both the macro and micro-levels by looking at the behavioural and material manifestation to institutions through roles and routines. Significantly, the thesis reflects on the dysfunctional institutional complementarities (Wood and Schnyder, 2021) in the Middle Eastern context and how these are translated on the ground at the micro-level by actors in relation to their power.

At the macro-level, the regional community logic that emphasises on getting things done through informal relationships, such as *wasta* in the Middle East, highly dominates the interinstitutional arena. The findings show that the introduction of this logics overshadows the exclusivity and dominance of the remaining logics within the interinstitutional system. Additionally, this logic pairs itself with other logics and results in changing its dynamics, cultural symbols, and material practices. It becomes a dominant frame of reference for powerful actors to use as a tool and for less powerful actors to navigate as a taken-for-granted social prescription. Therefore, it transforms logics to having a dual nature on organisations, employees, practices and processes. At the macro-level, the regional community logic of *wasta* can split and pair between highly institutionalised logics for organisations to create completely different organising principles and multiple hybrid frames of references external to organisation. Furthermore, it can magnify the sources of power and authority for some actors on account of others in a dysfunctional manner.

Therefore, disrupting the structural power dynamics in the formal organisational hierarchy. Most importantly, this logic extends organisational activities beyond its formal boundaries to penetrate other social domains such as family, religion, personal, and societal ones. These findings refine our understanding on the workings of the regional community logic in the institutional logics framework as the introduction of the community logic is recent and the few studies that examined it are conducted in western contexts where it is more pronounced at the group and profession levels -crucially since the foundational logic in western society organisations is bureaucratic- while it is silent at the regional level (Mutch, 2021; Thornton et al., 2012; Marquis and Battilana, 2009). Therefore, this thesis informs the western logics

framework (Thornton et al., 2012) on the working of *wasta* regional community logic in global organisations. It does so by underscoring its dual nature as both a tool and a taken-for-granted social prescription and therefore reconciles between the two camps of institutional logics that either conceptualises logics as a tool (Quattrone, 2015; McPherson and Sauder, 2013) or as a taken-for-granted social prescriptions (Thornton et al., 2012; Lounsbury, 2008; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007).

At the micro-level, the findings of this thesis unpack the embedded agency in institutions (Lok and Willmott, 2018; Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009) by showing how multiple institutional logics are translated into actions and how these actions are used to replicate the PA process in global firms. This part of the thesis speaks to a highly under researched area in the micro-institutional analysis which is specifically concerned with how actors (both organisations and individuals) socialise institutional norms in order to create, disrupt, or transform institutions (Chandler and Hwang, 2015; Hardy and Maguire, 2008; DiMaggio, 1988). In this literature, it is argued that actors are the ones who are solely responsible of carrying institutional information through their actions. This literature is based on the institutional entrepreneurship concept that was first introduced by DiMaggio (1988). He argued that some actors have the social skills, resources, and interest in modifying and changing the institutional structure and along the years, this led to a societal division at the macro-level between heroic entrepreneurs and cultural dopes (Hardy and Maguire, 2008). The former are actors with intentions to reform institutions and the latter are passive actors that are guided by institutions.

In this thesis, powerful actors who possess the resources for change and are interested in modifying institutions are those who are well connected informally. With this, the findings majorly show the skilfulness of these actors in taking advantage of contradictions and complementarities between the institutional norms of the regional community logic of *wasta* and other logics in the interinstitutional system in order to disrupt and modify institutions. To do so, these actors use logics as tools in order to devise organisational routinised activities such as PA into two, one that applies to them and another that applies to less powerful employees. This impact is captured by the mechanism of foregrounding and backgrounding logics by powerful agents in organisations. Similar mechanisms were uncovered in other studies examining logics at the micro-level, for instance, McPherson and Sauder (2013) uncovered hijacking logics to illustrate how actors "use the logics from other institutional realms" (p. 180) to enhance decision making in organisations. Smets et al. (2015) uncovered "demarcating" logics to show how insurance traders integrate and reassert foreign logics by *situationally*

privileging one over another. In this thesis, however, the mechanism of foregrounding and backgrounding logics is more permanent in nature and is used to modify institutions to advance actors self-interest, not to enhance organisational activities and decision making.

