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**A Study of Succession Processes for
Executive Positions in the Bahraini Public
Sector**

by

Hesham A. Al Bin Ali

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

University of Warwick, Warwick Business School

February 2013

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own work.

I certify that this thesis does not contain any information previously published where due reference is not made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This research strived to enhance our knowledge about the succession phenomenon by investigating the impact of various internal and external factors on the succession process. Specifically, the aim of the research was to explain the variations in succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector in light of the impact of the influential stakeholders and context-related factors. The researcher adopted a sequential mixed methods research approach to collect data. In the first phase, quantitative data were obtained to detect variations among the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector. In the second phase, qualitative data were collected to reveal the influential factors acting upon the succession processes and to explain the detected variations in light of the impact of these factors. However, as the aim of the research was to explain the variations among the succession processes and in order to maintain the focus of the current thesis, only the qualitative part of the research is reported.

The research findings highlighted the impact of several influential stakeholders (within and outside the organisational boundaries) and context-related factors (at macro, organisational and positional levels) on the succession process in the Bahraini public sector. Furthermore, the findings identified two factors that influence the stakeholders' involvement in the succession process (stakeholders' awareness and perceived importance of their stakes in the process). In addition, two factors were identified as determining the stakeholder's impact on the process (the stakeholder's power and the nature of the stakeholder-decision maker relationship). The findings also highlighted five influence mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to further their interests and claims in the succession process. Specifically, these influential mechanisms are intended to influence the availability of successors, overthrow the office incumbent, influence succession decisions, override undesirable decisions and alter the succession process framework.

Based on these findings, the researcher proposed two conceptual models. The first model illustrated the influential stakeholders and context-related factors that act upon the succession process. The second model explained the detected variations in the succession processes by linking these variations with the influential mechanisms employed by the stakeholders. In addition, the researcher proposed a categorisation of the mechanisms employed by stakeholders, in general, to further their interests and claims regarding an organisational issue.

The value of this research lies, primarily, in its contribution to the theory and literature of the succession phenomenon and to a lesser degree to the Stakeholder Theory; whilst the findings also have practical applications in the field of succession management.

ABBREVIATIONS

BIPA	Bahrain Institute of Public Administration
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIO	Central Informatics Organisation
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
CSP	Completed Succession Process
CV	Coefficient of Variation
EDB	Economic Development Board
H.H.	His/Her Highness
H.M.	His Majesty
HRM	Human Resource Management
KOB	Kingdom Of Bahrain
NAC	National Audit Court
OSP	Ongoing Succession Process
PSP	Participant's Succession Process
SCW	Supreme Council for Women

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the research. The first section presents a brief introduction to the “Succession Phenomenon” and highlights the literature gap addressed by this research. The rationale of the research is then discussed; followed by an outline of the research aim, objectives and questions. Next, the chapter presents an overview of the research methods. Finally, the chapter illustrates the structure of the thesis.

1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH TOPIC

This section introduces the succession phenomenon in twofold. Initially, it highlights the emergence of the succession phenomenon, as a research topic, into management studies; and then it highlights the significance of studying this phenomenon in organisational contexts.

1.2.1 The study of the Succession Phenomenon in Management Studies

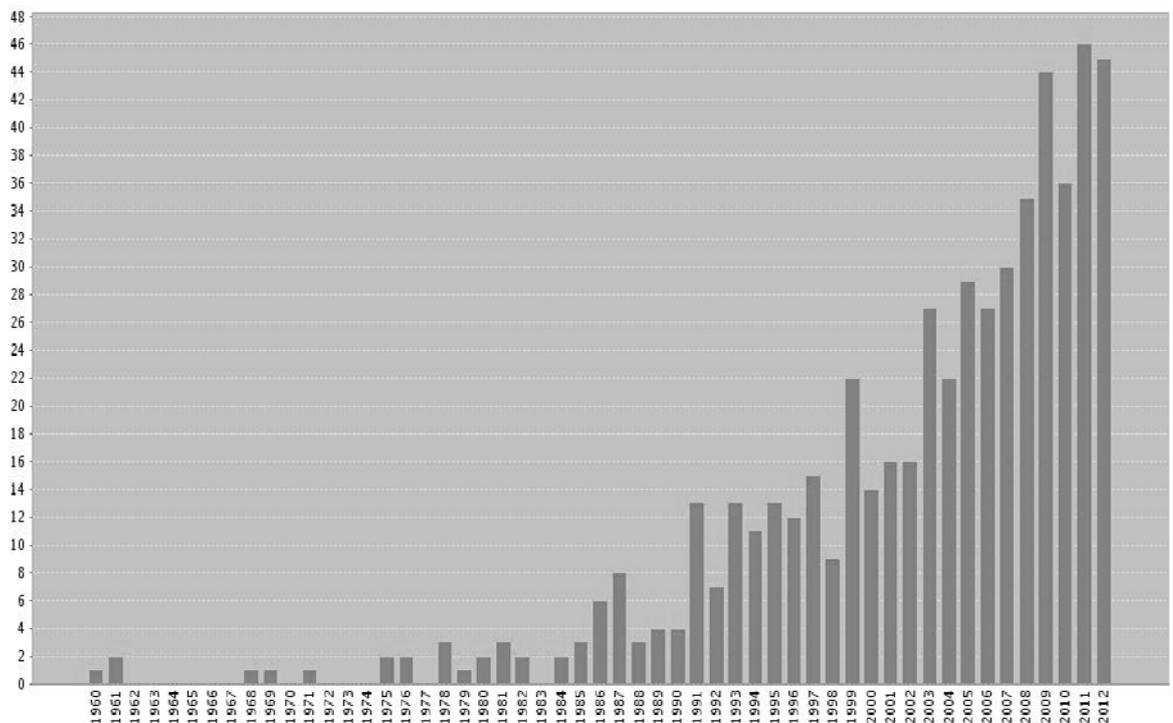
This research explores the succession phenomenon in public sector organisational contexts. In general, the succession phenomenon encompasses the various events, actions and activities that relate to staff replacement. Some scholars have traced the roots of the inquiry into the succession phenomenon in organisational contexts to Max Weber’s classical works on bureaucracies, such as Helmich and Brown (1972) and Brady and Helmich (1984). Other scholars, such as Hashemi (1983) and Ip and Jacobs (2006), have attributed the dissemination of the succession topic into management studies to the work of Christensen (1953), Gouldner (1954), Trow (1961), and Guest (1962).

Yet, the contributions of Grusky’s work (1960, 1961) to the succession line of studies are very noticeable (Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner and Sehora, 1994). Kesner and Sehora (1994) affirmed that “prior to Grusky’s work, much of what was known about succession was the result of individual case studies”; and his groundbreaking observations about the lack of systematic investigation in the field of succession studies were “the first step in setting the succession

literature on a more scientifically rigorous course of study” (p. 330). Furthermore, in addition to Grusky’s work (1960, 1961), Kesner and Sebor (1994) highlighted the contribution of Carlson (1961, 1962) in setting the research agenda for the topic for several succeeding decades.

Since the late 1970s, a steady growth in interest in studying the succession phenomenon has become apparent within the academic and practitioner-oriented literature. Numerous articles and books have been dedicated to addressing the various aspects of the succession phenomenon in the organisational contexts. This is clearly indicated by the number of the published work dedicated to address the succession topic illustrated in Figure 1-1 below.

FIGURE 1-1: NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS ADDRESSING THE SUCCESSION TOPIC IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT¹



The amount and range of the accumulated work on the succession topic indicate its wide appeal. Over a decade ago, Kesner and Sebor (1994) reviewed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) succession literature and stated that the interest was intense and had skyrocketed. More recently, Giambatista et al. (2005) have affirmed that succession is still “a viable and fruitful avenue for scholarly research” (p. 963). Lately, this notion has also been reaffirmed by other scholars, such as Hutzschenreuter et al. (2012). Furthermore, currently, succession is one of the most, if not the

¹ The researcher generated this graph using the Web of Science search engine to identify articles, books, book reviews and reviews published between 1960-2012 under the topic of succession in Business and Management categories.

most, proverbial research topics in family business literature (Cabrera-Suarez, 2005; Chua et al., 2003; Sharma, 2004).

1.2.2 The Significance of Succession Studies

Due to the association between the succession phenomenon and staff replacement, succession is most often viewed as an important issue in organisational contexts. It is widely believed that staff replacement, particularly at an organisation's top hierarchical levels, not only affects individuals and work teams, but also have an impact on organisational performance and survival (Giambatista et al., 2005; Ip and Jacobs, 2006; Kesner and Sebor, 1994). Thus, it is not a surprise to find a considerable body of literature has accumulated since the early days of exploring the succession phenomenon in organisational contexts.

The justification for such an interest could be summarised by the following three points. First, the inevitability of the phenomenon and the widely accepted assumptions about the critical consequences of the phenomenon on various aspects of the organisations make succession an important research topic among scholars and practitioners alike (Giambatista et al., 2005; Grusky, 1963; Kesner and Sebor, 1994). Second, the exceptional circumstances associated with the succession phenomenon provide a unique setting for investigating some of the key concepts and issues in organisational studies. This, in turn, has promoted the prevalence of the succession topic in the literature. For example, some scholars have viewed succession as a window to study "*change*" (Giambatista et al., 2005), a method to introduce change (Dyck et al., 2002) or as an adaptation mechanism to such changes (Dalton and Kesner, 1983; Friedman and Singh, 1989; Helmich, 1974a). Other scholars have found in the "succession phenomenon" an opportunity to open new prospects for answering the most fundamental question in leadership studies; *does leadership matter?* (Cannella Jr. and Rowe, 1995; Giambatista et al., 2005; Gordon and Rosen, 1981a). Third, the high rates of retirement and workforce mobility seen in the last two decades have drawn the researchers' attention more toward the succession phenomenon (Duta, 2008; Lynn, 2001).

1.3 THE GAP IN THE SUCCESSION LITERATURE ADDRESSED IN THE CURRENT RESEARCH

This section highlights the literature gap addressed by the current research. Initially, the scarcity of succession process is underlined. Then, the significance of succession process studies to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon is highlighted. Finally, the limitations of the available succession process studies are emphasised.

1.3.1 The Scarcity of Succession Process Studies

Despite the long history and the considerable body of literature devoted to the phenomenon, there are still some very important gaps in the body of knowledge, which are affecting our understanding. The fact that we are still some way from understanding the phenomenon is frequently stressed when the succession literature is reviewed (Dyck et al., 2002; Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner and Sebor, 1994). As will be illustrated in the third chapter of this thesis, the review of the literature revealed that most studies have been devoted to either of the antecedents or the consequences of the phenomenon. Insufficient attention has been given to the study of the phenomenon per se. Thus, the nature of the phenomenon is still unclear. Giambatista et al. (2005) reflected this notion in their review of the literature by noting the fragmented state of theory in the succession line of studies.

In addition, due to such insufficient attention given to the phenomenon per se, knowledge about some of the key aspects of the phenomenon is still lacking. Kesner and Sebor (1994) highlighted this notion in their review of the succession literature and related the deficiency in understanding of the phenomenon to these gaps in the succession studies. They stated, “[W]hen it comes to executive succession, there is little that we know conclusively, much that we do not know because of mixed results, and even more that we have not yet studied.” (p. 327).

One of these key gaps in the succession literature relates to the process by which the phenomenon evolves, or in other words, the *succession process*¹. Dyck et al. (2002) stated, “Despite its volume, the literature on this topic suffers from a number of limitations. Most glaring is the limited amount

¹ A detailed definition for succession process is presented in Chapter 3, The Literature Review: The Succession Process (p. 84). At this point of the thesis, succession process refers to the way in which the succession phenomenon evolves.

of attention that has been given to the actual succession process” (p. 144). More recently, Finkelstein et al. (2009) noted this gap and affirmed that there has been little research done on succession processes. Furthermore, given the scarcity of studies addressing the succession phenomenon in the public sector context in general (Boyne et al., 2008; Hill, 2005; Lynn, 2001), the lack of studies focusing on the succession process in the public sector is more pronounced.

1.3.2 The Importance of Succession Process Studies to Enhance our Understanding of the Phenomenon

The succession process is the core of the succession phenomenon. Vancil (1987) asserted this notion by stating, “The selection of a new CEO or heir apparent is the outcome of the entire process of CEO succession, but the selection process is the most important element because it provides answers to the questions of who and when” (p 264). The author explained what he meant by selection process by noting, “I am not interested in the name and date as much as I am in process – the why and how – that produced those decisions” (p 264).

Furthermore, Kesner and Sebra (1994) affirmed the pivotal role of the succession process in explaining the consequences of the phenomenon. They stated, “Consequently, what a firm becomes can be significantly influenced by how and to whom this power and authority are passed” (p. 328). The authors concluded, “Indeed, a majority of the research cited ... suggests not only that leaders matter, but that who they are and how they come into power has important ramifications for their firms.” (p. 363).

Nevertheless, despite the significance of the succession process, in terms of being the core of the phenomenon and its presumed impacts on the outcomes, only a small number of researchers have focused on studying the succession process (Denis et al., 2000; Dyck et al., 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2009). Thus, knowledge about the succession process is still limited. Dyck et al. (2002) asserted, “The result is that we know very little about the actual succession process” (p. 145). In addition, in their methodological recommendations for future studies, Giambatista et al. (2005) commented that, “We found relatively low reliance on survey and interview methods ..., which offer much potential for exploring the many holes and gaps in our understanding of processes from the early stages of succession (planning, searching, etc.) and exactly what it is successors do” (p. 984).

Consequently, one may argue that understanding of the succession phenomenon is mainly limited due to the shortage of studies addressing such a fundamental issue - the succession process. Giambatista et al. (2005) implicitly affirmed this notion. In their review of the state of theory in the succession line of studies, Giambatista et al. (2005) described the state of theory as “*fragmented and variable*”. Nevertheless, the authors noted the theoretical contributions of those studies that have investigated the succession processes, specifically, the relay succession process. They stated:

“If the current status of theory in succession literature could be described in one phrase, that phrase would be fragmented and variable. Judging by its better studies, the literature has moved forward substantially in the last 11 years. This progress is especially evident in the improvement of our contextual understanding of processes leading to succession.” (p. 981)

In addition, the argument related to the impact of the lack of succession process studies on our understanding of the phenomenon in general finds support in the explanation for the mixed findings in the succession studies. Al-sheikh (2001) stated:

“A possible reason for the inconsistent findings in executive succession research is the treatment of the succession process as a “black box”. The majority of this research looks at succession as an input and the company performance as an outcome without paying much attention to how the successor is selected or how leadership is transferred from the predecessor to the successor. Therefore, we need to thoroughly investigate these process in order to enhance our understanding of the subject.” (p. 14)

More recently, Finkelstein et al. (2009) affirmed this notion. According to the authors, researchers were more interested in studying the consequences of the succession phenomenon than the phenomenon per se. Such interests not only diverted the light away from the phenomenon, but also blurred the perception of the phenomenon. By focusing on the consequences of the phenomenon, most of the succession studies viewed the phenomenon as an instantaneous and discrete event. This distorted perception of the succession phenomenon not only disregarded the reasons for exploring how the phenomenon evolves over time (Dyck et al., 2002; Strauss and Kohler, 1983), but also led to the emergence of contradictory results in succession studies. Finkelstein et al. (2009) stated:

“Perhaps understandably, researchers have devoted more effort to understanding the consequences of succession, or the “So what?” questions, than to other facets of top executive transitions. Unfortunately, this preoccupation with succession effects has led researchers to ignore some critically important contextual factors, often resulting in weak and contradictory conclusions.” (p. 199).

The authors also advocated the importance of taking into consideration the succession process in the study of the consequences of the succession phenomenon. They stated:

“One cannot make cogent predictions about the effects of succession without considering the factors precipitating the succession, the succession process and the characteristics of the successor”. (p. 199).

1.3.3 The Limitations of the available Succession Process Studies

In addition to the scarcity of succession process studies, those studies that have been dedicated to the succession process have suffered from two major limitations. The first is an oversimplification of the process. As will be illustrated in the third chapter of this thesis, the review of the literature indicated that most of the succession process studies have viewed the succession process as a simple, unidirectional and linear process arranged in sequential stages. However, this view does not reflect the succession scholars’ consensus on the substantial degree of complexity and dynamicity of the process. Giambatista et al. (2005) strongly advocated the rejection of such oversimplified notions about the succession phenomenon by stating:

“Most importantly, our review suggests that simplistic notions of succession need to be discarded...The fundamental questions of “who?” (who should succeed?) and “how?” (what should the succession process be like?) are intricately linked with “when?” (i.e., the context in which succession takes place).” (p. 987).

The second major limitation in this line of studies is their narrow approach to studying the succession process by focusing on certain aspects of the process and overlooking the broad picture. Despite calls to adopt a holistic approach to studying the succession phenomenon in general (Datta et al., 2003; Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner and Sebor, 1994; Rowe et al., 2005), succession process has frequently been approached with a narrow focus.

The literature review indicated that the aim of most of the succession process studies was either to investigate a specific succession process type (such as Relay, Horse Race and Coup d'état) or a specific element of the process (such as successors' behaviour during transition periods, taking-over and socialisation). However, while such studies have undoubtedly increased our understanding of these investigated types or particular elements of the process, the need to adopt a holistic approach to studying the process is unambiguous. For instance, while these studies have raised awareness about the different processes, a holistic approach is needed to explain the reasons behind such differences among these processes. The adopted approach in these studies not only falls short of grasping the full picture of the phenomenon, but possibly, misses vital factors which could provide better explanations of the findings in the field of study. Giambatista et al. (2005) have highlighted the need for contextual approaches in order to improve understanding of the phenomenon by stating:

“Finally, we believe succession researchers would do well to adopt an inclusive attitude regarding setting, and that such inclusiveness would only serve to enrich our understanding of succession antecedents, events, and consequences.” (p. 985).

1.4 THE RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH

The rationale of the research is founded on the significance of the succession phenomenon while taking into account the scarcity of literature that addresses the succession process from a holistic approach. As stated earlier, the importance of the succession phenomenon, as a research topic, is hardly disputed. It is an inevitable phenomenon, which all organisations must cope with in one way or another (Giambatista et al., 2005; Grusky, 1963; Kesner and Sebor, 1994). Moreover, despite the inconsistency in the findings of the succession studies, there is a near consensus about the significance of the succession phenomenon's impact on various organisational aspects, particularly in the cases of high hierarchal levels and key positions (Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner and Sebor, 1994). Scholars have long stressed the necessity for organisations to deal with these issues if they are to ensure their continuity and prosperity (Motwani et al., 2006).

In addition, surveys have showed that succession issues are often on the top priorities lists of the organisations' decision-makers (Biggs, 2004; Busine and Watt, 2005; Ogden and Wood, 2008).

This highlights the importance accorded to these issues by organisations' decision-makers. However, as stated earlier, the nature of the phenomenon is still unclear. Moreover, due to the scarcity of holistic studies, understanding of how the succession phenomenon evolves is lacking. As well, from a practical perspective, the literature lacks consensus regarding planning and managing the succession phenomenon. Furthermore, surveys of the top priorities of organisations' decision-makers show that, despite the priority given to succession issues, many organisations lack adequate succession planning and procedures (Ip and Jacobs, 2006). This suggests that if organisations are to improve their succession planning and management, a comprehensive awareness of how the phenomenon evolves is needed. Indeed, scholars have started to recognise and stress the need to reject simple notions about the succession process (Clutterbuck, 2012; Giambatista et al., 2005; Wheeler, 2008), which have failed to grasp the complexity and the dynamicity involved. Thus, in summary, in order to acquire a more comprehensive knowledge about the succession phenomenon and thereby to better predict its consequences or to facilitate succession planning and management, it is important to comprehend the way in which the succession phenomenon evolves.

In addition to the abovementioned justifications for conducting the current research, the researcher also has an interest in exploring succession issues in relation to the Bahraini public sector. Specifically, the researcher is interested in identifying the factors that cause governmental organisations to take succession decisions that ostensibly produce ineffective outcomes. Such issue and many others may provoke controversial arguments; yet they cannot be overlooked. Some may argue that these issues are only the tip of an iceberg formed by poor governmental succession management. However, such issue could be clarified and explained by investigating the process by which civil servants assume executive positions and identifying the influential factors acting upon the process in general.

1.5 RESEARCH AIM, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This section presents the aim of the research along with the research objectives and questions.

1.5.1 The Overall Aim of the Research

The current research was conducted after considering the aforementioned gap in the succession literature and the limitations of those studies addressing the succession process. The overall aim of the research was to enhance knowledge of the succession phenomenon by investigating the impact of various internal and external factors on the succession process in the public sector. Specifically, the research aimed *to explain how the various influential stakeholders (actors) and context-related factors (such as organisational size, structure, and civil service laws) influence the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector.*

1.5.2 Research Objectives and Questions

In order to accomplish the abovementioned aim, three research objectives were set. In addition, these objectives were rephrased in a set of research questions and sub-questions. The research questions complement the objectives of the research by delineating the scope of the research and ensuring that the focus of the content is on the research topic under consideration. In addition, research questions are the operational version of the research objectives. Thus, in this subsection, the research objectives and questions are presented simultaneously. Table 1-1, in the following page, illustrates these research objectives and questions.

As stated in the previous subsection, the core aim of the research was to explain how the various influential stakeholders and context-related factors shape the ways in which succession process for executive positions unfolds in the Bahraini public sector. This is important for a number of reasons. First, the succession field of study lacks an overarching theory that explains the phenomenon. Second, the lion share of the succession studies addresses the phenomenon in the private sector context. Third, as discussed earlier, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding succession process studies. Thus, without a theoretical framework and in light of the scarcity of succession process studies, there was a need to investigate how succession processes actually vary in the Bahraini public sector to lay the ground for main inquiry of the research. The researcher needed to

identify these variations in the succession processes in order to track these variations to the real influential factors that shaped these processes and explain the effects of these factors on the succession process. In other words, there was a need to describe and compare these processes in the Bahraini context in order to establish the ground for explaining how the various influential factors shape the ways in which succession process for executive positions unfolds in the Bahraini public sector.

TABLE 1-1: THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Sub-questions
1st objective: Detect the variations in the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector	How do succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector differ?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent do succession processes vary in terms of who is in charge of the process? 2. To what extent do succession processes vary in terms of the predetermination of the process? 3. To what extent do succession processes vary in terms of who turns out to be the successor? 4. To what extent do succession processes vary in terms of the formality of the process? 5. To what extent do succession processes vary in terms of the transparency of the process? 6. To what extent do succession processes vary in terms of the integration of the process?
2nd objective: Identify the influential factors acting upon the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector	What are the factors that could be responsible for the detected variations in these succession processes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are the influential internal stakeholders of the succession process? 2. Who are the influential external stakeholders of the succession process? 3. What are the influential macro-level factors acting upon the succession process? 4. What are the influential organisational-level factors acting upon the succession process? 5. What are the influential positional-level factors acting upon the succession process?
3rd Objective: Explain how the stakeholders influence succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector	How do the stakeholders' involvements in the succession processes contribute to the variations among these processes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to influence the succession process? 2. How do these influential mechanisms affect the succession process? 3. In their involvement in the succession process, how do stakeholders interact with each other and with the context?

Therefore, the first research objective was formulated ***“to detect the variations in the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector”***. This objective was designed to verify and confirm the variations in the succession processes in the Bahraini public sector by identifying and measuring the differences in the way in which Bahraini public servants assume executive positions. This facilitated to determine the scope for investigating the influential factors behind such variations in the succession processes.

Accordingly, the first research question was articulated as ***“how do succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector differ?”*** To answer this question, quantitative data were required in order to describe and compare these succession processes, in terms of what happened and how it happened. Quantitative data provide the needed statistical reliability and generalisation to reflect the differences in these processes. In addition, succession processes unfold in various ways. Thus, without quantitative data, the research would explain hypothetical variations and consequently may provide unrealistic explanations.

However, as stated earlier, succession processes are complex in nature and can vary in numerous respects. Thereby, the comparison between these processes may result in numerous and, sometimes, insignificant variations. To facilitate such comparisons, the researcher focused on the decisive and differentiating aspects of the succession process. Thus, the first general question was divided into sub-questions designed to describe the succession processes in terms of the key differentiating aspects of the process.

The review of the relevant literature highlighted three of these key aspects. Specifically, the review of the existing typologies of the succession process revealed that most were founded on three decisive and differentiating aspects. These key aspects are: (1) the decision-maker of the succession process (*who is in charge of the succession process*), (2) the type of successor (*who turns out to be the successor*) and (3) the predetermination of the process (*in terms of the desired outcomes and procedures for executing the process*). In addition to these three key aspects, the researcher identified three other key aspects that reflect the way in which succession processes are conducted. These key aspects are the formality, transparency and integration of the process. By describing and

comparing the succession processes for executive positions in terms of these six aspects, the researcher detected the variations among these processes.

The other two research objectives strived to explain the variations detected through investigation of the first objective in light of the influential factors acting upon the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector. In other words, how do these influential factors shape these processes and cause such variations among the processes? In answering the “*how*” question, qualitative data are more appropriate. Therefore, the remaining two objectives and the associated research questions were formulated to obtain such qualitative data.

Thus, the second research objective was formulated as “*to identify the influential factors acting upon the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector*”. Accordingly, the second research question was articulated as “*what are the factors that could be responsible for the detected variations in these succession processes?*” As this research adopted a holistic approach to studying the succession phenomenon, the interests of the various stakeholders involved in the succession process and the impact of the context-related factors were taken into consideration. Thus, it was assumed from the outset of the research that factors which were influential in the succession processes were related either to the stakeholders’ involvements or to the context in which these processes occur. Hence, the second general question was divided into five sub-questions. The first two sub-questions focused on identifying the influential stakeholders of the succession process, whether within or outside the organisational boundaries.

The other three sub-questions focused on identifying the context-related factors at three different levels of analysis: the macro, organisational and positional levels. This division of the context-related factors was based on the unit of analysis of the current research. As can be seen by the research aim and objectives, the unit of analysis for this thesis is the succession process for executive positions in public sector organisations. Thus, factors that act upon the public sector in general were considered macro-level factors. Factors on the organisational level were those related to the organisation, per se, where the succession process takes place (such as size, structure, organisational culture and performance). Factors on the positional level were those related to the

position under consideration for the succession process (such as the structure of the office, the required criteria for assuming the position and the position's hierarchal level)¹.

Finally, to close the circle of the inquiry, the third research objective was designed to explain how the influential factors identified in the second research objective shape the succession processes and cause the variations that were identified in the first research objective. However, as stated earlier, succession processes were assumed to be subject to the stakeholders' influence and the impact of context-related factors. Therefore, it was important that the third research objective explained how those two sets of factors influence the succession processes. However, there is a vital difference in how these two sets of factors influence any organisational issue, which was noted in formulating the third objective.

The difference is that while the focal issue is directly influenced by the context in which it exists, stakeholders need to act to exert influence on such issue. In other words, on one hand, a context-related factor influences the focal issue. Whereas, on the other hand, a stakeholder's influence occurs via mechanisms directed toward altering either the decisions concerning the focal issue or the context in which it occurs. For example, if the recruitment for a position in an organisation were found to be influenced by the supply of the market, then, the identification of this factor would, directly, reflect how the market supply influenced the recruitment for the position in that organisation. However, if the involvement of a specific stakeholder (such as top management official or an employment agency) were found to influence this organisational issue, the mere identification of the stakeholder's involvement would not be sufficient to explain how the stakeholder influenced the recruitment for the position.

Therefore, based on the above argument and taking into consideration the second objective (which was designed to identify both the influential stakeholders and the context-related factors), the third research objective focused on how stakeholders' involvement influences the succession process. Specifically, the third objective was formulated ***“to explain how the stakeholders influence these succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector”***. Accordingly, the

¹ The term “Positional Level” was used instead of “Individual Level” as the former reflects those factors on the position level better than the latter. In addition, the unit of analysis is the succession process for an executive position and not the individual who is departing or assuming the position. Thus, to avoid any confusion, the term positional level was adopted to refer to the micro level of analysis.

third research question was articulated as *“how do the stakeholders’ involvements in the succession processes contribute to the variations among these processes?”* This general question was also divided into three sub-questions. The first focused on identifying the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to influence the succession process. The second sub-question focused on exploring impact of these influential mechanisms. The third sub-question focused on exploring how the various stakeholders interacted with each other and with the context to promote their interests.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHOD

As indicated earlier in the research objectives and questions section, quantitative and qualitative data were needed to accomplish the aim of the research. Quantitative data were needed to describe the succession processes in terms of the six key differentiating aspects related to the first research objective (refer to Table 1-1, page 11). In comparison, qualitative data were needed to explain the detected variations in these processes in light of the various stakeholders and context-related factors. Thus, the research adopted a sequential mixed methods research approach to the collection of data.

In the first phase, quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed to detect the variations among the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector. The questionnaire was distributed among executive employees in the civil service. The response rate was about 27%, with 212 questionnaires being collected. The collected questionnaires reported 185 succession process cases. To detect the variations among these cases, the quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). As stated earlier, succession processes were described and compared in terms of the six key differentiating aspects of the process.

In the second phase, qualitative data were collected in order to explain the detected variations in light of the impact of the influential stakeholders and context-related factors. The needed qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews. The interview agenda focused on identifying the influential factors acting upon the process and exploring how these factors influenced the succession process to cause the detected variations. In total, the researcher

conducted 45 interviews with internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders included the organisation's top management, HR department officials and executive class employees. The external stakeholders included political associations, professional associations, social associations, media organisations and specific policy-makers and regulatory bodies in the Bahraini government¹. The collected qualitative data were analysed using NVivo software package based on an interview analysis template.

However, even though the research was conducted into two-sequential phases, only the second phase of the research is reported in the current thesis. This decision was made for two reasons. The first reason was to maintain the focus of the thesis. By focusing on the qualitative part, the analysis focuses on explaining the variations in the succession processes in light of the various influential factors. Thus, the achievement of the first research objective along with the quantitative phase of the research was briefly addressed in the current thesis². Second, focusing on the qualitative part of the research helped reduce the overall size of the thesis.

1.7 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Including this introductory chapter, the current thesis comprises 11 chapters that collectively report the research process, the resulting empirical findings and the contributions of the research. The relationships between these chapters are illustrated in the diagram shown in Figure 1-2 (p.18).

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the research context. The main purpose of the chapter is to provide a portrait of the public sector in Bahrain by focusing on those issues related to the succession process for executive positions, as well to highlight the potential contextual factors that might influence this process. Initially, the chapter highlights the executive employees segment in the public sector workforce. Next, a brief account of the development of personnel administration in the Bahraini public services is presented. The chapter then proceeds to reflect the current succession management practices in the public sector by reviewing the available literature and the applicable civil service legislations along with

¹ Specifically, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB), Economic Development Board (EDB), Bahrain Institute for Public Administration (BIPA) and Supreme Council for Women (SCW) were selected due to their roles in establishing succession policies and regulations, supervising the execution of the process or due to their direct involvement in these processes in the public sector.

² For more information about the quantitative part of the research, kindly contact the researcher via email: Phd10ha@mail.wbs.ac.uk.

highlighting the governmental agencies that govern and oversee these practices. The last section analyses the Bahraini context to provide a panoramic view of the current state of affairs and to shed light on the potential sources for the influential factors acting upon the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector.

The following two chapters, Chapters 3 and 4, review the relevant literature to determine the status of knowledge regarding the research inquiry and to demonstrate the literature gaps highlighted in the introductory chapter. Specifically, Chapter 3 focuses on defining the succession process and the key differentiating aspects of the process. Chapter 4 reviews the literature to highlight gaps with regard to the influential factors acting upon the succession process. Following the literature review, a conceptual model was developed to illustrate the succession process, in terms of the key differentiating aspects and the potential influential factors acting upon it.

Chapter 5 presents the research methodology and provides the justification for the adopted research design. The chapter discusses the methodological position of the research and describes the adopted strategy of inquiry in the research. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the research methods used to collect the needed data.

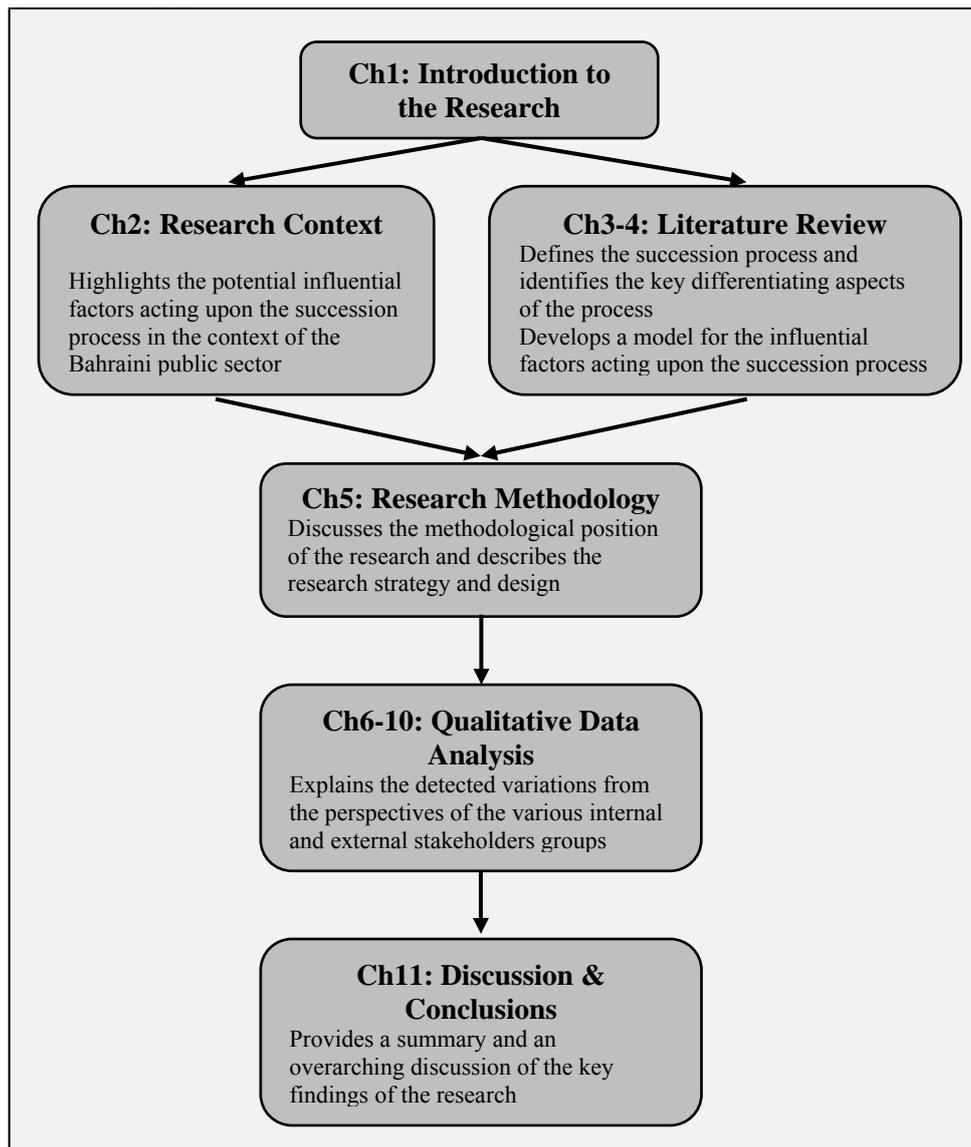
As stated earlier, the current thesis focuses on the qualitative part of the research that explained the variations in the succession processes in the Bahraini public sector. Due to the large amount of qualitative data, and in order to simplify presentation of the data analysis, the qualitative findings were divided into five chapters, Chapters 6-10. In these chapters, the qualitative data collected in the second phase of the research are presented and analysed to reflect the research findings regarding the second and third research questions¹. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the reported variations in the succession process from the internal stakeholders' perspectives. Specifically, Chapter 6 presents the perspectives of the organisations' top management and Chapter 7 presents the perspectives of the HRM officials and the executive class employees. The other three chapters, chapters 8-10, explore the influential factors acting upon the succession process from the external stakeholders' perspectives. Specifically, the chapters focus on the external stakeholders' claims and interests in the succession process and on the mechanisms employed to promote such claims and

¹ For the research questions, refer to Table 1-1 (p. 9).

interests during the process. Chapter 8 presents the perspectives of the political associations; Chapter 9 presents the perspectives of professional and social associations; and Chapter 10 presents the perspectives of media organisations, policy-makers, and regulatory bodies.

Finally, Chapter 11 presents a summary and a discussion of the key findings of the research. The chapter also demonstrates the achievements of the research in terms of the aim and objectives. Specifically, a model to explain the detected variations in the succession process in light of the identified influential stakeholders and context-related factors, as well as one that illustrates the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to influence the succession process are presented. In addition, the chapter presents the main theoretical and practical implications of the research, the research limitations and suggestions for further research.

FIGURE 1-2: DIAGRAM FOR THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CHAPTERS OF THE THESIS



CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

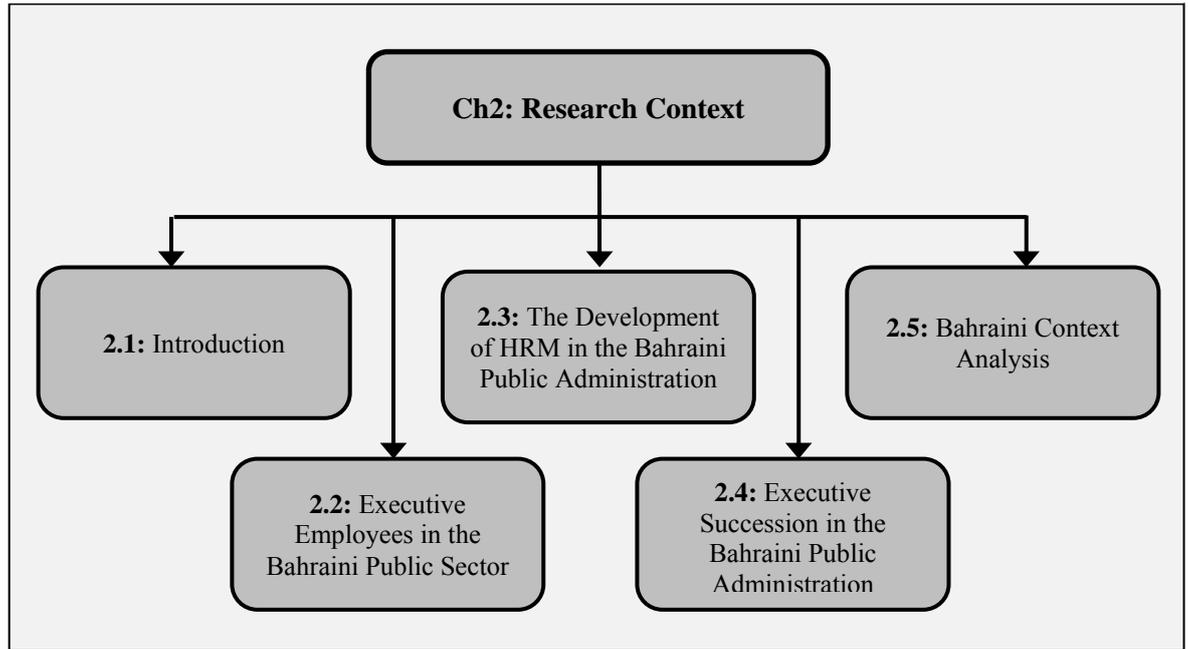
THE CONTEXT OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN THE BAHRAINI PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in the introductory chapter, the current research strives to identify the influential factors that shape the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector. Therefore, in order to grasp a holistic view of these factors, this chapter reviews the context of the executive succession processes in the Kingdom of Bahrain (KOB). The chapter aims to provide a portrait of the public sector in Bahrain by focusing on those issues related to the succession process for executive positions, as well to highlight the potential contextual factors that might influence this process.

As illustrated in Figure 2-1, in the following page, the chapter is organised in four key sections. The first highlights the executive employees segment in the public sector workforce. The second section presents a brief historical account of the development of Human Resources Management (HRM) in the Bahraini public sector, with a particular interest in appointments to executive positions. The third section strives to reflect the current succession management practices in the public sector by reviewing the available literature and the applicable civil service legislations along with highlighting the governmental agencies that govern and oversee these practices. Finally, the last section analyses the Bahraini context to provide a panoramic view of the current state of affairs and to shed light on the potential sources for the influential factors acting upon the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector. Specifically, this section discusses the aftermath of the State's Reform Project, introduced in 2002, and consequences of the subsequent political, economic, social and cultural issues on the succession process.

FIGURE 2-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 2



2.2 EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES IN THE BAHRAINI PUBLIC SECTOR

This section highlights the executive employees segment in the public sector in terms of the statistical representation in the total national workforce and the related civil service legislations. Initially, a short overview of the public sector workforce in the KOB is presented. Then, a brief account of the related regulations and laws identifying and governing executive employee segment in public sector is provided. Finally, statistical information reflecting this segment of employees in numbers is presented.