Therefore, this mechanism captures a more dynamic influence of institutional logics in organisations that is more at the discretion of its actors and explains how heroic agents in organisations at the individual level are able to disrupt and transform institutions, turn their expectations into rules, and embed them in organisational activities as patterns of action at the micro-level. However, in this case, they are more of 'villains' as they do so solely for the pursuit of their self-interest, irrespective of fairness, and ethical and professional codes of conduct. At the same time, there is also some evidence in the thesis that less powerful actors who became coerced to navigate the newly transformed institutional order only do that on the front stage of organisational activities, whereas in the backstage, they resist and reject these newly formed logics and replicate a whole new process that interact recursively with irrational frames of reference external to institutional logics such as feelings and emotions. In this sense, these less powerful actors are not cultural dopes as portrayed in the literature, but they are more of 'disingenuous agents' or 'covert villains' as they are not passive consumers of institutional norms (as conceptualised in the classical stream of institutional theory, e.g., DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977) but they can provide the illusion that organisational activities are informed by and linked to these norms at the front stage. In this regard, the thesis challenges this social division and shows that even actors who are considered cultural dopes with no power and resources are also able to disrupt and transform institutions, however, only covertly and at the backstage. Therefore, shedding light on how cultural dopes that become covert heroic agents.

With these findings, the thesis contributes to the perspective of institutional logics by showing how actors, relative to their power, use and reject logics strategically to influence the front and backstage of practice adoption in pursuit of their self-interest. Moreover, examining the influence of multiple logics down to the level of action further provides evidence for theoretical claims about the effects of institutional logics on everyday organisational activities and therefore, showing the value of employing the institutional logics framework to understand the macro-micro link between organisations and the adoption of practices and processes (Gümüsay et al., 2020; Smets et al., 2015; McPherson and Sauder, 2013). Furthermore, the in-depth examination of how actors use and navigate logics contribute to recent micro-level institutional studies with the ways in which actors navigate institutional complexity and disrupt and

transform institutional arrangements. More generally, the findings in this thesis speak to how local cultural forces, embodied by the regional community logic, can exert significant influence on micro-level organisational activities and actors behaviours. Finally, the work in this thesis provides a new perspective on how institutional theory can better our understanding of micro-level and routinised organisational activities in global firms in the Middle East and the replication of practices within them. In general, research that examines global firms has almost solely adopted the assumptions of isomorphism (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021) or focused on two logics (Alvehus, 2018) to examine their influence within these organisations. As such, the realistic complexity for the institutional arrangement has been largely absent in the analysis of global firms and especially those operating in the Middle Eastern region.

The results of this thesis provide valuable recommendations for researchers and future studies with the institutional theory field. Future research might examine practices and micro-level processes that support or discourage the fluid negotiation of logics at the micro-level. Since logics are negotiated on the ground based on actors' levels of power, where powerful actors' actions use logics as tools and less powerful ones are passive consumers to their cultural symbols and material practices. Additionally, researchers should pay more focus at the micro-level on the relationship between actors' power and the embedded agency in institutions in order to unpack how actors can disrupt, transform and change institutions. Future scholarship could further specify more factors that influence a dual nature for logics (i.e., as tools and taken-for-granted).

Furthermore, research is needed to examine the workings of community logic in the interinstitutional system. In particular, the regional community logics pertaining non-western contexts that could hinder the success of routinised organisational activities. In this respect, scholars might cross-fertilise institutional theories with those from the practice and process community such as sensemaking (Weick, 1995) and routines (Feldman and Pentland, 2003) in order to further illuminate how logics are translated on the ground and provide more evidence on the macro-micro link of institutions and organisational activities. Finally, scholars examining institutions in non-western contexts might want to adopt the institutional logics framework since it is more inclusive of their local cultural norms and could shed better light on their influence on organisational activities. More research is needed for the institutional logics framework in non-western empirical settings as the institutional arrangements in these contexts are fluid, dynamics, and could provide a better understanding and inform the western theory on the complex workings of logics in the interinstitutional arena.