2.2.1 An Overview of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the National Workforce in the Public Sector

The Kingdom of Bahrain (KOF) is a constitutional monarchy. The total area of the country is about 762 km², occupied by a total population of around 1.23 million (CIO, 2010). According to the 2010 Census, the total number of Bahraini nationals living in Bahrain is 568,399. The male/female ratio in this population is about 1.02 in favour of males¹. The predominant religion of the vast majority of the Bahraini nationals is Islam (about 99.8%). Both major Islamic sects, “*Sunni*” and “*Shiite*”,

¹ The researcher used the 2010 Census and the Statistical Abstract of 2010 to obtain these secondary data, rather than the Statistical Abstract of subsequent years, for two reasons. First, the census data are more accurate. Second, the Statistical Abstract of 2010 is more relevant to the primary data of the research, which covered the period of 2008-2010.

coexist in Bahrain¹. The official language is Arabic, and English is considered the second language (CIO, 2010).

The Bahraini national workforce is distributed among three sectors, namely, the public sector, private sector and security and military sector. Public sector organisations include ministries, governmental authorities and agencies. All the public sector organisations are subject to the Civil Service Law, except for those that were established through decrees specifying otherwise (such as the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the Electricity and Water Authority). In total, 28 public sector organisations are subject to the Civil Service Law (refer to Appendix B for these organisations).

The total Bahraini national workforce in public sector organisations (subject to the Civil Service Law) is 34,107, of which 17,508 are males and 16,599 are female. The male/female ratio is about 1.05 in favour of males. However, on the organisational level, the male/female ratio varies from one organisation to the other. In most of these organisations, male representation is higher than that of females. Only in three public organisations are there more females than males. These organisations are the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour, where the male/female ratios are markedly in favour of females (specifically, the ratios are 0.5, 0.79 and 0.84 respectively) (CIO, 2010).

2.2.2 Civil Service Legislation in Relation to Executive Employees

Civil Servants, in general, are subject to a package of legislation, including “*Civil Service Law*”, “*Executive Regulations of the Civil Service Law*” and “*Civil Service Releases*”. The fundamental legal framework for the public service is the Civil Service Law. The applicable law was issued by Royal Decree No. (48) of 2010, replacing an earlier version of the law, which was issued in 2006.

The second form of civil service legislation is the Executive Regulations, which are issued by a Council of Ministers’ resolution to clarify and explain the rules and regulations according to the Civil Service Law. In August 2012, the Prime Minister issued Resolution No. (51) of 2012, promulgating new Executive Regulations for the Civil Service Law of 2010 and replacing the previous version which was issued in 2007 for the Civil Service Law of 2006.

¹ There is no official record specifying the ratios of religious sects in the Bahraini population.

However, most of the 257 Articles in the previous version of the Executive Regulations of 2007 are either unchanged or still applicable, as the new version of the Executive Regulations of 2012 contained 46 Articles that focused on issues related to investigations and employee discipline. In general, all the Articles that govern issues related to the appointment and promotion to executive positions remained unchanged in the 2012 version of the Executive Regulations, except for the abandonment of the Acting in Charge appointment for Director Position¹.

According to Article (2) of the Royal Decree promulgating the Civil Service Law of 2010 and Article (2) of the resolution promulgating the Executive Regulations of 2012, the Executive Regulations of 2007 for the Civil Service Law of 2006 are still valid regarding those issues that were unaddressed in the subsequent legislations, including those Articles governing executive positions issues. Thus, in order to be consistent with the primary data collected in the research that cover the period of 2008-2010, this review of the applicable civil service legislation is based on the Executive Regulations of 2007, and highlights any amendments made to their Articles in the subsequent legislation.

The third form of civil service legislation is the Civil Service Releases. The Civil Service Releases are issued by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and grouped into three categories, namely, “*Civil Service Instructions*”, “*Civil Service Directives*” and “*Civil Service Circulars*”. The instructions are issued to clarify the procedures and controls necessary to manage and regulate personnel affairs in the public sector. The directives are clarifications regarding information or instructions that require to be implemented directly in the form of directives issued to all public sector organisations. Lastly, circulars are issued to address procedural or technical aspects related to specific issue such as procedures for calculating wages and deductions (CSB, 2008).

In the following parts, these three forms of the civil service legislation are reviewed to highlight executive employees’ classification, grading scales, appointments, promotion and termination of service.

¹ Currently, the Bahraini government is in the process of updating the civil service legislation. Thus, as noted in this part and in the following parts of the current chapter, some of this legislation and the related official documentation will require certain amendments in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

2.2.2.1 Executive Employees Classification

The Executive Regulations of 2007 categorise positions in the public sector into five functional groups, namely, general positions, professional positions, judicial positions, executive positions, and educational positions¹. According to Article (8) of these regulations, the executive positions group includes positions of supervisory, administrative and leadership functions with full administrative/technical supervision over subordinates. The executive positions group includes Undersecretary, Assistant Undersecretary, Director, and any function of a managerial or advisory nature exceeding the highest level in the general positions group in terms of the scope of operations and responsibilities (e.g. Section Head and Unit Supervisor) (Government of Bahrain, 2007).

2.2.2.2 Grading Scale of Executive Employees

The civil service system links executive positions and functions with a specific functional grading scale that determines the functional grades for the incumbents of these positions, titled as “*Executive Positions’ Salaries and Grades Scale*”. The scale consists of seven executive grades, with each grade comprising 15 steps. The highest executive grade is the seventh, while the highest step is step 15. The incumbents of these positions are classified as “*Executive Class Employees*”. These employees are ranked and, therefore, paid according to their grades and steps in the Executive Positions’ Salaries and Grades Scale. Normally, executive employees advance one step on their grade scale as an annual increment for satisfactory performance (Government of Bahrain, 2007).

According to the civil service regulations, the first and second executive grades are accorded to executive employees below the Section Head level, such as Group Head and Unit Supervisor. Executives appointed to Section Head positions are accorded the third executive grade, while Director, Assistant Undersecretary and Undersecretary appointments are accorded the fourth, the fifth and the sixth executive grades, respectively. (CSB, 2007).

2.2.2.3 Appointment of Executive Employees

Articles (18), (19) and (23) of the Executive Regulations specify three different appointment mechanisms in terms of the appointing authorities and according to the position under

¹ The Bahraini Government issued a subsequent amendment to the functions classification system in 2008 to encompass diplomatic positions in a separate functional group.

consideration (Government of Bahrain, 2007). The first and the second appointing mechanisms distinguish “*Senior Executive Positions*” from the rest of the public positions. Senior Executive Positions, according to Article (2) of the Civil Service Law, are those executive positions and functions, and their legal equivalents, at the Director level and above (Kingdom of Bahrain, 2010)¹. The first appointment mechanism is defined in Article (18) of the Executive Regulations. The Article specifies that for positions above the Director level (i.e. Undersecretary and Assistant Undersecretary) the nomination is pursuant to the proposal of the organisation’s competent authority (which is the head of the organisation) and approval of the Council of Ministers; while the appointment is made by Royal Decree issued by H.M. the King. The second mechanism is highlighted in Article (19). The Article specifies that for Directors, the nomination is pursuant to the proposal of the organisation’s competent authority; while the appointment is made by a Resolution issued by the Prime Minister. The third mechanism is defined in Article (23). According to this Article, appointments for all public positions, excluding senior positions and including executive positions at Section Head level and below, are based on the decision of the organisation’s competent authority and subject to the approval of the CSB.

Furthermore, the CSB specifies the requirements for the appointments in senior executive positions in terms of academic qualifications and minimum required experience in years of service in the public sector. With regard to academic qualifications, a Bachelor degree or equivalent is required for appointments to senior positions in general. However, the minimum required experience varied among the three levels of the senior positions. For appointments in positions at the Undersecretary level, 11 years of experience are required, while for positions at the Assistant Undersecretary and Director levels nine and seven years of experience are required, respectively (CSB, 2009). Recently, the CSB added another condition for the appointment for Director, or equivalent, positions. This condition specifies the successful completion of the “*Induction to the Senior Civil Service Programme*” provided by the Bahrain Institute of Public Administration² (CSB, 2012).

¹ The same distinction between executive positions is found in the previous Civil Service Law of 2006.

² The third section provides further details about this programme.

2.2.2.4 Promotion of Executive Employees

In general, promotions in the Bahraini public service are advancements within the functional grades. According to Article (52) of the Executive Regulations of 2007, employees are promoted by being accorded the grade directly above their current grade, whether in their current positions or any other vacant positions. For executive employees, there are two types of promotion. The first is appointment to a higher position in the executive hierarchal levels. In this case, the executive employee is accorded the designated grade in the higher position. For example, if the office incumbent of a Section Head position were appointed to a Director position, he/she would be promoted from the Third Executive Grade to the fourth Executive Grade, and so on.

The second type of promotion applies exclusively to executive positions and is called “*Special Executive Promotion*”. In the case of special executive promotion, employees do not move upward through the executive hierarchal levels; while remaining in their current position they are upgraded to the next grade in the Executive Positions’ Salaries and Grades Scale, even though their new grade exceeds the designated grades for that position. For example, an incumbent of a Director position could be promoted to the Fifth Executive Grade as a special executive promotion and continue in the director position, even though the designated grade for the Director position is the Fourth Executive Grade. Article (57) states:

“By a decision of the competent authority and subject to the approval of the Civil Service Bureau, and except for Acting Director, an employee may be accorded special promotion on the "Executive Positions' Salaries and Grades Scale" to a grade higher than the grade prescribed for the position occupied by the employee, provided that the employee satisfies the following conditions: ...” (Government of Bahrain, 2007)

2.2.2.5 Termination of Service

In general, the service of an executive position incumbent is terminated for nine reasons, specified in Article (241) of the Executive Regulations of 2007. The first four reasons are retirement, medical unfitness, resignation, and loss of Bahraini Nationality. The fifth reason for the termination of service is the issuance of a final judicial ruling with punishment for a felony or with punishment by imprisonment for an offence involving moral turpitude or dishonesty. The sixth reason is dismissal from service according to disciplinary decision or removal from service pursuant to

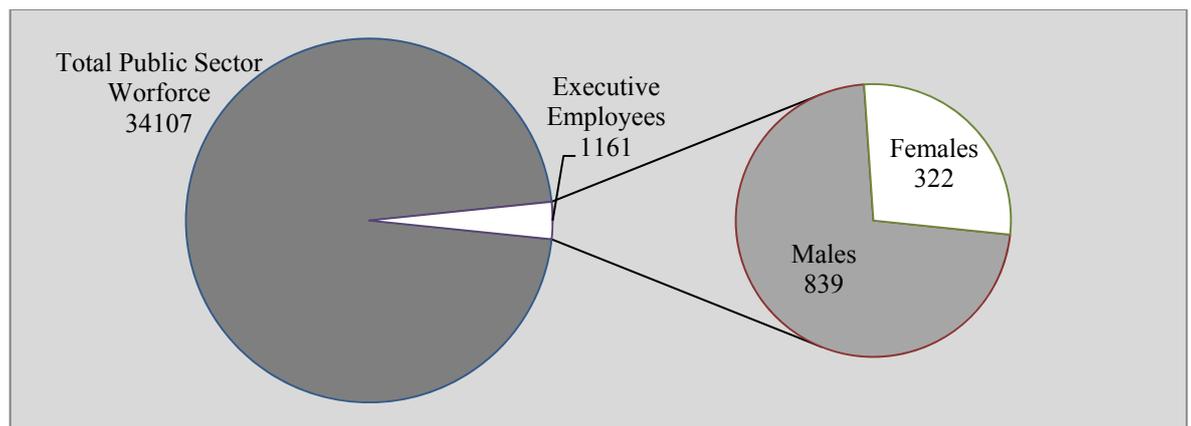
judicial ruling. The seventh reason is the cancelation of position. The eighth was briefly mentioned in this Article, but was clarified in the following Article. According to Article (242), the services of an incumbent of a senior position could be terminated by the issuance of a Royal Decree or a Resolution appointing an individual to the same position that the incumbent occupies without the organisation of the incumbent showing clear and conclusive intentions to relocate him/her to another position. The final reason for the termination of service is death.

It is noteworthy that, according to Article (243), employees may continue in service beyond the retirement age, which is 60 years, if the appointing authority for the position extends their term of employment (Government of Bahrain, 2007).

2.2.3 Executive Employees by Number

In this subsection, the executive employees segment is illustrated in numbers. According to the 2010 Census, there are 1,161 Bahraini nationals classified as executive class employees in public organisations and subject to the Civil Service Law¹. The executive employee segment forms 3.4% of the total Bahraini workforce in these organisations. As shown in Figure 2-2, out of these 1,161 executives, 839 executives are males and 322 are females. The male/female representation in this segment of employees is about 2.6 in favour of males (CIO, 2010).

FIGURE 2-2: EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES' SEGMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR²



For further illustration purposes, Table 2-1 shows the distribution of executive employees in the public sector on the Executive Grades Scale and the male/female ratio at each grade.

¹ The researcher excluded 14 non-Bahraini in senior technical and advisory executive positions as they were contracted to serve in specific positions for a specific period.

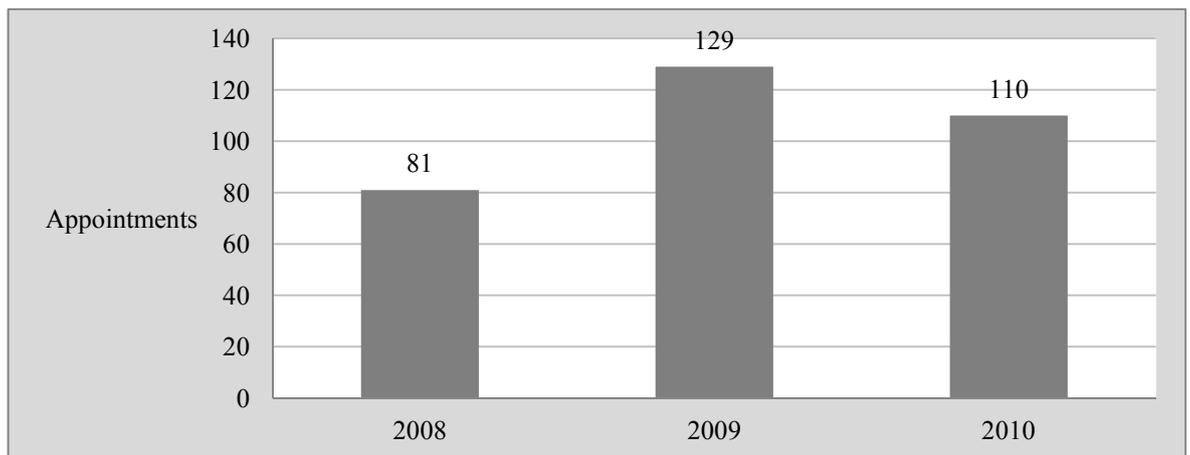
² The diagram is based on the 2010 Census (CIO, 2010).

TABLE 2-1: EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS BY SEX AND GRADE¹

Executives	Executive Grades							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Males	160	127	146	125	150	104	27	839
Females	93	65	47	35	42	37	3	322
Total	253	192	193	160	192	141	30	1161
M/F Ratio	1.72	1.95	3.11	3.57	3.57	2.81	9	2.6

Furthermore, Figure 2-3 illustrates the annual succession rates in executive positions for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010. The numbers were obtained from the CSB. However, due to certain limitations in the CSB's information system, these numbers were calculated by identifying the number of employees appointed annually to executive positions and excluding all those who had been appointed to newly executive positions created due to organisational restructuring².

FIGURE 2-3: ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS TO EXECUTIVE POSITIONS



2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF HRM IN THE BAHRAINI PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

This section reviews HRM development in the Bahraini public sector within the context of the development of the public administration in general. Such a historical outline is needed not only to provide a background for the current state of affairs, but also to facilitate the recognition of the factors that have influenced, and probably are still influencing, appointments to executive positions in the Bahraini public sector.

¹ The figures are based on the Statistical Abstract of 2010 (CIO, 2010).

² The researcher acknowledges that there is a room for marginal errors in these figures. Such errors may emerge from the possibility of some of the employees being appointed to vacant positions and not succeeding any incumbents in their positions. Thus, appointments to such vacant positions would not reflect the occurrence of succession processes.

One of the few scholars who have studied the development of public administration in Bahrain is Fuad Khuri. In his book *“Tribe and State in Bahrain: the transformation of social and political authority in an Arab State”*, Khuri dedicated one chapter to identifying the socio-political factors that shaped the development of the bureaucratic system in the Bahraini government (Khuri, 1980). Another chapter was dedicated to highlighting the institutions and the development of governmental organisations. After a comprehensive historical review, the author stated that bureaucracy in Bahrain has “evolved gradually in response to particular historical incidents and to a complex scenario of local power politics” (Khuri, 1980; p 85).

In the course of public administration development in Bahrain, three phases could be recognised. The first started in the late 1910s and lasted to 1957. The second was in the period from 1958 to 1969, while the third was between 1970 and 2002. These phases are not mutually exclusive as they intersect and overlap. Nevertheless, each of these phases was driven by a unique predominant factor and the developments in public administration were manifested in distinctive schemes, which in turn reflected on *“Personnel Administration”*¹ in public sector organisations. The forces behind such developments, in each of these phases, were different. Nevertheless, all of these development phases were driven by the power struggles between the various parties involved, which reflected on the formulation of HRM policies.

In the first developmental phase, the British colonial powers, in order to preserve their interests, introduced a bureaucratic system to administrate public affairs in the Sheikdom of Bahrain (Al-Tajir, 1987; Belgrave, 1960; Hay, 1955; Khuri, 1980; Mansi, 2004; Menissi, 2003). This was manifested in the establishment of a few modest official governmental offices in the early 1920s (Khuri, 1980; Mansi, 2004). In 1926, a British administrator was appointed as the *“Personal and Financial Advisor”* of the Ruler in order to help him develop and modernise the country. The British Advisor was the locus of authority for public service organisations, which mostly were run by western executives. Nevertheless, some senior positions in these organisations were assumed by Bahrainis based on their kinship to the Ruler of the country (Al-Khalifah and Rice, 1993; Albaker, 1965; Khuri, 1980; Mansi, 2004).

¹ The researcher used the term *“Personnel Administration”* to reflect the common conception of the HRM issues during most of these development phases.

In the second phase, the civil movement of the 1950s influenced the public administration in various respects, giving more power to the public (Khuri, 1980). During this phase, more Bahrainis were seen in top and middle management positions. In addition to kinship, education paved the way for more Bahrainis to attain higher positions in the government (Nakhleh, 2011). By the end of the second phase, most of the top officials were Bahraini citizens.

In the third phase, Bahrain became an independent state. Public administration was solely controlled by the government as it attained all the executive, legislative and judiciary powers (Khuri, 1980; Mansi, 2004). In this period, the domination by the Bahraini citizens of the middle and top levels of the hierarchal structure of the governmental organisations was recognisable. Just as this developmental phase had started with a major political shift, it also ended with one. In 2002, a new era started in Bahrain as the State's Reform Project began to materialise through the enactment of the Constitution and the formation of the National Council. The aftermath of this reform project is discussed in further detail in the last section of the chapter, which focuses on its impact on the succession process.

In relation to the research topic, Khuri (1980) provided an important remark about civil servant appointments and employment. The author conducted a comparative analysis of the social bases of civil employment that covered the history of Bahrain's public sector up to 1975. The findings of this study indicated that while members of the ruling family (*Al-Khalifa*) controlled the top positions in sovereign organisations, distribution by Bahraini technocrats in allocating other offices, departments or ministries, in terms of religious sects, was fair. The author affirmed, "In appointing or employing Bahrainis for high offices, fair distribution between Shi'a [Shiite] and Sunni has been observed." (p. 124). However, the author noted that those in high positions tended to recruit minor civil servants from the same religious sect; and thus, some of the public sector organisations were dominated by one religious sect. In his explanation, the author argued that such sect domination is not entirely a matter of favouritism, but is also an outcome of the unstructured employment procedures. He stated,

"This phenomenon is not entirely a matter of favouring one's own group in employment; it is also a product of the way employment is sought. For lack of formalised system of

manpower registration, an employer in the private or the public sector finds it necessary to rely upon his own knowledge of the labour market in recruitment - knowledge that is fashioned by his social contacts and links confined mainly to groups within his sect.” (p. 139)

2.4 SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT IN THE BAHRAINI PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

To follow the above brief historical outline of the development of HRM in the Bahraini public sector, this section strives to reflect how succession processes for executive positions are executed. Initially, the available literature is reviewed to reflect the HRM practices, and particularly those related to the succession process, in the context of the Bahraini public sector. Then, to illuminate the governing frameworks for the succession process, the civil service legislations are examined and the roles played by the regulatory bodies governing and overseeing these processes are highlighted.

2.4.1 HRM Practices in the Bahraini Public Administration: Specific Focus on Succession Issues

Very few studies were found that addressed HRM or public administration issues in the Bahraini context. In general, this is also the case for other Middle East countries (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2007; Common, 2008; Metcalfe, 2007; Nakhle, 2011). However, two such rare studies were found very relevant to the current research. The first was that of Mandi (2008), which was titled “*A Case Study Exploring Succession Planning: Supported By Quantitative Analysis of Governmental Organizations in the Kingdom Of Bahrain*”. The second was that of Ali (2010), titled “*New Public Management and Administrative Reforms in the Kingdom of Bahrain: Implementing Performance and Programme-based Budgeting*”. In the following subsections, findings of these two studies relevant to the current research inquiry are highlighted¹.