7.3 Organisational routines in the Middle East: power and politics in rule-enforcing routines

The routine dynamics theory is underpinned with the assumption that the reproduction of routines maintains a healthy course of balanced stability and change in organisations (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). Extant studies were majorly executed in western contexts and emphasise that change in routines is inevitable as actors jointly define situations and select agreed upon action variations in routine performances and retain them in dominant routine patterns for all participants to follow (Feldman et al., 2021; Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Dittrich et al., 2016; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013). The findings in this thesis portray different dynamics to routines in the Middle Eastern context by showing that change is more persistent, subjective, and incorporated individually in routine structure and performances. Moreover, the thesis shows that actors' power holds less significance in routine change than currently theorised in the literature (e.g., Eberhard et al., 2019; Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Safavi and Omidvar, 2016) as the findings show that a routine has a multiplex front and backstage structure where variations can be incorporated by both elite and non-elite actors. Additionally, a critical assumption in the routine dynamics theory posit that high levels of conflict between routine participants will inevitably lead to a breakdown in routine patterns (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010). The thesis challenges this assumption by showing that physical and emotional conflict between actors can be perpetuated and regulated by replicating different noninstitutionalised versions of the routine, without a breakdown in the official and formal routine patterns.

By adopting a routine dynamics theory, this thesis in general further investigates the workings of organising in the Middle Eastern context by reconceptualising PA as a central routine for stability and change that aims to enforce organisational rules and social controls. The studies in the existing literature solely focused on actors' actions in reproducing routines with the central assumption that these actions are cognitively generated from native knowledge structures to organisations such as the formal pattern of actions, routine and organisational goals, and rules and standard operating procedures (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; D'Adderio, 2014). To this end, the type of variations in routine performances that dominates the theory is favourable and aligned with the nominal performance standards of organisations. The results and assumptions in the existing literature are tethered to the taken-for-granted notion that there is a performance appraising high-order process in place through which organisational rules and controls are enforced on employees (Nelson and Winter, 1982). Therefore, as many variations

can be introduced and incorporated in routines, they are bounded within the scope of formal organising principles.

However, by investigating the influence of institutional logics and negative emotions on routines, the thesis highlights external knowledge structures that can be used to introduce individual's idiosyncratic variations beyond those currently uncovered in the routine dynamics theory. The findings show that powerful actors are able to incorporate their expectations in organisational rule-enforcing routines by changing the type of structures that these routines interact recursively with away from the organisational level to the institutional level, leading to arbitrary self-interested changes in routine's action pattern. In this regard, the findings provide evidence of the theoretical claims for how power can influence change in routines (Feldman et al., 2021; Feldman and Pentland, 2003). However, the thesis further extends this claim to include less powerful actors. As by investigating the role of negative feelings and emotions in routines, it is shown that less powerful actors are able to incorporate their expectations and change rule-enforcing routines covertly by changing the recursive structures from organisational to their own emotions.

In the organisational literature in general, studies emphasise that less powerful employees are more likely to follow and be attentive to the expectations and interpretations of powerful ones (Eberhard et al., 2019; den Nieuwenboer et a., 2017; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013; Metiu, 2006; Edmondson et al., 2001), and those powerful participants are more masterful than others in altering "the situation so that meanings in the situation are consistent with their own definition of the situation" (Cast, 2003: 188). By examining how negative emotions motivate actions during the replication of organisational routines, the findings of Chapter six illustrate how less powerful actors regulate the negative emotions that could result from the power struggles between actors. Most importantly, it shows that being attentive to the expectations and interpretations of powerful actors only occurs at the surface level and performed theatrically for the consumption of elites. However, in the backstage of routines, it is shown that less powerful actors are mainly attentive to their own expectations and interpretations that are guided by emotion regulation mechanisms.

In this way, the thesis shows that less powerful employees do not just "develop, over time, a more thorough understanding of how the other [powerful] is likely to respond" (Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013: 195) but that they also take advantage of this understanding to resist powerful actors' coerced versions and vent negative feelings associated with power subjugation.

Therefore, they become more able to incorporate their expectations covertly in routines while maintaining the status quo of conflict with powerful actors. In this regard, Light shed on power and politics in the dynamics of routines (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010), whose complexity has been barely detected in the existing literature, in which the main focus for power and politics in organisational studies is mainly devoted to the management and the upper echelons of organisations (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002), leaving the role of lower-level and front-line employees in shaping these politics and power dynamics largely in the shadows. However, examining how lower-level employees replicate organisational routinised activities provides us with a glimpse of how power and politics are reciprocated from this vantage point.

Furthermore, the findings further extend the routine replication and multiplicity perspective in its adoption as well as how routines are used to balance between two conflicting goals (Salvato and Rerup, 2018; D'Adderio, 2014), in this case it is between self-interested and organisational goals. This literature posits that two versions materialise in the adopting context that actors must balance between, one for exact replication and another for innovation and adaptation. Crucially, the boundaries between these routines are permeable as the literature shows that all actors can participate in the two patterns equally and contribute to their maintenance and change through performance (D'Adderio and Pollock, 2020; D'Adderio, 2020).