2.4.2 Mandi (2008): Significance of Succession Planning to the Bahraini Public Sector

In this study, the author explored the importance of succession planning from the perspective of the top management of four public organisations (four ministries). The author adopted a broad working

¹ Other studies are highlighted, as appropriate, in the following sections.

definition for succession planning, which went beyond the planning aspect of the issue to encompass implementation aspects of the process. He stated,

“Succession planning is the ongoing process of identifying, assessing, and developing skills and talent through mentoring, grooming, training and job rotation. Succession planning is a voyage, not an end by itself. Succession planning is the course of action ensuring that the appropriate intimates are ready, at the right time, to effectively run the organization and meet its future challenges.” (p.62)

Furthermore, the author reflected the importance of succession planning in terms of its impact on identifying new leaders, developing new leaders, delivering financial success, fostering a positive organisational culture, maintaining long-term viability, sustaining core competencies and initiating management changes.

In general, the findings of Mandi’s study indicated that the top management in these four ministries perceived succession planning as an important issue in terms of its impact on the abovementioned indicators. However, among the various findings of Mandi’s study, two are closely related to the current research inquiry. First, Mandi’s study indicated that there is no formal succession planning in these organisations and most of the appointments for executive positions are carried out via informal processes. He reflected this informality by highlighting the lack of documentation of the process, the informal professional career development schemes, the nonexistence of a specific department/body responsible for succession policies/procedures and the lack of communication in the process. Furthermore, in his recommendations for future studies, Mandi advocated researchers to explore the cultural and managerial impediments to formal succession planning within the Bahraini public sector context. The second important finding of this study in relation to the current research is the impact of the Bahraini political and social issues on the criteria for appointing executive employees in public organisations. Without giving more details, Mandi (2008) stated that appointments in key positions were subject to political and social influences.

2.4.3 Ali (2010): The Reform of the Bahraini Public Sector Administration

In this study, the author shed light on various aspects of the Bahraini public administration that relate to the current research inquiry to describe the state of affairs. He explored administrative

reform in the Bahraini public sector by investigating the drivers of such administrative changes, examining the manifestations of the elements of the “*New Public Management*” concept in the public management practices and by identifying the facilitators and challenges to such reform. In the following parts, the findings of this study are highlighted, with emphasis on those findings that relate to the current research inquiry.

2.4.3.1 The Drivers of Public Administration Reform

The findings of this study revealed that the Bahraini government has been forced to make some administrative changes by both internal and external drivers that stem from economic pressures and public demands. In addition, public administrative reform was part of the general agenda for political and economic reform of the state that was embarked on in 2001. According to the author, the drivers of such administrative reform “largely reflect a response to the Government’s inability to meet and fulfil citizens’ needs and demands and improve the overall standard of living.” (p. 252). Specifically, and of special interest for the inquiry of the current research, the author emphasised the public demands for greater transparency and responsiveness as one of the major drivers for such reform in the public administration. The author reflected these demands by highlighting the pressures of civil societies, political parties and the public, in general, for such reform; along with highlighting the political elites’ (Ministers and Parliament Members) awareness of the necessity to address these public demands. The significance of these findings to the current research is that, as succession management is part of the general public administration, such pressures are potentially influential factors that might affect, in one way or another, the succession processes for executive positions. Thus, the researcher considered such pressures in the investigation of the influential factors acting upon the succession process.

2.4.3.2 Manifestations of the Reform of the Bahraini Public Administration

Regarding administrative changes in the Bahraini public sector, Ali (2010) reflected these changes in terms of five key dimensions related to the New Public Management paradigm. Namely, these dimensions were organisational structure adjustments, changes in the decision-making process, the movement toward customer driven output based funding, improvements in HRM performance and embracement of quality management practices. The findings of Ali’s (2010) study in this respect

uncovered various HRM practices, and public administration issues in general, that related to the current research inquiry.

With regard to the first dimension, the organisational structure adjustments, Ali (2010) used six indicators to reflect these changes in terms of the orientation toward organisational decentralisation and the reduction of the hierarchical authority. In this regard, the findings of the study revealed that the government of Bahrain created many single agencies and adopted a downsizing approach to re-organise/re-structure governmental bodies. Nevertheless, an expansion of ministerial organisation hierarchy was noted as many departments were created through extensive expansion of managerial layers, which in turn slowed down the decentralisation and downsizing process. In relation to the inquiry of the current research, these findings imply that a considerable number of new staff have been appointed during such changes in the organisational structures, including appointments to executive positions.

The second dimension used to reflect the changes in the Bahraini public administration by Ali (2010) was the changes in the decision-making process. This dimension is closely linked to the inquiry of the current research, as it reflects how decisions are made in the public sector, including those decisions related to the succession process. With regard to this dimension, Ali (2010) noted that the decision-making process in the Bahraini public sector was dictated by several issues. According to the author, the foremost issue was the adopted leadership and management styles. The study's findings indicated that three leadership styles were adopted in the Bahraini public administration. The first is the "*Participatory Leadership*" style, which is viewed as a way of seeking the involvement of others in the decision-making process, such as assistants, subordinates, consultants, peers, superiors, teams and stakeholders. According to the author, the level of participation in the decision-making process varied according to the type of the decision under consideration, with decisions regarding goals, strategy and motivation requiring a high degree of participation. The second leadership style detected was "*Democratic Leadership*", which reflects concerns for a stronger voice for the public in the decision-making process. However, the most prevalent leadership style in Bahrain public administration was found to be "*Autocratic Leadership*", which heavily depends on procedure and rules to enforce compliance with performance targets. According to the author, those who adopt this autocratic style of leadership

“seek to make as many decisions as possible, using authority and control, retaining responsibility rather than making use of full delegation and consultation” (p. 290). The author added, “Moreover, findings revealed a tendency to favour a centralised, hierarchical, bureaucratic orientation of leadership” (p. 290).

Another issue Ali (2010) highlighted with regard to the decision-making process was how decisions were made in the Council of Ministers, which is the supreme governmental body chaired by H.H. the Prime Minister. According to the author, ministers put forward their opinions and ministries’ plans to the Council during formal weekly meetings, in which public policies are approved and directions for support committees are placed regarding the necessary actions and regulations. In addition, the author raised a very important issue concerning the demarcation line between policy and operational decisions taken by the Council. He noted,

“An unclear demarcation line between policy decisions and operational decisions, however, was found to be an important issue facing public services in Bahrain today. This confusion is complicated by the centralised tendency in administration, which causes delay in decision making.” (p. 292)

Furthermore, Ali (2010) raised another issue that imposes certain restrictions on the participation of the various stakeholders in the public sector’s decision-making process, which is the bureaucratic structure. Specifically, the author highlighted the impact of such bureaucratic structures on the role of the members of the Parliament in the public decision-making process, particularly those decisions concerning administrative issues. He stated,

“The other important aspect that may be noted here is that the discourse on decision making is confined to the dominant bureaucratic structure within the Government. In this regard, MPs [Members of Parliament] expressed that they are limited actors as there is no indication in the rules of business regarding the role of MPs in decision making, particularly at various administrative levels, without violating the separation of power policy.” (p. 292)

In addition, as a final remark, Ali (2010) highlighted the lack of participation and power distance in the public decision-making process in general. As will be illustrated in the following part of this

section, this remark is in agreement with other studies that have addressed decision-making processes in the Middle East region.

With regard to the third dimension used to reflect the changes in the Bahraini public administration: the movement toward customer driven output based funding, only one finding of Ali's (2010) study was found relevant to the current research. Ali's (2010) findings revealed that there was a partial and limited performance measurement and reward system. Such findings suggested that staff appraisal practices in the public sector were inadequate. This notion was also emphasised in the findings concerning the fourth dimension used to reflect public administration changes. In turn, this notion casts a shadow on the decision-making process concerning promotion and succession issues.

In the fourth dimension, Ali (2010) examined the changes in the public administration in terms of improvements in HRM practices. Specifically, the author focused on performance related pay that reflects market conditions, performance contracts and appraisal, changes in the reward system and merit pay and personnel deregulation for greater flexibility in recruitment. The findings of the study indicated that there were limited improvements in these areas; they scored the lowest among all the dimensions of the New Public Management reforms. While some improvements were recorded in public organisations outside the CSB umbrella, very little improvement was found in the remaining public sector, which is subject to the Civil Service Law. This was more evident in relation to performance related/merit pay and performance contracts. The author also highlighted the lack of flexibility in HRM in the public administration. In line with this notion, the author highlighted the government's efforts to overcome the rigidity in the civil service by signing an agreement with Singapore Cooperation Enterprise to improve civil service standards, mainly through amendment of the law toward a more flexible and positive legal framework that would be in line with Bahrain's strategic vision.

Another notable finding of Ali (2010) with regard to HRM practices was related to the lack of confidence and trust between the public and the authorities of the public sector with regard to equal opportunity and "*person-job fit*", particularly at decision-making levels. Ali (2010) adopted the definition for the concept of person-job fit from Kristof (1996). Accordingly, person-job fit refers

to the process of matching potential candidates to specific roles and responsibilities according to the fit between an individual's abilities and the demands of a particular job or position. The lack in public confidence in person-job fit was also reflected elsewhere in the study. Specifically, the author reemphasised this notion in his findings about the culture constraints that impeded the implementation of the administrative reform in the public sector. The following part will provide more detail about these constraints.

In the last dimension, Ali (2010) investigated the changes in the Bahraini public administration in terms of orientation toward quality management practices. The author used several elements to measure such orientation. In general, the findings of the study showed that these elements were weakly expressed in the Bahraini context. Of particular interest to the current research inquiry, one of these elements was the orientation to foster greater transparency in the public sector. In this regard, Ali (2010) highlighted the pressures on the government to achieve a higher degree of transparency, which would allow the public to monitor the provided services, as the existing system lacks adequate evaluation and feedback mechanisms.

In summary, as illustrated above, Ali (2010) reflected the status quo of the public administration in Bahrain in his examination of manifestations of elements of New Public Management in the public administration reforms. The study provided a portrait of public administration, which highlighted various issues related to the current research inquiry, most importantly those related to the decision-making process and HRM practices. The following subsection presents Ali's findings concerning the challenges to such reform.

2.4.3.3 Challenges to the Implementation of the New Public Management Paradigm

Ali (2010) highlighted various issues that impeded the implementation of administrative reform in the Bahraini Public sector, some of which go beyond the scope of the current research inquiry. However, one of the issues that the author emphasised related to the impact of culture-related factors as "a major determinant of work attitudes and the potential for administrative reform" (p. 300). In particular, the author highlighted "*Wasta*", nepotism and cronyism as cultural practices in the Bahraini context that present unique challenges to the administrative reform endeavours. *Wasta* is an Arabic term referring to the social networks of interpersonal connections rooted in family and

kinship ties and implicating the exercise of power, influence, and information sharing through social and politico-business networks (Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Smith et al., 2012). According to Ali (2010), Wasta practices are widespread in the Bahraini culture, and influence employment and promotion decisions. Furthermore, the author asserted that while many Bahrainis criticised Wasta and complained about the unfairness of such practices, Wasta is rooted in the Bahraini social norms. He stated,

“The results ... revealed that social norms in Bahrain provide fertile ground for favouritism and nepotism, including Wasta, particularly in public service provision and delivery. Many elites extended their discussion of ineffectiveness and corruption to include recruitment and promotion for senior public posts (some said in public service recruitment as a whole).” (p. 301)

2.4.4 Summary of Succession Management Practices in the Bahraini Public Sector

As stated earlier, there are very limited literature addressing HRM and public administration in the Bahraini context, obviously, this is also true regarding succession process. However, Mendi (2008) and Ali (2010) provided remarkable contributions in this regard. Mandi (2008) affirmed that there was no formal succession planning in the public sector (at least those four investigated public organisations) and touched on the impact of political and social issues on the appointment for executive positions in public organisations. This is in line with other studies that addressed talent management in the Arab and Middle Eastern context. For example, Ali (2011) stated,

“Until recently, in both government and private sectors, the issue of succession was not discussed. In government, this was usually a political decision made arbitrarily by those in higher positions.” (p. 168).

Ali (2010) investigated the recent administrative changes in the Bahraini public sector and the drivers for such changes. He highlighted the public pressures for the reform in the public administration in general, which may represent potential influential factor acting upon the succession process for executive positions in the public sector. Ali (2010) also provided a novel portrait of the public administration in the Bahraini context. He highlighted the organisational restructuring/re-organisation process that took place in the recent years. This implies a considerable

re-allocation of staff occurred during these years, including appointment of executive employees. In addition, Ali (2010) reflected how decisions are made in the public sector. In this context, he highlighted the dominant autocratic leadership style in the public administration, which promotes a centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic decision-making process. He also described how decisions are made in the Council of Ministers and noted lack of the demarcation between policy and operational decisions addressed by the Council. In addition, Ali (2010) highlighted the lack of participation and the power distance in the decision-making process. With regard to HRM practices, Ali (2010) highlighted the rigidity of the existing system governing compensations and rewards along with the inadequacy of performance appraisal practices. In addition, the author highlighted the lack of public confidence and trust in the fairness and appropriateness of appointments for executive positions in the public sector, where favouritism and Wasta are very common and influential. These findings echoed the general characteristics of the decision-making process in similar contexts highlighted in the literature. For example, after exploring HRM practices in the contexts of 14 Middle Eastern countries in their notable work, Mellahi and Budhwar (2006) provided an overview of practices. The authors highlighted the widespread power distance in these practices and stated,

“[I]t is reported that high power distance in some Middle Eastern countries ... has an impact on managers’ perception towards the delegation of authority to lower levels in the organisation, and level and ways of interaction with employees. This is also reflected in the centralized decision-making process, unwillingness to delegate responsibility and rigidly designed and compulsory HRM policies” (p. 292)

In addition, Mellahi and Budhwar (2006) underlined the drift toward favouritism in HRM practices in the Middle Eastern contexts and the divergence of these practices from some of the Islamic values. They noted,

“Islamic values such as equity and fairness are often not adhered to in practice ... This explains the widespread adoption of some HRM practices in the Middle East that are not compatible with Islamic values, such as the use of nepotism in recruitment and compensation, known as wasta” (p. 292)

2.4.5 The Succession Process and Civil Service Legislation

In the previous subsection, the HRM practices in the Bahraini public sector were addressed, with special focus on those practices related to succession management issues. In order to present a complete picture of the succession management in Bahrain's public administration, this subsection reviews the applicable civil service legislations to highlight the legal framework governing succession issues.

The review of these legislations revealed no evidence whatsoever of articles or even legal items addressing the succession process per se in the Civil Service Law, the Executive Regulations or in any of the Civil Service Instructions, Directives or Circulars. Furthermore, the succession issue was not reflected in the use of any other related terminologies, such as leadership development or second line preparation. This conclusion was in agreement with Mandi's (2008) findings about the lack of formal succession planning in Bahrain's public administration.

However, the review of these civil service legislations highlighted one Article in the Executive Regulations that briefly touches on replacement plans. According to Article (157), the CSB shall cooperate with public sector organisations to develop training and replacement plans according to a specific programme developed to identify potential candidates for assuming senior positions. It states:

“The Civil Service Bureau shall - in co-operation with government entities -undertake the responsibility of developing replacement and training plans for employees by formulating a programme which determines the method and standards for selecting and qualifying employees of distinguished competencies to occupy senior positions and other positions”

(Government of Bahrain, 2007)

However, no information about any such specific programme for identifying and developing potential employees, or about the implementation method, was found in any of the civil service legislations. In addition, the CSB does not identify any mechanism or procedure to monitor the implementation of such a programme. Furthermore, regarding standards for selecting employees to assume senior positions, nothing was found apart from the general criteria specifying the minimum

academic qualifications and years of experience (refer to Appointment of Executive Employees, on page 23).

Moreover, civil service legislation appears not only to fall short of addressing succession as a continuous and integral process, it also lacks detail in tackling some key aspects of the issue. Take for example the decision-making process. The legislation specifies three different appointing authorities for senior positions. However, no mechanism or procedure is identified specifying how candidates are selected and evaluated. Also, there is no mechanism or procedure specifying in detail how to prepare and develop those potential candidates.

In general, the abovementioned remarks about the lack of information, prescribed procedures and guidelines for executing the succession process in the Bahraini civil service legislations are in harmony with the findings of Common (2008) regarding administrative reform in Bahrain. He highlighted the lack of information regarding implementation procedures in most of the official publications by stating, “[M]ost official publications lack detail on implementation”, the aim being to raise public expectation, and “the emphasis is objective- rather than procedure-oriented” (p 179). As illustrated in the following subsection, the same remark about the lack of information and official documents is also noted in the review of the governmental agencies’ involvement in the succession process.

2.4.6 Governmental Agencies’ Involvement in the Succession Process

In this subsection, the governmental agencies involved in regulating and monitoring the succession processes in the public sector are highlighted. The review of the Bahraini context highlighted three governmental agencies which are involved in the appointment and promotion of public servants. Specifically, these agencies are the CSB, Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA) and the National Audit Court (NAC). The following parts shed light on these agencies and their roles in the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector.

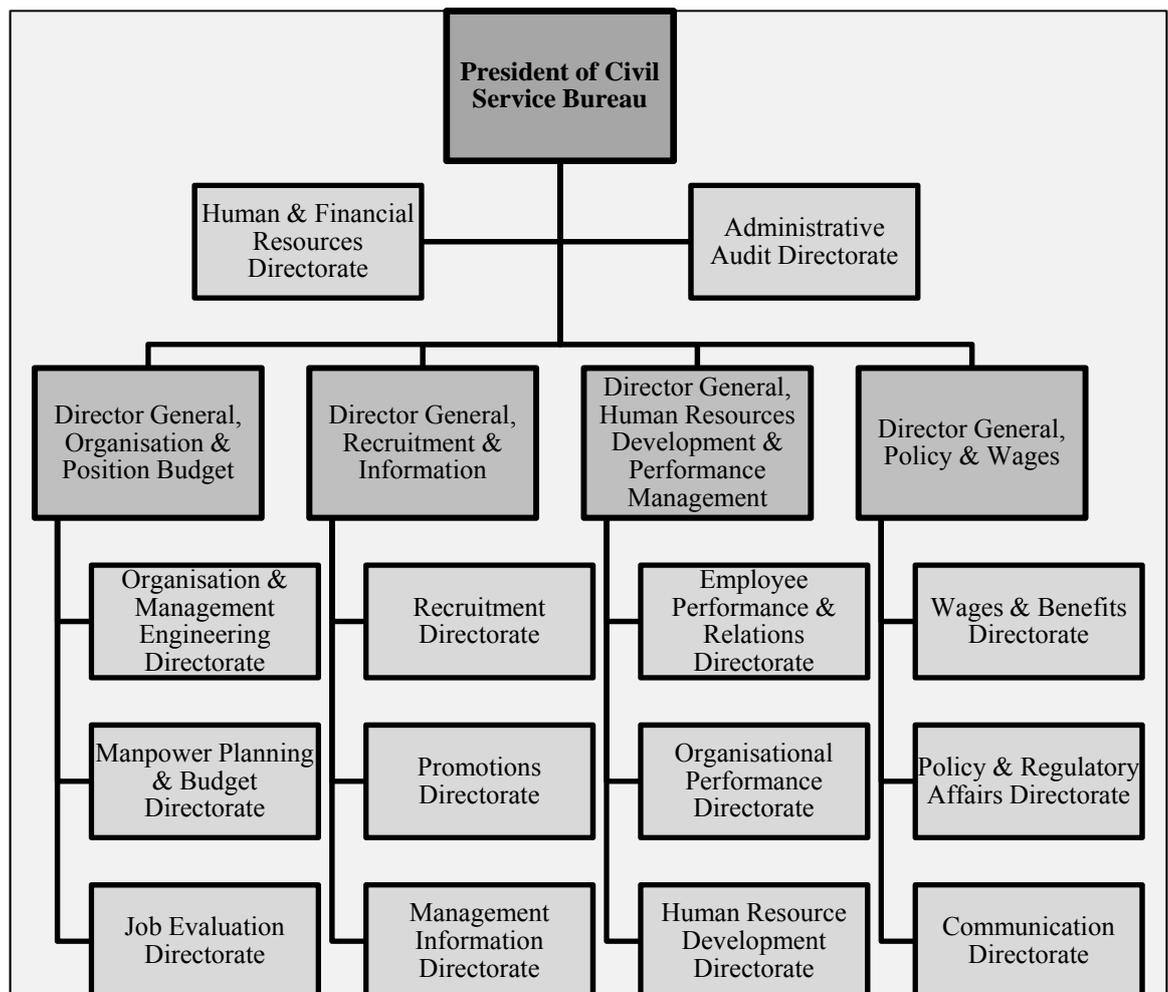
2.4.6.1 Civil Service Bureau (CSB)

The CSB was established in 1975 and it was attached to the Council of Ministers (Government of Bahrain, 1975). According to the establishing decree, the main objectives of the CSB are the development of the civil service, the improvement of its productivity and efficiency and the

achievement of justice and equity in the treatment of the employees in the public sector. The CSB became the central authority overseeing the public administration and served as the executive arm of the Civil Service Council, which is the supreme authority for the civil service¹.