Chapter five illustrated that non-managerial organisational actors simultaneously created and maintained multiple sets of ostensive patterns and performances to the PA routine. Powerful actors created two sets of routines that favour advancing their self-interested goals, one that is performed just for show through lip service actions to align to the formal PA template and a corrupted one that advances their self-interested goals. Less powerful actors, on the other hand, were left to replicate the formal PA template but without its rewarding outcomes. Chapter six further highlights the creation and replication of multiple sets, but it emphasises further on the lip service replication to the formal template in the front stage of routines and the creation of multiple ones in the backstage. Much of the variations that were introduced into the multiple versions of the routine were not leaked to the formal pattern. Surprisingly, these findings show that by linking routines to structures external to the formal organisation such as institutions and emotions, mental barriers were erected by powerful actors between the multiple versions of the routine and such barriers were also erected by less powerful actors between the front and back stages of routines.

This evidence shows that actors are able to balance between their self-interested and routine goals manipulatively by replicating the formal PA pattern theatrically to align to the formal template and create multiple self-interested pursuing routines. The focus on actors' self-interest and self-seeking behaviours sheds new light on the replication and multiplicity of rule-enforcing routines in global organisations in the Middle East. Furthermore, by showing how actors can link routines to external structures and devise non-permeable barriers between the multiple created versions as well as between their front and backstage, it contributes in-depth explanations to the theoretical claims on the influence of power and power resistance on routines. Therefore, the thesis provides a nuanced understanding to a highly under researched area in the routine dynamics literature of how actors, irrespective of their power, can incorporate their self-interested goals in routines. At a bigger picture, the thesis contributes to the complexity of routine embeddedness in multileveled sociomaterial structures and actors' agency through the lenses of institutions and emotions.

The results of this thesis provide valuable recommendations for researchers and avenues for future research. First, routine dynamics researchers should move away from examining power and politics in operational routines, such as the shipping routine or the sales routine (e.g., Dittrich and Seidl, 2018; Salvato and Rerup, 2018; Zbaracki and Bergens, 2010) and focus more on the influence of power on routinised rule-enforcing activities in organisations, such as the process of PA. Since as illustrated in this thesis, the influence of contention, power, and politics in routinised rule-enforcing mechanisms is more accentuated than in operational routines. Therefore, future scholarship might examine routinised rule-enforcing mechanisms that constrain and minimises the incorporation of unfavourable variations in routines. Second, not all the dominant and recognisable patterns of interdependent actions are easily captured during the investigation of routines.

Scholars in the routine dynamics literature predominantly focus on the recursive relationship between actors' actions that are informed by organisational artefacts and artefacts that were created by actors. Crucially, as this thesis demonstrated, actors can enact these actions through lip service performances and provide the illusion aligned artefact-patterning-performing relationships, whereas in reality, actors can disassociate routines from formal structures and enact them idiosyncratically. Future research could further specify and uncover variations in routines from being linked with structures beyond the formal organisation, such as institutions and emotions, and investigate further how actors can create non-permeable boundaries between (in)formal structures and routines. To do so, more research could be conducted in Middle

Eastern and non-western contexts as since these contexts are characterised by the absence of formal institutions and organisations, light could be shed on routine dissociation from formal structures and the incorporation of unfavourable variations in routines.

7.4 Contributions and recommendations to practice

The results of this thesis deliver valuable insights to MNCs and GPSFs regardless of their sector particularly those operating in the Middle East on the diffusion of management practices in the region. Furthermore, they deliver equally important insights for management practitioners. Since the primary focus of this thesis was to uncover performative mechanisms that explain PA adoption and replication failure, the recommendations of this thesis crucially target factors that contribute to its successful adoption and replication. Theoretically, PA helps both organisations and employees to have information about how well they are doing and how to improve the level of their performance (DeNisi et al., 2021). Moreover, the practice is designed to protect employees' rights from being breached or taken advantage of. Empirical studies in the literature of PA suggest that only effective implementation and adoption of PA can achieve these purposes as well as cultivating a culture that balances between control and development (Murphy, 2020; DeNisi and Smith, 2014). In this respect, the studies in this thesis provide evidence for organisations that this is not the case. Researchers and practitioners should shift their focus from the type of process adopted at the organisational level to the heterogeneous processes replicated at the individual and micro-levels.