In the last three decades, the CSB has gone through several restructuring processes. Recently, the CSB was organised into four General-Directorates, with each General-Directorate including three Directorates. In addition, two directorates were directly linked to the office of the President of the CSB. Collectively via this organisational structure, the CSB is tasked with regulating, monitoring, controlling and coordinating the various aspects of the HRM in the public sector organisations subject to the Civil Service Law (Kingdom of Bahrain, 2012). Figure 2-4 illustrates the current organisational structure of the CSB.

FIGURE 2-4: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CSB²



¹ The Civil Service Council is headed by H.H. the Prime Minister and made up of a Deputy Prime Minister, seven ministers and the President of the CSB.

² Due to the outdated organisational structure specified on the official website of the CSB, this structure was developed by the researcher to incorporate the latest updates. The translations of the titles of the General-Directorates and Directorates were adopted from the CSB.

In spite of the recent restructuring of the CSB, no evidence was found of any official documents specifying the roles of the various General-Directorates and Directorates. Nevertheless, according to relevant inside information obtained by the researcher, four directorates were tasked with issues related to the succession processes for executive positions. First, the Recruitment Directorate is tasked with coordinating and executing the appointment of new employees in the public sector, including executive class employees. The second directorate involved in the succession process is the Promotion Directorate. This directorate coordinates and approves promotions to executive positions in public sector organisations. The development of the second line of executive employees is one of the tasks assigned to the Human Resources Development Directorate. Finally, the Administrative Audit Directorate oversees and ensures the proper implementation of the civil service regulations and standard procedures.

2.4.6.2 Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA)

In 2006, the government of Bahrain established the Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA) as a specialised training institute for public administration (BIPA, 2010a). The institute is directed by a board of directors headed by the President of the CSB, three Assistant Undersecretaries (representing the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance), the General Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the General Director of the BIPA. The organisational structure of the BIPA is flat, consisting of ten directorates under the control of the General Director (BIPA, 2010b).

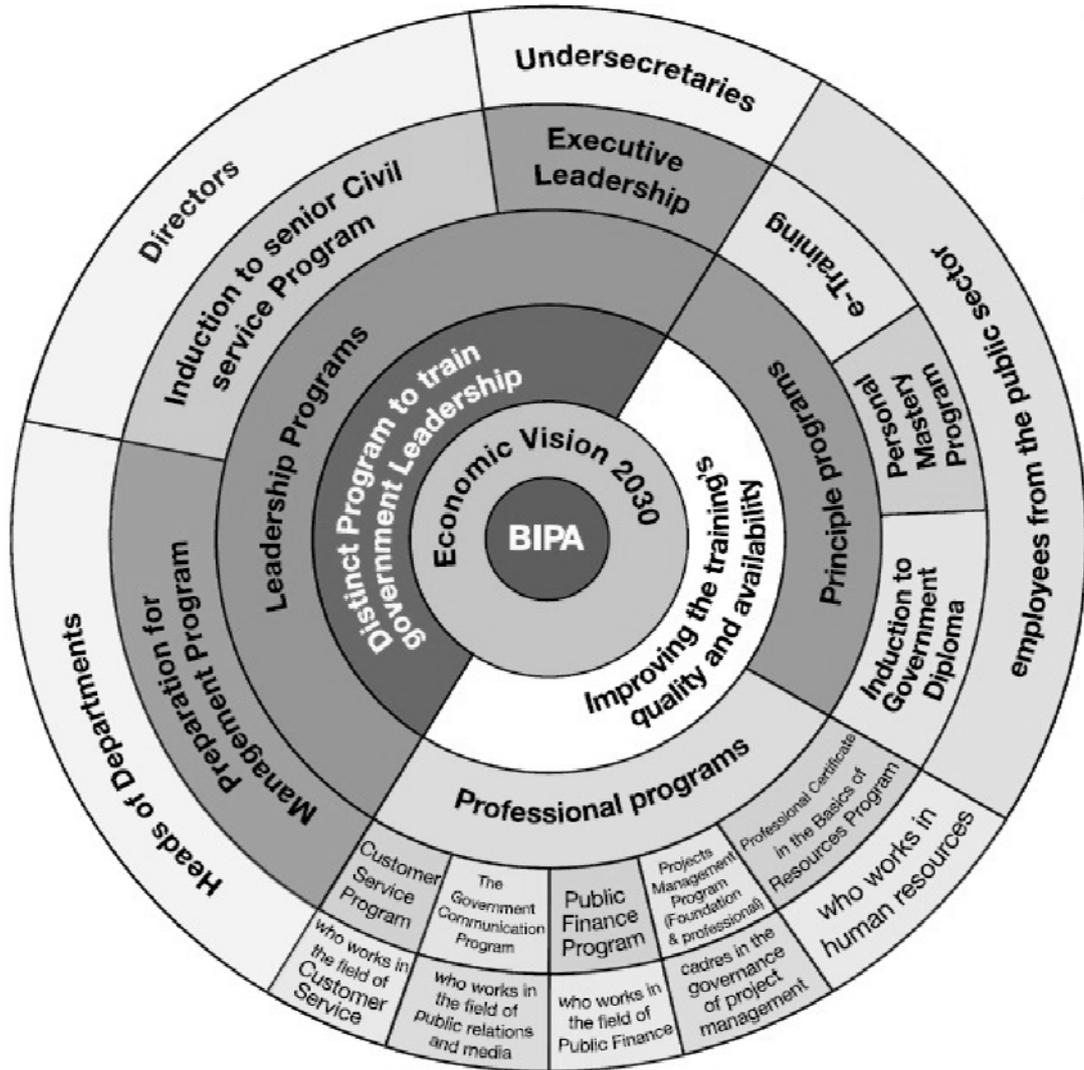
The BIPA aims to improve public administration by contributing to the preparation and training of public sector personnel. Accordingly, the institute adopted a clear mission statement affirming this aim by stating, “Acting as a Change Agent for Sustained Transformation through Training, Learning and Development in the Public Sector.” Furthermore, the strategic embracement of the aim to improve public administration via training is also reflected in the fact that the BIPA took the responsibility of implementing two initiatives of the National Economic Strategy, Vision 2030, which was developed by the Bahraini Economic Development Board (EDB)¹. The first initiative is to enhance the quality and abundance of training in general by preparing and offering programmes

¹ The last section of this chapter highlights the relevant initiatives of the National Economic Strategy and the role played by the EDB in developing the public administration.

that achieve the aim of the National Economic Strategy in terms of public administrators. The second initiative is more focused on the executive level employees. This initiative aims to create proper programmes to improve the performance of these administrators and to ensure the development and the retention of future leaders in the public sector (BIPA, 2010).

Accordingly, one of the main tasks of the BIPA became the development and execution of training programmes to enhance the leadership capabilities of executive class employees in the public sector (BIPA, 2010a). In addition, the intention to provide proper training for executive employees in the public sector is also reflected by the organisational structure of the BIPA, with one of the directorates being tasked with responsibilities for developing and executing such training programmes (i.e. Directorate of Leadership Development Programme) (BIPA, 2010b). Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2-5, the attention given to such training programmes is clear in the chart of the programmes currently provided by the BIPA (BIPA, 2012a). As illustrated in the chart, leadership programmes take up a large portion of the BIPA's agenda of programmes.

In targeting executive employees, the institute provides tailored workshops, seminars and training programmes. In the course of the past few years, two executive training programmes have become fixtures on the BIPA's schedule of programmes and courses. The first leadership programme is the *"Preparation for Top Management Programme"*. As its title implies, this programme aims to prepare future leaders of the public sector by equipping potential candidates at Section Head and Section Chief levels for senior executive positions, specifically, for Director level positions. The programme aims to develop the leadership skills in these potential candidates. The programme was launched in 2010 as a joint initiative between the BIPA and the University of Oxford (Said Business School). The programme is divided into five modules over a period of four months, and the lecturers are a group of experts and advisors from the teaching facility of Said Business School. These modules focus on issues related to the strategic Vision 2030, improvement of public sector services, planning, creativity and financial skills. Since the introduction of this programme, one cohort has graduated (BIPA, 2012b).

FIGURE 2-5: TRAINING PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY BIPA¹

The second programme targeting executive employees is the “*Induction to Senior Civil Service Program*”. This programme aims to develop the capabilities of newly appointed directors (acting directors)² and to prepare them for their new positions. The programme introduces these executive employees to the requirements of the director position in the public sector, and helps them to perform their duties efficiently. The programme was accredited internationally by the National College of the Government in the United Kingdom. The programme is divided into eight modules over a nine month period. These modules cover, among other issues, strategic planning, customer care, skills in dealing with the media and public finance management. Among the lecturers in this programme, a number of ministers and heads of authorities are invited to share with the trainees

¹ The chart is adopted from BIPA (2012).

² As stated earlier, according to the new amendments to the Executive Regulations, Directors are appointed to the position directly; and thus, there is no assessment period via appointment as Acting Director. Nevertheless, the official publications have not yet been updated.

their practical and scientific expertise. Since the introduction of the programme in 2009 and up until 2011, four cohorts have graduated (BIPA, 2012). Recently, as stated earlier in the Executive Employees Appointments subsection (p. 23), the CSB made appointment to Director Positions conditional on the successful completion of this programme. This implies that potential candidates for Director Positions are nominated to attend this course before the appointment decision is made.

2.4.6.3 National Audit Court (NAC)

To supplement the constitutional institutions of the state, the National Audit Court (NAC) was established in 2002 as a body that would be financially and administratively independent from the legislative and executive authorities. Initially, the NAC was assigned the auditing of financial records of public sector organisations in terms of regularity and performance. Recently, the role of NAC was amended to embrace administrative audit tasks via Royal Decree No. (49) of 2010 (NAC, 2011).

Accordingly, the organisational structure of NAC was adjusted to include these expansions in its role. Thus, in addition to the hierarchal structure for the Regularity and Performance Audits, which has existed since the establishment of the organisation, a parallel hierarchal structure was created to perform administrative audits.

Nevertheless, the administrative auditing role of the NAC is not clear. There are no publically available official documents specifying the adopted regulations, standards, procedures or even the scope of the administrative audit. Furthermore, the strategic objectives of the organisations, as stated in the official website of NAC, do not identify such administrative roles within the organisation. In addition, the annual audit report of 2011 merely focused on the financials aspect of the auditing process. The report made no reference to administrative audits.

2.5 BAHRAINI CONTEXT ANALYSIS: THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE STATE'S REFORM PROJECT FOR THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

This section analyses the Bahraini context to provide a view of the current state of affairs and to shed light on the potential sources of the influential factors acting upon the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector. Specifically, the context analysis focuses on political,

economic, social and cultural issues that emerged after the commencement of the State's Reforms Project in 2002, which may have an impact on the way in which succession processes are executed in the Bahraini public sector.

Therefore, this section starts by providing a brief account of the State's Reform Project. Then, it highlights the political, economic, social and cultural ramifications of this reform project for the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector.

2.5.1 The State's Reform Project

In 1975, a conflict between the government and the National Assembly occurred concerning the "*National Security Law*". Menissi (2003) noted that, due to this conflict, the late Emir used his constitutional powers to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint a new government. However, no election was held to form a new National Assembly as specified in the Constitution. Moreover, some of the Articles of the Constitution were disabled and strict measures were implemented to prevent the political opposition from rebelling. Consequently, the opposition went underground and unrest surfaced from time to time, particularly during the mid 1990s (Menissi, 2003).

In March 1999, the Crown Prince succeeded the late Emir. Even though the opposition had lost momentum on the streets in the previous two years, the new Emir faced an enormous burden, as the roots of the troubles were still alive and vigorous. As gestures of good intentions to ease the political tension, the new Emir released the leaders of the political opposition in July 1999, issued a general amnesty freeing all those who had been criminalized under the National Security Law and invited all exiles to return to Bahrain. In addition, major amendments to the laws were executed, such as the abolishment of the National Security Law and ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Conventions Against Torture (Coleman, 2012; Menissi, 2003).

In a public speech on 3 October 2000, the new Emir announced his wish to take on a wide-ranging reform project to put Bahrain back on track and to end the Constitutional dilemma created by the cessation of the National Assembly. This was followed by a national dialogue to draft a National Charter of Action. In February 2001, Bahrainis voted on the draft in a general referendum. The

overwhelming majority of the Bahrainis endorsed the draft, and the National Charter of Action became the general framework for the upcoming reforms ((Menissi, 2003, Coleman, 2012).

According to the National Charter of Action, Bahrain became a Constitutional Monarchy headed by H.M. the King. In addition, the charter affirmed the constitutional principle of the separation between the executive, legislature and judiciary powers. The legislative system was organised in a bicameral National Assembly consisting of the *Nuwab Council* (a Representative Council made up of 40 directly elected members) and the *Shura Council* (a Consultative Council made up of 40 members appointed by H.M. the King). The executive branch is headed by H.M the King, with the Prime Minister and the Ministers appointed by Royal Decrees. The judicial system was also modified to incorporate new instruments to facilitate the state's reforms, such as the establishment of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the Constitutional Court and the Attorney General and the public prosecution system. In general, the National Charter of Action was a breakthrough in dealing with the constitutional dilemma; nevertheless, major constitutional amendments and legal frameworks adjustments were still needed in order for the National Charter of Action to take effect (Menissi, 2003).

To achieve this end, the Emir (who later became king) appointed two committees, one to activate the National Charter of Action and the other to prepare the needed constitutional amendments. The first committee, the "National Charter of Action Activation Committee", was tasked with making the necessary adjustments to the governmental system in accordance with the frameworks established by the National Charter of Action. As a result, many immediate measures were taken to adjust the laws and regulations. For example, the country was divided into five governorates, each governorate containing ten constituencies. In addition, a new law was enacted to regulate the elections for the Nuwab Council (Menissi, 2003). The second committee, the "Committee for the Amendment of Constitutional Articles", was commissioned to put forward proposals for constitutional amendments. Menissi (2003) summarizes these amendments in four issues: (1) the position of H.M. the King at the helm of the political system; (2) the changes in the legislative branch in terms of configuration and legislative powers of the elected members in the National Assembly; (3) the mechanism for declaring the "State of National Safety" and (4) the autonomy of the Constitutional Supreme Court.

The political opposition disagreed with the content of these amendments and the mechanism used to amend the Constitution. They questioned the supremacy of the National Charter of Action over the Constitution of 1973 and insisted on the requirement specified in the Constitution for constitutional articles to be amended via the National Assembly. Nevertheless, the political leadership argued that the National Charter of Action was superior to the Constitution of 1973, as the Emir was thereby commissioned by the people to carry out the necessary actions to reform the state and restore democracy. In addition, the political leadership argued that the constitutional mechanism specified in the Constitution of 1973 was not applicable, as memberships of the National Assembly of 1973 had expired; and the number of available members of that National Assembly did not constitute the required percentage for amending the Constitution (Menissi, 2003). Despite this constitutional debate, both the political leadership and the opposition were keen to maintain the positive progress and avoid any unnecessary clashes. The opposition expressed their view publicly via press conferences, political forums and peaceful demonstrations. Nevertheless, the political leadership succeeded in containing this conflict and, eventually, in enacting the constitutional amendments in the Constitution of 2002 issued by the Emir on 14 February 2002.

Consequently, these amendments facilitated the launch of the State's Reform Project and paved the way for holding the elections for the Nuwab Council in October 2002. Although, some members of the opposition, who insisted on rejecting these constitutional amendments, did not participate in the Nuwab elections, the elections went smoothly and about 53% of the 242,449 eligible (male and female) voters participated (Menissi, 2003). This remarkable rate of participation in the elections demonstrated the Bahrainis' eagerness for the reforming the state and may also have been an indication of the public's support for the constitutional amendments.

Since then, many changes have occurred in Bahrain as a result of the State's Reform Project. However, the following subsections focus on the consequences of this reform project for the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector. Specifically, the focus is on those political, economic, social and cultural issues that are potential sources of the influential factors acting upon the succession process.

2.5.2 The Political Dimension: the Emergence of New Political Powers

The transition from an Emirate to a Constitutional Monarchy has changed Bahrain in many aspects, most noticeably in the political dimension. Since 1975, the government had controlled all the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary powers. However, the commencement of the State's Reform Project confined the government to its executive role, under the direct supervision of the elected members of the National Assembly. The members of the Nuwab Council were empowered to monitor and question the government's policies and performance. Due to these political changes, new power bases have emerged on the Bahraini scene in the last decade, which cannot be overlooked in an investigation of the influential factors acting upon the succession process.

2.5.2.1 The formation of Political Associations

Due to the overt and covert active political movements of the past decades, the Bahrainis' political orientations, to some degree, have been obvious (Jalal, 2007). Some Bahrainis remained affiliated with the nationalist, socialist and communist movements of the 1960s; others were keener on liberal Western views. However, the majority of Bahrainis embraced Islamic political orientations. Indeed, as demonstrated in the following part, the outcomes of the elections for the Nuwab Council of 2002, 2006 and 2010 support this notion.

The elections for the Nuwab Council of 2002 demonstrated very clear political polarisation in the candidates' alliances. Several Islamic civil society organisations and politically oriented groups formed, what was known later as, "*Political Associations*" in order to field candidates and organise election campaigns. For example, "*Al-Eslah Society*", which is a charitable Islamic (Sunni) organisation affiliated with the philosophy of the "*Muslim Brotherhood*", established a political wing named "*Al-Menber Islamic Association*". Other examples include "*Al-Asalah*", established by the "*Muslim Educational Society*" (Sunni), and "*Al-Wefaq*", established by the leaders of the "*Islamic Scholars Council*" (Shiite). In addition, other associations were established based on different political orientations, such as "*Wa'ad*" (socialist) and "*Al-Menbar Progressive Democratic Society*" (communism) (Jalal, 2007)¹.

¹ Additional information about the political associations is furnished in the following parts.

It is noteworthy that, according to the applicable laws and regulations in 2002, politically oriented organisations were prohibited. Nonetheless, in the spirit of that era, the government overlooked these practices. Moreover, these unofficial political associations continued to operate freely until the enactment of the Law No. (26) of 2005 regarding Political Associations. Under this law, Bahrainis can form and register political associations that function essentially as political parties. Moreover, the government is obliged to provide financial support to these registered associations based on the size of the association's general assembly. However, to prevent the infiltration of external influences, these associations are forbidden from accepting foreign funds.

2.5.2.2 The Outcomes of the Nuwab Council Elections

The elections for the Nuwab Council were held on the scheduled dates in 2002. The political opposition groups, led by Al-Wefaq (the major Islamic Shiite political association), boycotted the elections in 2002 in an act of rejection of the constitutional amendments. However, other Shiite political associations participated in the elections. According to the election officials, total participation in the 2002 elections was about 53%.

The outcomes of the 2002 elections showed the dominance of the Islamic political orientations among the Bahrainis. This is demonstrated by the formation of large Islamic political blocs on the Nuwab Council of 2002, as was documented in a special issue of Al-Wasat newspaper to mark the commencement of the fourth session of the first legislative term (supplement of issue No. 1122 dated 2 October 2005). According to this report, 19 out of the 40 members of the Nuwab Council were of Islamic political orientations. These 19 members formed three political blocs in the council; namely, the "*Islamic Bloc*" (Shiites, seven seats), "*Al-Menbar Bloc*" (Sunnis, seven seats) and "*Al-Asalah Bloc*" (Sunnis, five seats). However, the largest political bloc was the "*Independent Bloc*", which was composed of eight members who embraced various political views. Furthermore, the 2002 council witnessed the formation of the "*Democrats Bloc*" (leftist, three seats) and the "*Economists Bloc*" (Businessmen, three seats). The remaining seven members of the council were independents who chose not to join any political bloc.

However, with the participation of Al-Wefaq in the elections of 2006 and 2010, the dominance of the Nuwab Council by its Islamic groups became very evident. The members of the Nuwab

Council were divided into four political blocs, of which Al-Wefaq bloc was the largest, with 18 seats in the 2006 and 2010 councils. Al-Menbar and Al-Asalah political blocs both retained their seats on the 2006 council (seven and five seats respectively). The Independent bloc gained two additional seats in the 2006 council elections and became the second largest bloc in the council with ten seats. In the 2010 elections, Al-Menbar and Al-Asalah political blocs both lost seats to the Independent bloc and their representation shrank (to two and three seats respectively). Thus, the Independent bloc remained the second largest bloc after the 2010 council elections, with 17 seats. Table 2-2 illustrates the outcomes of the Nuwab Council elections of 2002, 2006 and 2010.