They must pay attention to the varying meanings that actors attach to the process and the dominant frames of reference that inform their actions while they are replicating PA, which contribute to process multiplicity. This nurtures more confusion from employees about the process that is definitely bound to affect their perceptions of it and the intended outcomes from it. The findings show that the multiplicity of PA processes at the micro-level is somehow difficult to be avoided but its negative outcomes could be reduced. Performance measurement, appraisal, and associated rewards are tightly coupled with employee control, development, and motivation. Crucially, unstructured expectations in the Middle East (those relating to friendships and society) were overlooked in process design and implementation, but as shown in this thesis, their impact is highly devastating on the process. Therefore, MNCs should implement strategies and helping factors that enable them to manage employees' expectations in non-western contexts in addition to managing their performance. In particular, organisations should implement socio-ideological informal controls that could help in preventing actors from creating multiple processes and create non-permeable boundaries between them which enable

them to incorporate such unstructured expectations. These factors include cultivating organisational culture and identity that emphasise on individual accountability and ethical behaviours (Alvesson et al., 2015). These strategies are important because they lessen the impact of the structural authority and power that appraisers and appraisees in the Middle Eastern context gain from organisational bureaucracy and societal accepted value systems and focus more on achieving aligned behaviours intrinsically by actors. Therefore, organisations in the Middle East and non-western contexts that are characterised by high structural power distance (Harbi et al., 2017) should start to move away from the traditional PA and the centralised command-and-control mechanisms to control, develop, and improve employees' behaviours and rely more on decentralised mechanisms that focuses on actors' intrinsic need to conform, be motivated, develop, and improve.

Another important recommendation to practitioners and MNCs is to become more aware of the backstage of PA, since the thesis examined PA at the micro-level, the results stress that unaligned behaviours are mostly incorporated in its backstage and that behaviours on the front stage can be theatrically enacted to provide the illusion of successful adoption and aligned behaviours. In this regard, MNCs and practitioners should find a way to extend informal control mechanisms beyond its front stage and make sure that the deep structure of PA is inaccessible by appraisers and appraisees. Crucially, the impact of having or not having interpersonal relationships in organisations is the main reason that compels organisational actors to access the backstage of PA. In this respect, practitioners and MNCs should heed the influence of interpersonal relationships in organisations. The thesis shows that having interpersonal relationships in organisations can cultivate multiple expectations beyond those formally dictated by the organisation in a way that it increases the corruptive translation of PA at the micro-level. This in turn will generate negative feelings and emotions for actors with weak interpersonal relationships that must be alleviated. In both cases, actors are forced to incorporate unrelated expectations in the backstage of PA, and some of which will find its way into the front stage while the rest will remain hidden, leading to PA failure. Rotating appraisers or outsourcing the PA process all together could be effective solutions for this structural vulnerability in PA since it disrupts interpersonal expectations and minimises actors access to the PA backstage.

The third recommendation is for HR and management control practitioners in GPSFs operating in the Middle East. The findings of this thesis show that there are several shortcomings from implementing the formal PA practice in these types of organisations. Although the formal

practice was implemented to counteract behaviours that go beyond professional integrity in the services they provide and to uphold their professional reputation, it was demonstrated that these are not achieved as many employees who experienced negative emotions and discriminatory treatment compromised the quality of the services they provide, and this will have a negative spill over on organisational performance. In particular, it was shown that the influence of *wasta* in the Middle East can greatly harm organisational processes and the professional reputation these companies aim to uphold. In this respect, GPSFs should consider *wasta* as two faces for the same coin through which it is true that it could be considered a social capital in terms of being affiliated with powerful actors in the region and to recruit clients in order to guarantee organisational success and survival (Mellahi et al., 2011), but also its corrupt side must be recognised as well because it could nurture the perpetuation of discrimination and unfairness in the workplace.

Careful attention must be paid by HRM and management control practitioners in how *wasta* unfolds in these organisations and how power dynamics between employees shift with its use, particularly in the PA process. Moreover, the management should emphasise on balancing between professional integrity and commercial success equally and move away from *wasta*-related recruitment, appraisals, and promotions based on nepotism for the potential of achieving commercial success or conduct these particular activities in specialised units outside the country to eliminate such negative impact. These companies should apply the process equally on employees as the findings show a huge gap in process application between employees with strong *wasta* and employees who lack or have weak *wasta*. This will help in maintaining a healthy social structure and prevent discrimination between employees in these companies as well as reduce feelings of unfairness that are harmful to both employees and organisational performance.

International PA and its processes are an important organisational activity which can potentially generate huge benefits for both organisations and employees but at the same time, the exact adoption and replication of the practice in non-western contexts as per the institutional configurations of western contexts can create huge disadvantages for employees and organisations located in the Middle East. Therefore, organisations and practitioners should move away from relying on exact replication to PA practices in the Middle East and tailor a process that is more adequate for the context. The researcher can only explain PA and its flaws while actual improvement is the responsibility of practitioners and organisations.

Pertaining the transferability of the findings to various contexts or across cultures is difficult. As much as the studies in this thesis aimed to abstract the influence of dominant cultural norms to fit a similar definition that is shared at least at a high level between non-western contexts. In reality, the studies adopted a subjective and interpretivist positions that conceptualise social realities as multiple and constructed individually. Therefore, the meaning of the practice or dominant cultural norms differ across individuals in non-western contexts and are informed by different accepted value systems that are unique to these regions. Therefore, transferring the findings and meanings beyond GPSFs in the Arabian Middle Eastern context is inappropriate because different types of organisations enact different versions of PA and other contexts have different social and cultural factors that provide alternative frames of references for actors actions. Nonetheless, as previously stated in section (3.1.2), the practice and process perspective aims to identify similarities, regularities, and causal relationships not by using statistical generalisation by the examination of variables, but by uncovering the underlying mechanisms that explain different organisational phenomena. To this end, the studies in this thesis and the revealed underlying mechanisms are useful in understanding the same phenomena in other contexts (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011), i.e., replicating international PA in non-western contexts, but cannot be generalisable. Therefore, quantitative studies with large samples are needed to generalise the findings.

7.5 Thesis Conclusion

The thesis was primarily motivated by our limited understanding on how PA fails to be adopted and replicated at the micro-level in the Middle East and non-western contexts in general, particularly by professionals in GPSFs. The studies advance the existing literature by revealing the multiplicity of PA at the micro-level and uncovering the underlying mechanisms for PA adoption and replication failure by illuminating (1) role integration and selective adoption and replication of PA (2) foregrounding and backgrounding institutional throughout the replication of PA; and (3) down-regulating negative emotions during the replication of PA. The thesis provides in-depth understanding of how each phenomenon contributes to replicating a failing formal PA process.

The work in this thesis departs from the traditional approach to examining PA by adopting a practice and process perspective, as current interpretive research in the field is mainly dominated by the examination of actors' interpretations to the process and the context where it is embedded (e.g., Yahiaoui et al., 2021; Jentjens and Yang, 2021; Gu and Nolan, 2019; Harbi et al., 2017; Mellahi et al., 2016). The thesis contributes to the interpretive methodology in the

literature by taking such a perspective, as it offers the opportunity to explore the meanings of employees' experience and the intricate construction of social reality in the minds of individuals at the micro-level from within (i.e., at the level of the process). It does so by recognising the embeddedness and the mutual constituency of PA in distal and proximate contexts as well as social interactions (Cloutier and Langley, 2020), and by analysing PA process replication through the recursion between structure and agency. This approach has proven to be significant in advancing our understanding of PA. The research also contributes finely grained understanding of the mechanisms that lead to PA multiplicity at the micro-level and thus, to its failure. As valuable these insights are, the thesis does however raise more questions than answers.

This was not anticipated during the design and execution of the thesis studies. By cross-fertilising different theoretical perspectives for examining PA, such as coupling institutional logics with a role perspective (Chapter Four) and with a routine dynamics perspective (Chapter Five), as well as linking emotion dynamics with routine dynamics (Chapter Six), the thesis sheds light on organisation through self-seeking behaviours. It mainly clarifies what happens in the backstage of organising by paying more attention to actors expectations, power and political struggles, and emotions regulation. This makes us question not the extent to which PA is rated as a failure (DeNisi et al., 2021; Murphy, 2020), but what such failure makes of organisations. Ultimately, rewards and sanctions are formally put in the hands of the few, namely the upper echelons or upper management, and there seems to be an informal struggle for everyone in the organisation to mobilise them informally, particularly non-managerial employees as demonstrated in this thesis.