TABLE 2-2: THE OUTCOMES OF THE NUWAB COUNCIL ELECTIONS OF 2002, 2006 AND 2010¹

Political Blocs	2002	2006	2010
Al-Asalah	5	5	3
Al-Menbar Islamic Association	7	7	2
Al-Wefaq (Shiite)	Boycott	18	18
Democrats	3	0	0
Economists	3	0	0
Independent	8	10	17
Islamic (Shiite)	7	0	0

2.5.2.3 The Stances of the Major Political Blocs in Relation to the Government

As demonstrated above, four political blocs were the most stable over the last three legislative terms of the Nuwab Council, namely, Al-Asalah, Al-Menbar, Al-Wefaq and the Independent blocs. The first three political blocs represent registered political associations that were established based on clear political orientations. However, the Independent bloc emerged from the alliances of independent members after the elections and during the first session of each legislative term. According to Jalal (2007) and many other political journalists, the Independent bloc is always pro-government in its stance on council matters.

Furthermore, Al-Asalah is a pro-government political bloc, whose mother association has maintained a good relationship with the country's political leadership (Menissi, 2003; Monroe, 2012). According to the Salafi creed adopted by Al-Asalah Association, overt opposition to the

¹ The researcher obtained the figures for the political associations' seats on the Nuwab Council from Jalal (2007) and the official website of the Election Network in the Arabian World, <http://www.arabew.org>.

country's political leadership is undesirable behaviour in comparison to offering advice and consultation (Jalal, 2007; Monroe, 2012). In addition, Al-Menbar bloc is also considered a pro-government bloc (Menissi, 2003). As stated earlier, Al-Menbar Association is an offspring of Al-Eslah Society, which follows the Muslim Brotherhood's philosophy. Even though Muslim Brotherhood organisations in other Arab countries have clashed with the ruling regimes (e.g. in Egypt and Syria), Al-Eslah Society is very close to the ruling family in Bahrain (Menissi, 2003). In fact, the head of the society and its founding father in Bahrain is a member of the ruling family (Menissi, 2003).

However, Al-Wefaq bloc is often recognised as the opposition on the Nuwab Council (Menissi, 2003; Coleman, 2007; Jalal, 2007). Al-Wefaq Association was formed by returnees from exile. The founders of this political association have a long history of struggle with the government and form the core of the Shiite opposition (Menissi, 2003).

Despite the various political stances of these major blocs in the council in relation to the government, being part of the legislative power has facilitated interaction between these blocs and the government's officials. Moreover, the pragmatism in the political arena has encouraged these political blocs, and their mother associations, to seek power to fulfil their missions and political agendas. In addition, like other political blocs, the abovementioned four major political blocs in the council have the power to bargain for what they want and are pragmatic enough to cut deals with the government. This implies that these political associations, via their blocs in the Nuwab Council, have the potential to influence the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector. Indeed, on various occasions, the Bahraini press has claimed that these political associations have striven to gain more power by pushing for the recruitment and promotion of their followers in the public sector. For instance, according to Al-Wasat newspaper, there is an out of sight war between Al-Asalah and Al-Menbar associations over the positions in the Secretariat of the Nuwab Council (Mirza and Alaiwat, 2008).

2.5.3 The Economic Dimension: Public Administration Reforms in accordance with the Economic Vision 2030

Economic development is one of the strategic goals of the State's Reform Project. Accordingly, the Economic Development Board (EDB) was established to initiate economic reforms needed to complement the political reforms. Initially, the board was established as an advisory body for the government. Nonetheless, Royal Decree No. 31 of 2005 transformed the board to a powerful executive agency with an overall responsibility for formulating and overseeing the economic development strategy of Bahrain. The EDB derives its power from its board of directors, which is chaired by H.H. the Crown Prince. In addition, the EDB's board of directors includes four Deputies to the Prime Minister, two Personal Representatives of H.M. the King, 11 Ministers, the Governor of the Central Bank of Bahrain, the Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and nine leading executives from the private sector (EDB, 2008).

In order to fulfil its mission, in 2007 the EDB launched a unified vision of national strategies for economic growth, titled the Economic Vision 2030. This strategic vision of Bahrain provides a general policy agenda for the aspirations for the future, along with progress measurement indicators. One of the aspirations of the Economic Vision 2030 is to develop an effective and efficient system of government (EDB, 2007). Two of the other related objectives are relevant to the inquiry of the current research: the succession process for executive positions in the public sector. The first is enhancement of productivity in the public sector. For achieving this objective, the Economic Vision 2030 specifies four goals which the Bahraini government will strive to accomplish. These goals are as follows: transformation of HRM in the public sector, strengthening of the civil service regulations, review and adjustment of government organisations and processes to streamline them and increase transparency, and establishment of a performance-management system that sets clear targets for measuring and linking the performance of the employees and the organisations and provides comparable rewards. Furthermore, the Economic Vision 2030 specifies two measurement indicators, namely, the public sector wage bill as a share of GDP and World Bank ranking for government effectiveness and accountability (EDB, 2007).

The second objective defined by the Economic Vision 2030 for achieving an efficient and effective government is to establish a predictable, transparent and fairly enforced regulatory system that

facilitates economic growth. In this regard, the following four goals were highlighted: high quality and consistent regulation, enforcement of regulations through inspection and stronger consequence management, a policy of zero tolerance towards corruption and favouritism, and upgrading of the judicial system. For the purpose of progress measurement, the Regulatory Quality Ranking of the World Bank was highlighted (EDB, 2007).

In the past few years, the EDB has accomplished some progress toward the objectives of the Economic Vision 2030 as a result of various initiatives¹. Focusing on the abovementioned two objectives for an effective and efficient government, the EDB established a central governmental agency for public administration training, BIPA. In addition, as illustrated earlier, Ali (2010) highlighted the government's efforts, which were initiated by the EDB, to reform the civil service regulations. Taking into consideration the powers of the EDB to influence the public sector and the clear aims of its strategic vision for the Bahraini public sector, the EDB has the potential to influence the succession process for executive positions.

2.5.4 The Social Dimension: Increased Participation by Bahrain's Citizens in Public Administration

Since 2000, due to the new direction of the political leadership, the citizens of Bahrain have played an active role in administering public affairs. In addition to political participation as elected members of the Nuwab Council, Bahrainis now are more involved in administering their municipal services. In 2002 and the subsequent years, Municipal Elections have been held to select ten members for each of the five Municipal Councils. These five councils supervise the municipal functions and services provided by the government.

Another indicator of the increase in citizens' participation in public administration is the proliferation of civil society organisations. The number of civil society organisations has grown rapidly during the last decade. Menissi (2003) reported that in 2001 registered civil society organisations numbered 231. By 2012, this number had jumped to 573 (MSD, 2012). Such civil society organisations are one of the mechanisms by which the public can contribute to public administration.

¹ For detailed information about the progress made, refer to the Annual Operating Reviews provided by the official website of the EDB (<http://www.bahrainedb.com/annual-operating-review.aspx>).

For example, focusing on those civil society organisations that are potential sources of influence on the succession process, there are 65 organisations categorised as professional associations, including the Bahrain Medical Society and Bahrain Society of Engineers. Since trade unions are not allowed in the public sector¹, such professional associations play an important role in representing the professionals in the public sector organisations. Indeed, some of these professional associations have played a part in the development of professionals' cadres, as reported by the officials of these associations and the CSB in the local newspapers². The joint-committees formed by the government for establishing new professional cadres for doctors, engineers and nurses have included officials from the relevant professional associations. Another example illustrating the role played by these professional associations in representing public servants is the lawsuit filed by Bahrain Medical Society on behalf of public sector consultant doctors opposed to Ministry of Health regulation of the fees they charged in their private clinics. Thus, taking into consideration the roles of these professional associations in addressing career related issues as well in representing public servants, the potential for these associations to influence the succession process cannot be overlooked.

Some of the Bahraini civil society organisations are also concerned with improving women's status in society. There are 22 organisations categorised as women associations (MSD, 2012). Some of these women's associations focus on improving women's status by empowering them to gain leading positions in the public sector. This goal is well documented as an objective of some of these associations and made clear in their programmes and publications. For example, one of the strategic goals of the Bahrain Women Union, which is a union made up of 12 women's associations, is "Empowering women to participate actively in the legislative, executive and judicial branches." (BWU, 2006, p. 5). This goal has been manifested in several programmes carried out by the union and the affiliated women's associations, such as workshops and training programmes directed to prepare women to assume leading positions in the public sector.

¹ While Royal Decree No (33) of 2002 permitted the formation of trade unions and authorised the public servants to join such unions, the right to form unions in the public sector was not made clear. Civil Service Circulars No (1) of 2003 and No (3) of 2007 clarified that no unions are allowed in the public sector.

² For example, refer to the report titled "CSB puts forward the Engineering Cadre to the Government" in Al-Wasat Newspaper, issue No. 1367 on the 4th of June 2006 (p. 9).

Furthermore, three officials of these women's associations were appointed to the board of directors of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) (SCW, 2005). The SCW was established as an advisory body to assist the government in drawing up policies on issues concerning women. The SCW is chaired by the wife of H.M. the King and it consists of 16 members. The main role assigned to the SCW is to propose public policies to the government on issues relevant to women and recommend amendments to existing legislation (SCW, 2005). One of the first accomplishments of the SCW was the development of the National Strategy for Women, which is a national plan to review the situation of women and tackle the problems they face. One of the aims of this national plan was to place women in decision-making positions (SCW, 2005). Accordingly, several projects were implemented to empower women to assume leading positions in the public sector. For example, in addition to training programmes directed to prepare women for such positions, 16 Equal-opportunity Units were established in various ministries and governmental agencies to monitor the organisation's efforts in providing females with the training and opportunities they needed to progress in their careers. Another project is the Award of Her Highness Sheikha Sabika for Empowering Bahraini Women, which is awarded to those organisations that achieve remarkable progress in empowering women. In the past decade, the number of females in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the Kingdom has increased markedly. Focusing on the executive branch, by 2010, three women had been appointed as Ministers (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, and Ministry of Culture), 27% of the executive positions were held by women, while there were three women at Undersecretary level and 37 women at Assistant Undersecretary level (CIO, 2010). This implies that the SCW and the women's associations are potential sources of influence on the succession process.

2.5.5 The Cultural Dimension: Elevation of the Ceiling of Freedom

One of the consequences of the State's Reform Project was the remarkable expansion of the citizens' freedoms. For example, amendments of the constitution have given citizens the right to file lawsuits at the Constitutional Court against any law or regulation that is incompatible with the Constitution. Furthermore, citizens can now file lawsuits against the government, which was not previously possible. Another example is the expansion of freedom of expression. The National Charter of Action and the enacted constitutional amendments affirmed the rights of the people to

express their opinions freely, which included peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins and strikes. Thus, the legislation was amended accordingly. One of these amendments to the law concerned publications. In 2002, a new Publication Law was promulgated and many of the previous constraints were abolished. As a result, the number of Arabic newspapers increased dramatically, from two in 2000 to seven in 2010. In addition, this growth was replicated among other types of publications, such as books, magazines and other specialist periodicals. Moreover, due to these amendments in the Publication Law, the press are able to address sensitive issues, which were taboos previously. Al-Fadhel (2009), in her study of the discourse of pre and post reforms in Bahraini newspapers, affirmed this notion by stating:

“The press has brought about enhancing the margin of freedom of expression which is depicted in both coverage and discourse of newspapers ... A wider range of topics and issues, some of which are quite sensitive, are now addressed with relative transparency.”
(p. 1)

Such cultural changes regarding the freedom of expression may have an impact on the way in which the public sector is administrated. Therefore, an investigation of factors influencing the succession process for executive positions should not overlook these issues, which could be reflected in the impact of the newspapers on the succession process.

2.5.6 Summary of the Consequences of the State’s Reforms Project for the Succession Process

As illustrated in the previous parts of this section, the State’s Reforms Project brought about many changes to the Bahraini public administration. With regard to the current research inquiry, the State’s Reform Project reforms strived to improve the public administration via the EDB’s initiatives, such as the establishment of new governmental bodies and improvements to civil service legislation, which were highlighted by Ali (2010). In addition, the State’s reform Project facilitated the emergence of new power bases (political associations) and empowered the civil society (professional and women associations) and the press.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The current and the following chapter, Chapter 4, review the relevant literature to determine the status of knowledge with regard to the research inquiry, *how the various influential stakeholders and context-related factors influence the succession processes*¹. Specifically, the literature review aims to facilitate answering the research questions by defining the frame of reference of the succession process, highlighting the key differentiating aspects of the process and revealing the existing gaps in the body of knowledge with regard to influential factors acting upon the succession process. To accomplish these aims, the literature review is divided into two chapters, Chapter 3: The Succession Process and Chapter 4: The Influential Factors Acting upon the Succession Process.

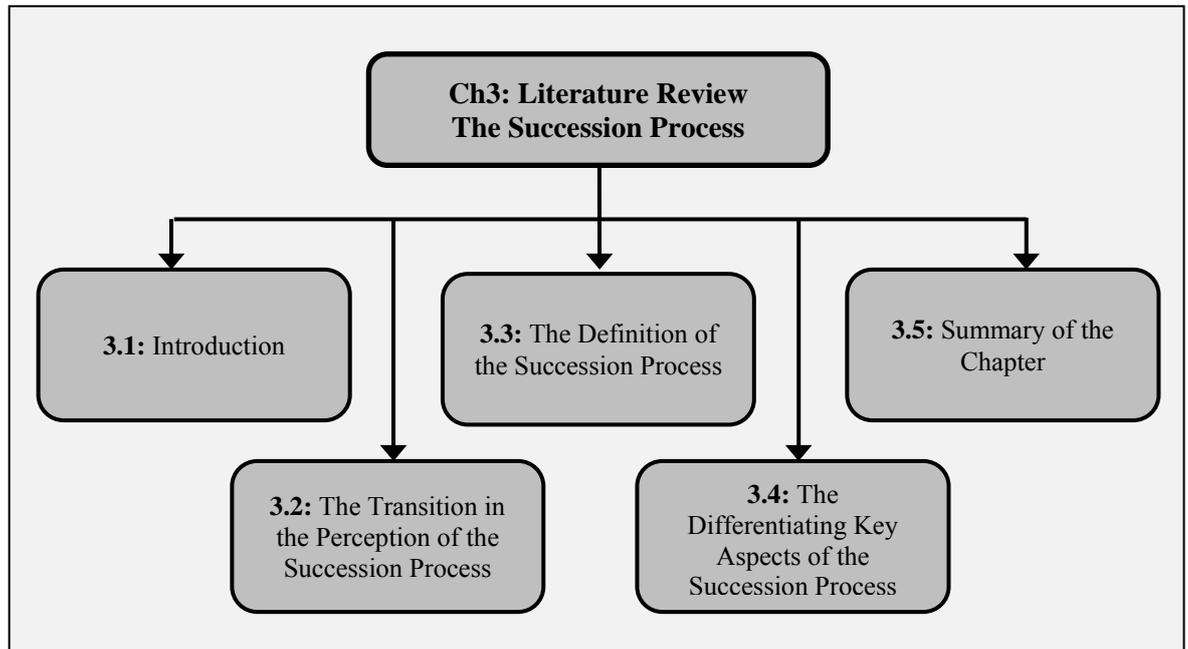
As a starting point for the literature review process, the researcher conducted a comprehensive search for literature review articles. The researcher searched Emerald Management Reviews, JSTOR, ProQuest, Sciencedirect, SAGE, SpringerLink, and Swetswise databases using “succession and review” or “succession and literature” as keywords. The search generated mixed results from which only eight review articles were found to be relevant to the topic under consideration in this research. These review articles were Kohler and Strauss (1983), Handler (1994), Kesner and Sebora (1994), Dunemann and Barrett (2004), Giambatista et al. (2005), Bisbee and Miller (2006), Ip and Jacobs (2006) and Brooking (2007). Based on these literature review articles and a more general search via Google Scholar search engine, the relevant literature was identified.

As illustrated in Figure 3-1 in the following page, the literature review in this chapter is organised into three themes. Following this introductory section, the second section provides a brief account

¹ Note that, due to the deficiency in the literature concerning the study of the succession phenomenon in the public sector (which was highlighted in Chapter 1), the literature review in Chapters 3 and 4 includes those studies that addressed the phenomenon in the private sector.

for the transition of the perception of the succession phenomenon from one of an instantaneous and discrete event to that of succession as an evolving process. The third section presents the adopted frame of reference for the succession process. The fourth section determines the key differentiating aspects of the succession process and the last section presents a summary of the literature review undertaken in this chapter.

FIGURE 3-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 3



3.2 THE TRANSITION IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

This section provides an account of the transition in the perception of the succession phenomenon. The first part of this section highlights the perception of the phenomenon as an instantaneous and discrete event in the early studies, whilst the second subsection sheds light on the emergence of the perception of the phenomenon as an evolving process in the late 1970s.

3.2.1 The Instantaneous and Discrete Event Perception of the Succession Phenomenon

Focused on the consequences of the phenomenon on organisations, early succession studies introduced and approached the phenomenon as an instantaneous and discrete event represented by the replacement of key personnel. To illustrate this perception of the phenomenon, theories that were particularly developed to address the succession phenomenon in organisational contexts are

reviewed; namely, the “Vicious cycle (Circle) Theory”, the “Common Sense Theory” and the “Ritual Scapegoating Theory”.

3.2.1.1 The Vicious Cycle (Circle) Theory

Grusky’s (1960) exploration of factors likely to determine the consequences of succession, led to the presentation of his first succession theory, the vicious cycle. Based on his review of earlier succession studies (i.e. Gouldner (1954), McCleery (1957), Dale (1957) and Whyte (1948)) and despite his awareness of the lack of reliable tools for measuring the impact of succession phenomena on organisations, Grusky concluded that succession tends to be a disruptive process that affects all organisations. He stated, “Although the problems of reliably measuring the impact of succession on formal organisations have hardly begun to be solved, the evidence that the process promotes instability appears to be consistent” (Grusky, 1960, p. 106).

He attributed the disruptive and destabilising nature of the phenomenon to its role in setting the stage for the development of new policies, upsetting the existing norms of the organisation and promoting changes in formal and informal interrelationships among the organisations’ members. Although he recognised the benefits associated with the phenomenon, such as the enhancement of an organisation’s adaptation to inconstant internal demands and environmental pressures through the introduction of new blood, he asserted that the resulting conflict and lower member morale diminish such benefits and negatively influence the organisation’s effectiveness, at least in the short term, triggering other succession events. Thus, Grusky’s vicious cycle theory proposed that frequent successions are disruptive to the organisation’s cohesiveness and effectiveness and lower the organisation’s performance level, which in turn leads to another succession event. It is noteworthy that, according to Rowe *et al.* (2005), relatively few studies have backed up the vicious cycle theory.

Focusing on the consequences of the phenomenon, Grusky seemed to view succession as an event or a sequence of key personnel replacement events, though he often referred to it as the “succession process”. Moreover, he implicitly indicated the sequential nature of succession events by saying “In any event, replacement of one established member of the company means that the organisation will probably be confronted in a short time with more lower-level replacements. The process of

succession therefore tends to ramify well beyond the integration of a single person into the social structure of the organisation”, referring to Gouldner’s term “strategic replacements” (1960, p. 109). In addition and without any further clarification on such a frame of reference, Grusky did not provide an operational definition for the “succession event”.

3.2.1.2 The Common-Sense Theory

Common-Sense Theory, which was also founded by Gursky (1963), simply proposed that successful succession leads to higher organisational performance. In this study, Gursky examined two hypotheses: the rate of succession of sports clubs’ field managers and the organisational effectiveness level (the number of games won by the sports clubs) are negatively correlated, and also that changes in the succession rate and organisational effectiveness are negatively correlated. In this study, Gursky defined succession by the number of field manager replacements. The study’s conclusion supported the hypothesised negative correlation between the succession rate and the organisational effectiveness. However, despite Gursky’s awareness of data limitations in determining the primary independent variable and the possibility of a reciprocal effect, he proposed a common sense explanation that favoured organisational effectiveness as the cause but not the effect. Kesner and Sebor (1994) sum up the common sense theory main proposition by stating:

"Common sense, suggested that performance improved following succession. In other words, when replacing a CEO, decision-makers would choose someone with the expertise and experience to enhance firm performance" (1994, p. 331).

While Kesner and Sebor (1994) considered the common sense theory a counter to the vicious cycle theory, Rowe *et al.* (2005) stated that it was a straw man argument for Grusky's earlier theory. Rowe *et al.* (2005) stated, "He [Gursky] then quickly refuted this argument in favour of his vicious-circle theory". Interestingly, Grusky’s argument for favouring the vicious cycle theory over the common sense theory is based on the influence of a contextual factor he introduced as *clientele support*, which reaches beyond the boundaries of the baseball team’s organisational entity and into its external environment. His proposed a conceptual scheme for analysing interrelations between the succession rate and organisational effectiveness, named “organisational factors in team performance”, included clientele support among other organisational factors. According to Grusky,

only two links of the previous scheme were supported by the study findings: a negative correlation between rate of succession and effectiveness and a positive correlation between clientele support and effectiveness. He explained the importance of clientele support by linking it to team morale and effectiveness. In addition, he argued that clientele support, mediated through managerial role strain and represented by clientele attendance, could produce strong pressure for managerial change when organisational effectiveness is low by affecting profitability and influencing team effectiveness and morale. These managerial changes, consequently, lead to lower effectiveness levels, creating the vicious cycle (Grusky, 1963).

The Common-Sense Theory, like Grusky's earlier theory, viewed succession as an event, focusing on the consequences of the succession on the organisational performance. Nonetheless, the presence of contextual influences is very clear in its underpinning argument. Rowe *et al.* (2005) stated, "Although Grusky's (1963) common-sense theory was a straw-man argument, a long history of research on organisational adaptation provides a rich explanation for why the replacement of a poorly performing leader should lead to improved organisational performance" (pp. 199 and 200).

3.2.1.3 The Ritual Scapegoating Theory

The last theory of the three succession theories is the Ritual Scapegoating, which was presented by Gamson and Scotch (1964) in their critique of Grusky's (1960, 1963) work. They criticised Grusky's studies in arguing that despite its use of innovative and resourceful sources of data for comparative organisational analysis, Grusky's analysis failed to present more than an obvious correlation between low-performance organisations and succession rate. In addition to Grusky's previous explanations for such correlated relationships, they proposed a third explanation that argued that the field manager's influence on team performance is insignificant compared to the general manager's influence. In this argument, Gamson and Scotch (1964) stressed the role of the general manager in forming the team and selecting team players whom that field manager has to deal with; this factor, according to the authors, is the main determinant of team performance. Therefore, the replacement of the field manager, the authors argued, is best described as a scapegoat ritual performed by those responsible, the general managers (Gamson and Scotch, 1964), to avoid pressures from outside (Kesner and Sebor, 1994).

In this proposition, the succession phenomenon was not only viewed as an event, but also it was implicitly indicated that succession is an instantaneous event for evading the heat caused by poor performance. Despite the fact that Gamson and Scotch were unable to demonstrate supportive results for their theory (Kesner and Sebor, 1994), according to Rowe et al. (2005), the Ritual Scapegoating Theory has found support from a number of subsequent studies.

3.2.1.4 The Shortcomings of the Instantaneous and Discrete Event Perception of the Succession Phenomenon

As illustrated above, the three succession theories conceived the phenomenon as a discrete event happening at a single point of time and represented by the replacement of key personnel. Consequently, many of the subsequent scholars who focused on the antecedents and/or consequences of the phenomenon adopted such a perception of the succession phenomenon. This perception of the phenomenon dominated the early succession studies (Friedman and Olk, 1995). However, by adopting this approach, these early studies failed to capture the phenomenon in full. Datta et al. (2003) affirmed this notion by stating:

“Prior research on the performance consequences of CEO succession has typically focused on the event of succession. However, the event of succession does not fully capture the succession phenomenon.” (p. 101)

One of the main aspects of the phenomenon, which the instantaneous and discrete event perception of the phenomenon fails to capture fully, is the time dimension. According to Kohler and Strauss (1983) in their review of the early succession studies, most of these early studies neglected to consider how the succession phenomenon evolves over time. However, time is a vital factor for investigating the consequences of the phenomenon as distinctions can be made between short-term and long-term consequences. According to Hughes *et al.* (2009), the fact that studies of the succession consequences have rarely drawn such distinctions has contributed to the contradictory findings in this line of studies. Such shortcomings not only highlight the importance of time consideration in the examination of the consequences of the succession, but also highlight the significance of time as a variable in investigating the succession phenomenon as a whole. Moreover, this failure of the instantaneous and discrete event perception to recognise the time dimension of the phenomenon becomes critical whenever succession is viewed as a means to pass

on knowledge and power from the incumbent to the successor. As scholars became aware of the significance of the time dimension in understanding the succession phenomenon and its consequences, a new perception, which viewed the phenomenon as an evolving process, began to emerge.

3.2.2 The Transition in the Perception of the Phenomenon: Succession as an Evolving Process

In the late 1970s, a new line of research was emerging in succession studies, focusing on the role of the organisation's board of directors in CEO succession decisions (Kesner and Sehora, 1994). These studies triggered other inquiries concerning how the succession phenomenon evolves over time. For example, Redlich (1977) and Greenblatt (1978) investigated the stages of the succession process¹. Also, Gephart (1978) conducted an ethnography study to examine the process of the status transformation involved in the phenomenon. In these studies, scholars perceived the succession phenomenon as an evolving process. In addition, studies addressing career dynamics and transition, such as the work of Schein (1978) and Louis (1980), shared a similar perception of the succession phenomenon (Kesner and Sehora, 1994).

Since then, the succession process has become one of the themes for researching the succession phenomenon in organisational contexts (Kesner and Sehora, 1994). Four lines of inquiry can be identified within this theme. The first line of inquiry is "succession planning", where scholars examine the degree and nature of planning the process. The second is focused on the systematic classifications of the stages of the succession process; while the third explores the time boundaries of the succession process (Kesner and Sehora, 1994). The fourth and final line of inquiry is concerned with the succession process typologies. In the following subsection, some of the studies representing the first three lines of inquiry are illustrated. However, studies addressing the succession process typologies are presented in the fourth section, where the key differentiating aspects of the process are discussed.

¹ Both Redlich (1977) and Greenblatt (1978) were cited in Kesner & Sehora (1994).

3.2.2.1 Succession planning

The significance of succession planning to the outcome of the phenomenon was highlighted by early succession scholars such as Christensen (1953) and Trow (1961). Nevertheless, succession planning only started to be tackled as a research topic in the 1980s. Kesner and Sebra (1994), in their review of the literature, highlighted the emergence of this line of inquiry and stated, “Perhaps because it was a logical offshoot of twenty years of investigation, a number of researchers began to consider the impact of both the degree of planning and the nature of the planning process” (p. 359). According to the authors, some scholars, such as Mahler (1980) and Tashakori (1980), reemphasised the need for succession planning. Others, such as Kesner (1989), posited how to execute succession planning by emphasising its links with organisational strategy or, in the cases of such as Hall (1986) and Gabarro (1988), with career development and learning.

In addition, some scholars investigated the procedural aspects of succession planning. For example, Rhodes and Walker (1984, cited in Kesner and Sebra, 1994) identified four approaches to succession planning, namely, informal, decentralised, centralised and integrated. Meanwhile, Brady and Helmich (1984) proposed an executive succession planning process comprising ten phases. Also, in relation to the process of succession planning, Brady et al. (1982) noted its limited implementation in the real world. Furthermore, according to Vancil (1987), succession planning often rests in the hands of the office incumbent.

Since the 1980s, succession planning has become, and continues to be, one of the major themes in the succession line of studies (Kesner and Sebra, 1994; Ip and Jacobs, 2006). The emphasis on the significance of succession planning in ensuring the continuity and prosperity of organisations is still evident in the contemporary literature. Take, for example, Sharma et al. (2003), Rothwell (2005) and Motwani et al. (2006). Moreover, the topic of succession planning has received considerable attention in studies on family-owned businesses.

Nevertheless, Ip and Jacobs (2006), in their review of the succession planning literature, highlighted the lack of consensus regarding how to plan for succession. They stated, despite the abundance of advice in the literature on how succession planning should be tackled, “The reality is, however, that it is difficult to discern any general consensus, and thus to ascertain a precise,

wholesome approach to succession planning.” (p. 337). In addition, the authors reemphasised the lack of planning for succession in reality and highlighted some of the obstacles that impede the application of succession planning within organisations. One of these obstacles is the highly complicated and uncertain nature of conventional succession planning, which is “bureaucratic, inflexible, focused on hypothetical situations, and use succession and replacement charts” (p. 336). However, according to Clutterbuck (2012), the main problem in the adopted approaches to succession planning is the oversimplified perception of the phenomenon. He stated:

“A key part of the problem is that most of the assumptions about succession and talent derive from a simple, linear systems perspective. Yet we are dealing here with complex, adaptive systems, which are essentially uncontrollable, but which can be influenced.” (p. 4)

Accordingly, this suggests that to improve succession planning, the oversimplified perception of the phenomenon needs to be abandoned. In other words, a comprehensive awareness of how the succession phenomenon evolves is needed along with identification of the factors influential in shaping it, which is the aim of the current research.

3.2.2.2 Succession Process Stages

In the second line of succession process inquiry, scholars strived to classify, systematically, the stages of the succession process. Some scholars focused on identifying the sequential process through which the succession phenomenon unfolds. For example, Redlich (1977) described seven stages for the succession process, namely, anticipation, appointment, inauguration, honeymoon, assertion, working through and new equilibrium. Greenblatt (1978) highlighted four stages: anticipation, honeymoon, crises, and equilibrium. Also, the ethnographical study by Gephart (1978) identified five stages in the succession process as a status degradation process. Gephart’s (1978) five stages are as follows: establishing succession as a problem at hand, interpreting the facts, what next if, accomplishing the status change of the actor to be succeeded, and selecting a successor. Moreover, Gordon and Rosen (1981b) highlighted two stages in distinguishing the pre and post arrival stages. Gilmore and McCann (1983, cited in Kesner & Sebor, 1994), identified four succession stages: negotiation, entry, initiatives, and pattern setting. Vancil (1987) described the succession process as a drama played in three sequential acts: prologue, the selection of an heir

apparent, and the stepping down of the predecessor. In addition, other scholars classified the stages of the succession process based on the decisions made over the course of the phenomenon. For example, Friedman (1986) presented a four-stage model for the succession process. In this model, the succession process was presented as sequence of decisions concerning establishing the need for the succession event, determining the selection criteria, selecting the candidates, and choosing among these candidates.

In addition to those who described the stages of the succession process in a general context, other scholars focused on stages of the succession process in the context of family-owned businesses. For instance, Handler (1990) presented a three-stage model in his proposed founder-successor mutual-role adjustment theory. In this theory, Handler (1990) highlighted the progression of the successor's role in the family-owned business as pre-entry and personal development, business involvement, and leadership succession phases. Also, Murray (2003) conducted a longitudinal case study on the succession transition process in family enterprises, highlighting the sequence of phases in a transition cycle. Freiling and Gersch (2009) presented a three phase succession process in family firms that included pre, during, post ownership/leadership transfer phases.

In addition, some scholars focused on the stages of particular succession process types. For example, Ashcraft (1999) described a unique succession process in the case of the office incumbent departing for a long period of maternity leave. The author called this process a temporary executive succession and identified four stages, namely, anticipation, vacillation, showdown and limbo. Another study focusing on classifying the stages of a particular succession process is that of Zhang and Rajagopalan (2004). In this study, the authors focused on the relay succession process, which they defined as the process for identification and potential appointment to CEO of the predecessor's heir apparent within the organisation. Adopting an organisational learning and adaptation perspective to view the succession process, the authors differentiated between two phases in the relay succession process: the pre-designation phase and the grooming phase. According to the authors, in the first phase, the organisation evaluates the qualifications of the available candidates within the organisation in light of key internal and external contingencies in order to decide whether or not to designate one of them as an heir apparent. However, in the second

phase of the process the organisation decides whether or not to promote the heir apparent to the position after providing him/her with the opportunity to acquire and enhance his/her position-specific knowledge and develop broader leadership skills.

Whilst some scholars explored the entire succession process, others narrowed their studies to investigate certain parts of the process. For example, focusing on the succession process post replacement of the office incumbent, Kelly (1980) described successor behaviour during the succession transition period for new CEOs in four stages. These stages are moving cautiously and informally in establishing authority, changing the infrastructure to gain control of the organisation before tackling strategic issues, creating management teams and having a honeymoon period before becoming accountable for the problems of the past. Gabarro (1979) was another scholar who focused on the succession transition period, and he claimed that work relationships among superiors and subordinates develop through an evolutionary process which includes four stages: orientation, exploration, testing, and stabilisation. In a later study, Gabarro (1985) stated that taking charge of a new position is a process that involves a series of alternating phases of intense learning and action for managers, which is composed of five stages: taking hold, immersion, reshaping, consolidation, and refinement.

All of the abovementioned studies described and classified the stages of the succession process as a sequential linear process, with each stage leading to another. However, succession is a complex phenomenon. Scholars, as well as practitioners, are in agreement about the complexity involved in the succession phenomenon. Indeed, this notion about the complexity of the phenomenon is frequently highlighted in reviews of succession literature. For example, Kesner and Seborá described succession as “an enigmatic and complicated event” (p. 359), whilst Giambatista et al. reinforced this notion of the complexity of the phenomenon in stating, “In our view, the succession event is a result of the interplay of several complex factors that unfold over a period of time starting well before the actual event.” (p. 696). Therefore, describing the process by which succession unfolds as a simple linear process is inadequate. Wheeler (2008) criticised this approach to studying the succession process, asserting, “Most studies on succession segment the succession process and treat succession as a linear, phased process. Succession, like many organizational

processes, is messy, complex and dynamic.” (p. 4). In addition, Giambatista et al. (2005) strongly rejected such oversimplified notions about the succession phenomenon by stating, “Most importantly, our review suggests that simplistic notions of succession need to be discarded.” (p. 987).

Thus, taking into consideration this limitation in the succession process line of studies, there is a need to reconsider the approach for investigating the succession process, to recognise the complexity involved in the phenomenon. By explaining how the various influential stakeholders and context-related factors influence the succession process, the current research aims to enhance our understanding of the succession process and our awareness of the complexity involved.

3.2.2.3 The timespan of the succession process

In the third line of succession process inquiry, scholars strived to identify the time boundaries for the succession process. As stated earlier, identifying the time boundaries of the phenomenon is crucial for investigating its consequences on the various organisational aspects. Initially, general statements were made to indicate the timespan of the succession process. For instance, Pickhardt (1981), in his study of the problems posed by new leadership promotion and recruitment, stated that such organisational changes take from one to three years to complete. In addition, Kinzer (1982, cited in Kohler & Strauss, 1983) affirmed that a new CEO needs two to three years to get a firm grip on the reins of an organisation. These general statements about the time boundaries of the succession process encouraged other scholars to focus their attention on this issue.

One of the earliest researchers to consider the timespan of the succession process was Hashemi (1983). From her in-depth interviews with hospital executives, she identified three potential starting points for the succession process; namely, when the executive learned of position, was offered the position, or started in the position. Most of her 20 respondents indicated that succession starts when the position is offered. In terms of the completion of the succession process, the interview data offered nine ending points. Despite the scattered responses shown in the data, Heshemi (1983) stated that “The most frequent marker of completion was when the executive had established relationships with the key people in top and middle management levels” (p. 41). Furthermore, it was clear that the data show equal marking for two ending points: “when the respondent had

established relationships with top and middle management executives” and “when the respondent felt comfortable in the new position”. Both of these ending points were emphasised by the responses of five out of the 18 respondents¹. Despite this finding, according to Hashemi (1983), the duration of the succession process is 0.5 - 24 months.

Strauss and Kohler (1983) also investigated the duration of the succession process. According to the responses of 19 health care organisation executives, the succession process starts from one month to 13 months prior to the first day on the job. According to Strauss and Kohler (1983), the starting point of the process for some executives is indicated by institutional variables such as position vacancy. However, other executives specified individual variables as triggering the process, such as dissatisfaction with the previous job or the offer of a new job. For Strauss and Kohler (1983), the average length of the process was 11 months. Gabarro (1988), in his investigation of the time dimension of the succession process, found that taking charge of a new position does not occur overnight, rather it occurs in several predictable stages over a long period of time, with each stage characterised by the nature of the learning and action involved. The author affirmed that the taking-charge process starts with taking hold of the new assignment and ends when the manager has mastered the assignment in sufficient depth to manage the new assignment as efficiently as the resources, constraints, and his/her own ability allow. According to Gabarro (1988), taking charge may require a period of up to three years. Other scholars who addressed the succession process timespan include Friedman and Olk (1995). Their study found that the succession process begins when both candidates and the selection criteria are first considered, and the process ends when the successor assumes the new position. However, according to Murray’s (2003) longitudinal study, the succession transition process takes three to eight years to complete.

As illustrated above, there is a lack of consensus about the starting and ending points of the succession process, and thus, the duration of the process could vary from a few weeks to eight years. Such failure to determine precisely the timespan of the succession process reflects the diverse perceptions of the essence of the phenomenon. For scholars such as Hashemi (1983), Strauss and Kohler (1983) and Friedman and Olk (1995), succession is about taking charge of the

¹ Two respondents were not eligible to identify the ending point of the succession process as the process was still in progress.

position. Other scholars, such as Gabarro (1988) and Murray (2003), viewed the succession process as a process whereby knowledge and power are passed from the office incumbent to the successor. Therefore, there is a need to revisit the conceptions underpinning the succession process, which the current research strives to do in the following section by identifying the frame of reference of the succession process.

3.3 THE DEFINITION OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

This section presents the frame of reference for the succession process which was adopted in the current research. Initially, the literature is reviewed to highlight the available definitions. Then, the identified definitions are discussed to reflect their appropriateness for the current research. Finally, a definition for the succession process is developed and embraced for the current research.

3.3.1 The Available Succession Process Definitions in the Literature

The review of the succession process line of studies highlighted several definitions for the succession process. Explicit definitions for the succession process are not always provided in such studies. Nevertheless, several definitions were highlighted in the literature review, which are discussed below.

In general, the literature presents different definitions for the succession process which reflect the various viewpoints that have been adopted by the scholars. For some scholars, the succession process is a means to transfer power and status from the office incumbent (or the predecessor) to the successor. For example, Redlich (1977) defined the succession process as the process of passing the status and power of the office incumbent to his/her successor (cited in Strauss and Kohler, 1983; p. 23).

Similarly, Gephart (1978) defined the succession process as a means to construct a social reality through the transfer of status. Initially, the author differentiated the causes of the actual succession event, namely, the office incumbent's death, retirement, forced removal (i.e. demotion or firing), voluntary resignation, promotion, transfer or advancement. Then, in an attempt to capture the richness and complexity of the phenomenon, Gephart (1978) perceived succession as "an event accomplished through situated activity, ritual forms, and the social construction of an enforceable

organisational reality” (p. 553). The author subsequently focused on forced removal of the office incumbent and defined the succession process as status degradation, whereby the office incumbent is demoted to a lower status in the organisation. He stated, “Succession in organizations may be defined as the process whereby the particular incumbent of such a position changes. Succession therefore involves changes in the status of two or more persons, the predecessor and the successor.” (p. 554). Accordingly, the author viewed the succession process as the process “whereby organisational schemes are constructed, modified, and invoked as interpretational frameworks used by members to make sense of scenic events, and to accomplish succession as a practical outcome of organisational behaviour” (Gephart, 1978; p. 580). Meanwhile, focusing on family-owned businesses, Handler (1990) argued that the succession process is better represented as a mutual process of role adjustment between the office incumbent and the successor during which the former lessens his/her involvement in the firm over time.

For other scholars, the succession process is a means for taking charge of a new position. For example, Strauss and Kohler (1983) defined the succession process as the movement of an individual into a higher level position of authority and responsibility within an organisation. Another relevant example is provided by Gabarro (1985). Focusing on what new managers do after starting a new job and how they take charge of their new positions, Gabarro (1985) defined taking charge as a process of learning and intense action for the successor that lasts until he/she masters the new assignment in sufficient depth to perform in the position as well as resources and constraints allow.

Other scholars, however, defined the succession process from different points of view. For example, viewing succession as a decision-making process, Friedman (1986) defined the succession process as the means by which succession decisions are made in relation to establishing the need for the succession event, determining the selection criteria, selecting the candidates for the position and choosing among these selected candidates. However, Kesner and Seborá (1994) adopted a more holistic view to define the succession process. According to Kesner and Seborá (1994), the succession process is a calculated, systematic, and political process. The authors explained that the process is calculated in terms of being consequential, connected to goals and

future outcomes and controlled by intention, whilst they use systematic as referring to the historic rules that govern the process that have evolved and accumulated over time within the organisation. Furthermore, the process is political since it is the result of self-interested, but interdependent, individuals and groups using power to influence the organisation to further their own interests. Breton-Miller et al. (2004) developed another holistic definition, which defines the succession process as the process that encompasses the actions, events, and organisational mechanisms by which leadership at the top of the firm, and often ownership, are transferred. A summary of the various succession definitions adopted in these studies is provided in Table 3-1.