Moreover, since PA is a source of political struggles and negative emotions for employees (Murphy, 2020), then there will always be variations in how actors cognitively and behaviourally replicate the process. More importantly, the majority of these variations are incorporated covertly and need to be concealed by deceptive actions and workarounds, which influence change in a way barely seen during formal front stage PA replications. Revealing this highly idiosyncratic and covert change in PA routines also leads us to question the actual dynamics of stability and change in organisations as theorised by current studies (Pentland et al., 2019; Feldman and Pentland, 2003), as they largely focus on overt and front stage manifestations and, except for a few (Eberhard et al., 2019; den Nieuwenboer et al., 2017), largely overlook how backstage actions maintain stability and change in organisations. Performance appraisal as a rule-enforcing mechanism (Nelson and Winter, 1982), and as a

process for identifying, measuring, and developing employees' performance (Schleicher et al., 2018) has proved to be important in serving a more profound purpose than currently acknowledged in the literature. Improving employees' performance is the main purpose scholars refer to when arguing about the importance of adopting the PA process in organisations worldwide, also as argued in the study; however, in parallel to performance appraisal and improvement, the thesis also highlights that the process is closely related to how stability and change are achieved in organisations.

Therefore, it becomes worrying when scholars and practitioners rate the process as a failure (e.g., DeNisi et al., 2021; Murphy, 2020; DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006), as it not only makes us question the difficulty of managing employees' performance, but also makes us question how stability and change are achieved in organisations when rule-enforcing mechanisms fail. By extension, if stability and change are important to organisational performance, then how do organisations improve their performance if actors change the PA process as they wish because of power and political struggles or in order to regulate their negative emotions?

These questions are beyond the scope of this thesis, but reading between the lines of the findings, there appears to be a contaminated ethical and moral environment through which actors and organisations are able to advance their self-interested goals unethically and outside formal organisational boundaries. This is evident in studies that shed light on contemporary social issues that result from the dyadic supervisor-supervisee relationship such as bullying, abuse, injustice, and gender discrimination, and most importantly, from the lack of a direct link between PA and improved organisational performance (DeNisi and Smith, 2014). Several studies do indicate the existence of these issues in organisations; however, it is not clear how while such issues persist, organisational performance improves. To this extent, and in order to start understanding if PA will ever succeed, or why it fails, we need to extend our efforts from simply examining employees' reactions to examining how they actually replicate the process at the micro-level by focusing on their embedded agency in the process. We need to extend our explanatory power of PA success or failure by uncovering more underlying mechanisms in addition to descriptive explanations. Furthermore, we need to recognise the multiple purposes for PA and reflect on the interdependency for its micro-processes in managing and controlling employees' performance besides maintaining stability and change in organisations. We need to expand our conceptualisation of PA beyond structural determinism and include its negotiated nature in the future. Finally, as this thesis shows, it is unlikely that we will ever understand the

complexity of PA or its success or failure by examining each aspect in isolation, the process is multifaceted and needs to be recognised and examined as such.

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Appendix A: Participants information table

Participant Identification Number	Position	Company alias	Years of Experience	Notes
A1	Senior	GPSF2	6	Worked for five years at GPSF1.
A2	Senior	GPSF1	7	Worked for six years at GPSF1.
A3	Junior	GPSF3	2	Left company.
A4	Senior	GPSF2	8	Worked for seven years at GPSF1.
A5	Junior	GPSF3	1	Left company.
A6	Senior	GPSF3	3	
A7	Senior	GPSF1	5	Left company.
A8	Senior	GPSF1	3	Left company.
A9	Junior	GPSF1	4	
A10	Semi-senior	GPSF2	3	
A11	Junior	GPSF2	1	
A12	Semi-senior	GPSF4	2	
A13	Senior	GPSF1	8	
A14	Junior	GPSF1	4	
A15	Junior	GPSF1	2	
A16	Senior	GPSF1	5	
A17	Junior	GPSF3	2	
A18	Senior	GPSF2	6	Worked for five Years at GPSF1.
A19	Semi-senior	GPSF1	3	
A20	Senior	GPSF3	3	Worked for two years at GPSF1.
A21	Senior	GPSF2	7	Worked for five years at GPSF1.
A22	Senior	GPSF2	7	Worked for five years at GPSF1.
A23	Junior	GPSF2	2	
A24	Senior	GPSF1	4	Left company.
A25	Senior	GPSF2	8	Worked for three years at GPSF1 and two years in GPSF2.
A26	Senior	GPSF1	5	Left company.
A27	Junior	GPSF1	2	Left company.
A28	Senior	GPSF4	5	
A29	Senior	GPSF1	4	
A30	Senior	GPSF1	3	Left company.

Appendix B: Main interview questions

1.	I would like to start with your background and your job. Could you please describe your job?
2.	Can you tell me about the performance appraisal process in your company and how the final decisions are made?
3.	To what extent do you feel that the process of appraisal used by your organisation is accurate?
4.	To what extent are you able to participate in the process of performance appraisal?
5.	How fair do you think the performance appraisal process in your organisation is?
6.	Do you feel that the relationship between supervisor and subordinate play a role in the evaluation?
7.	Do you feel that the performance appraisal decisions are made with integrity?
8.	Does your supervisor frequently let you know how you are doing in your work?
9.	How regularly does your supervisor evaluate your performance?
10.	How much do you think your supervisor knows about what you are supposed to be doing?
11.	Are you able to appeal against an evaluation that you think, or feel is inaccurate or biased?
12.	Does your supervisor set performance expectations with you at the start of the evaluation, explain performance standards for you and make sure that you are aware of your responsibilities towards your job?
13.	Do you feel that the appraisal process is based on political considerations or are those irrelevant?
14.	Are performance appraisal outcomes fair and related to your actual contributions?
15.	How do you compare to your colleagues' input (effort) and output (rewards)?
16.	Are the procedures for deciding outcomes such as promotion or compensation accurate and fair?
17.	Which is more important in terms of fairness, the PROCESS of the evaluation or the OUTCOME (rewards) you receive? Why?
18.	Does your supervisor treat you with dignity, respect and politeness?
19.	Does your supervisor give you real and clear examples to justify his evaluation of your performance?
20.	Are you satisfied with the performance appraisal system in your organisation?
21.	How do you define *wasta* and what do you know about it in the GPSFs?
22.	Do you think that the practice of *wasta* has positive or negative effects on organisations? Why?
23.	Do you think that *wasta* affects or is involved in the process of performance appraisal?
24.	Do you think that tribe and relationships play a role in the process of performance appraisal?
25.	Do you know any other types of cultural factors that influence the practice of performance appraisal?
26.	How would you describe your job performance? Are you satisfied? Why and why not?
27.	Do you think that your intra and extra role performance are affected by the practice of *wasta*? How?

Appendix C: Thornton et al.'s (2012) revised interinstitutional system ideal types

Y-Axis:	X-Axis: Institutional Orders						
Categories	**Family 1**	**Community 2**	**Religion 3**	**State 4**	**Market 5**	**Profession 6**	**Corporation 7**
Root Metaphor 1	Family as firm	Common boundary	Temple as bank	State as redistribution mechanism	Transaction	Profession as relational network	Corporation as hierarchy
Sources of Legitimacy 2	Unconditional loyalty	Unity of will Belief in trust & reciprocity	Importance of faith & sacredness in economy & society	Democratic participation	Share price	Personal expertise	Market position of firm
Sources of Authority 3	Patriarchal domination	Commitment to community values & ideology	Priesthood charisma	Bureaucratic domination	Shareholder activism	Professional association	Board of directors Top management
Sources of Identity 4	Family reputation	Emotional connection Ego-satisfaction & reputation	Association with deities	Social & economic class	Faceless	Association with quality of craft Personal reputation	Bureaucratic roles
Basis of Norms 5	Membership in household	Group membership	Membership in congregation	Citizenship In nation	Self-interest	Membership in guild & association	Employment in firm
Basis of Attention 6	Status in household	Personal investment in group	Relation to supernatural	Status of interest group	Status in market	Status in profession	Status in hierarchy
Basis of Strategy 7	Increase family honor	Increase status & honor of members & practices	Increase religious symbolism of natural events	Increase community good	Increase efficiency profit	Increase personal reputation	Increase size & diversification of firm
Informal Control Mechanisms 8	Family politics	Visibility of actions	Worship of calling	Backroom politics	Industry analysts	Celebrity professionals	Organization culture
Economic System 9	Family capitalism	Cooperative capitalism	Occidental capitalism	Welfare capitalism	Market capitalism	Personal capitalism	Managerial capitalism

Adopted from Thornton et al. (2012)