TABLE 3-1: SUMMARY OF THE AVAILABLE DEFINITIONS OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

Author(s)	Succession Process Definition
Redlich (1977)	The process of passing the status and power (possession and its symbols) from one person to another
Gephart (1978)	Succession process, in the case of forced removal, is a status degradation process whereby organisational schemes are constructed, modified, and invoked as interpretational frameworks used by those who are involved to make sense of events, and to accomplish successful predecessor-successor status transfer as a practical outcome of organisational behaviour
Strauss & Kohler (1983)	The movement of an individual into a position of high level authority and responsibility within an organisation
Gabarro (1985)	Succession process, as taking charge, is the process of learning and taking action that a manager goes through until he (or she) masters the new assignment in sufficient depth to run the organisation as well as resources and constraints allow
Friedman (1986)	The succession process is the means by which succession decisions are made concerning establishing the need for the succession event, determining the selection criteria, selecting the candidates for the position and choosing among these selected candidates
Handler (1990)	Succession, in family-owned firms, is the mutual role adjustment process between the office incumbent and the successor during which the former lessens his/her involvement in the firm over time
Kesner & Sebora (1994)	Succession is a consequential process, connected to goals and future outcomes, and controlled by intention, which reflects the historic rules that evolved and accumulated over time within the organisation, and the result of self-interested but interdependent individuals and groups using power to influence the organisation to further their own interests
Breton-Miller et al (2004)	Succession process encompasses the actions, events, and organisational mechanisms by which leadership at the top of the firm, and often ownership, are transferred.

3.3.2 The Appropriateness of the Available Definitions for the Current Research

As illustrated above, the literature provided several definitions for the succession process. Taking into consideration the aim of the current research, the appropriateness of these definitions for the current research is examined in this subsection.

As shown in Table 3-1, among researchers there is no consensus on what the succession process stands for. Some scholars, such as Redlich (1977) and Friedman (1986), have defined the process by focusing on its ends or purposes. In these teleological definitions, the succession process was defined as a means to pass on status and power (Redlich, 1977) or as the means by which succession decisions are made (Friedman, 1986). The problem with these definitions is their fundamental assumption about the existence of a unified purpose for a long, complicated and multi-actor process such as the succession process. In other words, during the long and complicated course of the process, which involves various parties, any action or activity that is not directed towards satisfying the unified purpose of the process is, therefore, not part of it. However, if this assumption is true, it contradicts the systematic classification of the succession process as a process consisting of a variety of events, actions and activities that lack a unified purpose. Take for example the stages relating to preparation of the successor, which both Redlich (1977) and Friedman (1995) overlooked in their definitions. Nevertheless, these stages are integral parts of a well-recognised succession process: the relay (heir apparent) process. Surprisingly, Friedman (1986) considered executive development as the “*backbone of the succession system*” (p. 212). Another striking example is provided by Redlich (1977), who defined the succession process as a means to pass status and power. However, it is not clear how the anticipation stage of the process, which was identified by Redlich (1977), contributes to the attainment of this aim. Furthermore, whilst these two definitions imply that there is a purpose that unifies all those who are involved in the process, other studies focusing on the succession process typology suggest that power struggles and politics are involved in the succession process and not all of those who are involved in the succession process are working in harmony. Due to these drawbacks, these two definitions were found inappropriate for the current research.

Gephart’s (1978) definition of the succession process was also found inappropriate for the current research. Gephart (1978) defined the process as a means to construct a social reality through degradation of the predecessor’s status. The focus of such a constructivist approach is on understanding the meanings of the activities and actions from the perspective of the participants, rather than defining the actual process per se. In addition, Gephart’s (1978) definition is tied to a specific succession process related to the forced removal of the predecessor.

Strauss and Kohler's (1983) definition defined the succession process as the movement of an individual into a higher-level position of authority and responsibility within an organisation. Clearly, the definition reflects a process of promotion rather than succession. In addition, the definition limits consideration of the succession process to the appointment of successors within the organisation and overlooks external successors. Moreover, the definition neglects the process by which a successor is appointed to a position from another position of similar authority and responsibility. Thus, this definition was also unsuitable for the current research.

For a variety of reasons the other definitions proposed were also found inappropriate for the current research. For example, the definition offered by Kesner and Sebra (1994), despite its attempt to reflect the complexity of the process, presents the succession process as a linear, sequential and unidirectional process. Handler's (1990) definition relates to a specific organisational context (family-owned firms) and focuses on mutual role adjustment between entrepreneurs and next-generation family members, whilst the definition by Breton-Miller et al. (2004), which also focuses on the family-owned firm context, further limits its consideration of the succession process to the transfer of leadership at the top of these firms. Gabarro's (1985) definition focuses on taking charge of the position *after* the succession event and overlooks the process by which the successor assumed the position. Furthermore, according to Gabarro (1989), the succession process is the process of learning and taking action that a manager goes through until he/she masters the new assignment in sufficient depth to run the organisation as well as resources and constraints allow. However, what if the successor does not develop the required levels of mastery and influence; does this change the fact that he/she is the successor and disqualify the process from being a succession process? The above discussion highlights the need to define the succession process. The following subsection focuses on this task.

3.3.3 Frame of Reference for the Succession Process

In order to develop a comprehensive frame of reference for the "succession process", the meaning of the two keywords constituting the term is to be clarified. According to Merriam-Webster Online

Dictionary, succession refers to “the act or process of following in order”¹. Thus, in an organisational context, succession refers to the replacement of the predecessor by the successor. Indeed, this is the most obvious and tangible aspect of the succession process. As illustrated earlier, systematic classifications of the succession process usually distinguish the stages of the succession process as occurring pre, during and post this noticeable event. Duta (2008), affirmed this notion and stated that the replacement of the office incumbent is the dividing milestone in the succession process.

With regard to the second keyword in the term, Pettigrew (1997) defined the process as a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time, in context. Moreover, Pettigrew (1997) stressed the dual quality of agents/actors and context in their bilateral relations in explanation of how actions embedded in and interacting with their contexts generate the process. The author stated,

“Contexts are shaping and shaped. Actors are producers and products. Crucially for any processual analysis, this interchange between agents and contexts occurs over time and is cumulative.” (Pettigrew, 1997; p. 338)

Therefore, the succession process is the ***dynamic and complex course of individual and collective events, actions and activities that result in the replacement of an office incumbent by a successor, where the accumulated effects of all the interactions between those who are involved in the process and the context determine how the process unfolds.***

This proposed definition can significantly enhance understanding of the succession process. First, it provides a holistic and a dynamic view of the succession process that captures the various ways in which the phenomenon unfolds. In other words, the definition reflects the evolutionary course of the succession process, which unfolds through various events, actions and activities. Second, the definition emphasises the core aspect of the phenomenon by focusing on the replacement of the office incumbent by the successor. Third, the definition recognises the impact of the reciprocal relationship between those who are involved and the context on the succession process. In general,

¹ “Succession” (2010). In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved March 11, 2010, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/succession>

this definition strives to reflect the complexity of the succession phenomenon by taking into consideration the numerous ways in which the phenomenon unfolds and the impact of the various actors and context-related factors. However, in order to determine how these influential actors and context-related factors shape the succession process, it is necessary to detect the variations in the process in light of the impact of these actors and context-related factors. However, the application of the proposed definition to comparisons of succession processes may result in numerous and, sometimes, insignificant variations. Thus, to facilitate such comparisons, it is necessary to focus on the decisive and differentiating aspects of the succession process. In the next section, the literature is reviewed to highlight these key differentiating aspects of the process.

3.4 THE KEY DIFFERENTIATING ASPECTS OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

As stated earlier, succession processes are complex in nature and can vary in numerous respects. The variations in these processes may occur on two dimensions. The first dimension relates to the event, actions and activities that constitute the process. In other words, the first dimension reflects *what* has happened in the succession process. The second dimension reflects how these events, actions and activities have occurred, or simply, *how* the process has happened. However, as stated earlier, to be able to make comparisons between succession processes, it is necessary to focus on the decisive and key differentiating aspects. Thus, in order to highlight these aspects, the literature is reviewed in this section. Specifically, the review focuses on those studies that investigate the systematic classification of the succession process.

Initially, the available succession process typologies are highlighted, along with some of the studies that investigate certain succession process types, to shed light on the differentiating aspects used to differentiate the various types of the succession process. Then, remarks on the highlighted differentiating aspects are presented. Finally, the last subsection presents additional important aspects of the succession process that could serve as differentiating aspects to reflect how the process was executed.

3.4.1 Succession Process Typologies

As scholars began to recognise and acknowledge the various aspects of the succession process, a new line of inquiry, to distinguish the various types of succession process, emerged. Consequently, several succession process typologies were presented. As illustrated below, some of these typologies were explicitly based on *who* the successor is (or in other words, the *type of the successor*), such as insider/outsider or follower/contender successor¹. Other typologies strived to differentiate the succession processes based on *how* or *when* the process occurs. Nevertheless, as discussed below, due to the complexity of the process, the essence of the differentiating aspects for these typologies was the type of the successor. In other words, these typologies differentiated the succession processes based on events and actions that led to the appointment of a specific type of successor. An exception from these typologies is that of Friedman and Olk (1995). Friedman and Olk (1995) provided significant improvement to this line of studies by highlighting two differentiating aspects of the process that reflect its complexity. In the following parts, these typologies are highlighted along with some of the studies that were dedicated to addressing particular types of succession processes. At the end of this subsection, Table 3-2 (on p. 85) presents a summary of these typologies.

3.4.1.1 The Succession Process Typology of Vancil (1987)

Vancil (1987) was one of the first scholars to address the systematic classification of the succession processes. The author identified two internal succession processes whereby the successor is promoted from within the organisations, namely, the “*Relay*” and the “*Horse race*” succession processes. In the relay process, the office incumbent names a successor (an heir apparent) two to three years before the actual succession announcement. If the board of directors approves the nomination, the office incumbent him/herself manages the transition process and grooms the successor for the new position. Vancil described the relay succession process as “an overt” process which is “an integral part of the regular management process” (p. 107 and p.114). However, in a horse race succession process, several potential candidates compete against each other to win the position. According to Vancil (1987), this is also an overt process, but with a higher degree of

¹ At this point of the literature review, the term “type of successor” is briefly discussed by highlighting the various types of successors. However, the following chapter of the literature review revisits and discusses this term in further detail.

complexity. Clearly, the author differentiated between the two internal succession processes, the relay and the horse race, based on *how* the internal successor was selected to assume the position, by highlighting the sequential events and actions within these two processes.

In addition to the two internal succession processes, Vancil (1987) also highlighted briefly a third process, which he labelled the *outside succession process*. In the outside succession process the appointed successor had no previous tenure at the recruiting organisation and was specifically recruited to succeed the incumbent of the position under consideration (Vancil, 1987). Here, the author considered the origin of the successor (insider/outsider) as the main criterion for differentiating between the succession processes.

Moreover, Vancil documented two additional processes in striving to capture the complexity of the succession process and the various ways in which it could unfold. The author affirmed that sometimes a short horse race process precedes a longer relay process; and an implicit short relay process is occasionally initiated in the final stages of a horse race process. Nevertheless, he did not consider these cases as distinctive succession process types deserving separate classification as types per se. This implies that while the author appeared to differentiate the internal succession processes based on how the successor assumed the position, the essence of the differentiation is the successor per se; or in other words, the *type of successor*. As demonstrated above, despite the recognition of different ways in which successors may assume the position, the author did not distinguish these ways as distinctive succession processes since their outcomes are similar to those of the earlier processes (heir apparent or a contest winner successor). This notion is supported by the second differentiating aspect used by Vancil to differentiate between the insider/outsider succession processes.

3.4.1.2 The Succession Process Typology of Friedman and Olk (1995)

Following on from Vancil (1987), Friedman and Olk (1995) described a quadripartite typology for the succession process by focusing on the decision-making process. In their investigation of stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of various succession processes on the sense of fairness and legitimacy surrounding such processes, the authors highlighted four distinctive succession processes, namely, Crown Heir, Horse Race, Coup d'état, and Comprehensive Search. The authors

differentiated these processes based on two dimensions reflecting the political structure and dynamic of the organisation and the organisation's need to adapt to environmental change. In the first dimension, the authors focused on the dominating coalition, or in simpler terms "*who rules*", to reveal the political structure and dynamic within the organisation. The authors highlighted two groups that may represent the dominant coalition controlling the succession process. The first is the office incumbent (and the organisational interests or coalitions he/she represents); while the second is any individual or group that represents a different set of political interests than those of the office incumbent. The authors used three factors to indicate which group is controlling the process. These factors are as follows: (1) the office incumbent influence, (2) the timespan over which the decision about successor unfolds and (3) the information symmetry between those who seek the position and the decision makers of the succession process.

With regard to the second differentiating dimension, the authors reflected the organisation's need to adapt to environmental change by highlighting the degree to which the preferences regarding the candidates and the selection criteria are known in advance to decision makers from the outset of the process. In other words, this dimension relates to the predetermination of the succession process outcomes in terms of who should be the successor and the selection criteria. The authors identified three indicators to reflect this dimension: (1) the sources of information about candidates and criteria, (2) the time and effort spent by decision makers on deliberations and (3) the number and kinds of potential candidates considered.

According to these two dimensions, four distinctive succession processes were identified. The first process is the *Crown Heir*, which is similar to Vancil's Relay process: where an heir apparent is identified well in advance of the actual replacement of the office incumbent. The heir apparent is informed about his/her nomination and then groomed by the office incumbent. According to Friedman and Olk (1995), in such a process the preferences regarding the candidate and the selection criteria are known beforehand and controlled by the office incumbent. The heir apparent has to wait until the incumbent steps down, which may provide an opportunity to prepare the successor and his/her team. However, this could be frustrating for the successor, who may force the incumbent out prematurely or seek another position.

The second succession process Friedman and Olk (1995) described is the *Horse race* process, which shares more than the label with Vancil's horse race process. In such a process, several key employees are identified and informed about their consideration as potential candidates for a certain position. Thus, these candidates will be groomed, monitored and the best performer will be selected for the position. Similar to the Crown Heir, the horse race process is controlled by the office incumbent; however, there is an uncertainty in the preferences as the criteria are either unclear or unstable at the outset. During the competition and in an attempt to influence the decision makers, candidates may lobby and exploit personal relationships to secure the position. The authors also recognised variations in the horse race process, such as when there are no suitably qualified candidates for the position or when only one candidate is seriously considered throughout the process and the other candidates are just pseudo-candidates.

The third succession process according to Friedman and Olk's typology is the *Coup d'état*. In such a process, a coalition is formed by those who oppose the office incumbent and aim to overthrow him/her. Typically, the uprising coalition includes individuals from the organisation's top management, who are linked with members of the board of directors; however, the coalition may contain members from outside the organisation. The process quietly starts as a minority group which asserts that the office incumbent is no longer fit to hold the position. The insurgent coalition covertly anticipates changes in the organisation's circumstances and seeks opportunities to gain power and seize control of the succession process, which unfolds in a relatively short time. The authors affirmed, "Though the seeds of the revolution may be sown well in advance, it is not until conditions change enough to empower a nonincumbent coalition that an overthrow can succeed" (p. 153). Due to their upper hand in such a succession process, the non-incumbent coalition sets the selection criteria and nominates the successor. The authors also point out that successions via takeovers are a variation of the Coup d'état process, whereby an outsider comes to power by deposing the current administration.

The fourth and final process in Friedman and Olk's typology is the *Comprehensive Search*. Motivated by the organisation's pressing need for strategic changes, the decision makers search for a successor whose background and skills fit with the intended organisational reorientation. The

search is comprehensive, with extensive effort expended and many decision makers involved, along with individuals who are knowledgeable both about potential candidates and the selection criteria. However, the criteria are not fixed, and as the search unfolds, the selection criteria may shift to fit the available candidate pool. According to the authors, this is due to the fact that “the perfect candidate (one who precisely matches preordained selection criteria and is available) rarely exists” (p. 154). Although, the office incumbent may play a role in the process, other key players, such as members of the board of directors, overshadow such a role. In addition, coalitions exist and compete in such succession processes to define the selection criteria and evaluate the candidates.

As demonstrated above, in addition to Vincil’s differentiating aspects of the succession process (how the internal successor was selected and origin of the successor), Friedman and Olk’s typology highlighted two further aspects. The first is the dominant coalition controlling the succession process, and the second is predetermination of the process in terms of the selection criteria.

3.4.1.3 The Succession Process Typology of Shen and Cannella (2002b)

In this typology, Shen and Cannella (2002b) adapted the perspective of the power circulation theory of control to identify three different succession processes. The authors distinguished between these processes based on the circumstances of the office incumbent’s departure and his/her relationship with the successor. Specifically, the authors identified three succession processes, which they labelled *follower*, *contender*, and *outsider*, according to the type of the successor who follows the office incumbent in the position under consideration.

The follower and the outsider succession processes reflect relay and outside succession, respectively. The third process, contender succession, is to some extent similar to Friedman and Olk’s Coup d’état process, whereby a coalition works to overthrow the office incumbent. However, the degree of concealment and secrecy involved in the Coup d’état may differentiate the two processes. In the contender succession process, the authors argued that the increasing obsolescence of the office incumbent opens the door for other executives to contest his/her power. As these challenges become more serious through questioning the incumbent’s capabilities and where feasible insider candidates are on hand, the odds on office incumbent turnover increase significantly. According to the authors, the dismissal of an office incumbent and replacement by an

individual from within the organisation reflects a successful internal power contest (Shen and Cannella, 2002b).

While the authors presented a new typology for the succession processes, the differentiating factor is, basically, similar to those highlighted by Vincil (1987), namely, how the internal successor assumed the position and the origin of the successor (insider/outsider). However, Shen and Cannella (2002b) explicitly named these processes after the type of successor who followed the office incumbent in the position.

3.4.1.4 The Succession Process Typology of Finkelstein et al. (2009)

Finkelstein et al. (2009) developed a succession process typology based on the same differentiating criteria as were used in the previous typologies. In their typology, Finkelstein et al. described four succession processes. Similarly to Vincil's (1987) typology, Finkelstein et al. differentiated their first three processes based on the way in which the internal successor assumes the position. The first two processes described by Finkelstein et al., the *Relay* and the *Horse race*, are identical to those described above in the previous typologies. In the third process, the authors reported that sometimes a horse race process precedes a relay process, which they classified as a new category per se. In such a process, which they labelled the *Early Horse Race and Relay* process, candidates compete for the heir apparent slot. However, the authors argued that "until an heir-apparent is designated, an implicit horse race is under way, as ambitious executives vie to improve their chances for later phases of the tournament" (p. 180). As is the case with Vancil's typology (1987), this implies that the key aspect for differentiating these processes is the type of successor rather than the process by which the successor assumes the position.

The fourth and final succession process described by the authors is *Crisis Successions*, in which there is no designated heir apparent, often due to the illness, death, or the abrupt dismissal of the office incumbent. This process is based on the circumstances of the office incumbent's departure and was used by Shen and Cannella (2002b) in their typology to reflect the type of successor who assumes the position. In addition, to some extent, Finkelstein et al.'s crisis succession relates to the second dimension used by Friedman and Olk (1995) to reflect the organisation's need to adapt to

environmental change. Thus, Finkelstein et al.'s (2009) typology reemphasised the differentiating aspects of the previous typologies.

3.4.1.5 Studies Highlighting Particular Types of Succession Process

A number of studies have deviated from the systematic classification of the succession process to focus on particular types of succession process. Some of these studies have investigated succession processes identified by the previous typologies. For example, Cannella and Shen (2001), Shen and Cannella (2003) and Zhang and Rajagopalan (2004) investigated the relay process; Shen and Cannella (2002a) investigated the contender process; and Helfat and Bailey (2005) investigated outside succession processes. It is noteworthy that Helfat and Bailey differentiated three types of outside succession processes based on the identification of internal/external heir apparent.

Other studies focused on less common succession processes. For example, Ashcraft (1999) identified a unique succession process of *Temporary Executive Succession*, where the incumbent leaves her post for a maternity leave. According to the author, such a process represents a need for an interim successor yet builds in expectations of the office incumbent's return. Thus, the differentiating aspect of this process is the return of the predecessor to the position after a period of time. Another study which highlighted a distinctive succession process was that of Intintoli (2007). The author identified a succession process whereby no permanent successor is named at the time of the announcement of office incumbent turnover, but a temporary successor is appointed until a permanent successor is found. Intintoli labelled this process the *Marathon Succession Process*. The distinctive feature of marathon succession is *when* the permanent successor is appointed. In other words, the differentiating aspect is whether the successor is permanent or temporary, which also reflects the type of successor.

In general, these studies were dedicated to investigating particular succession processes and reemphasised the differentiating aspects highlighted in the succession process typologies. Nevertheless, as illustrated above, some of these studies highlighted uncommon succession processes defined by unique differentiating aspects, such as the work of Ashcraft (1999) (the return of the predecessor) and Intintoli (2007) (the intervening period between the office incumbent's departure and the permanent successor's appointment).

TABLE 3-2: SUMMARY OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS TYPOLOGIES

Succession Process Typologies	Types of process	Differentiating Aspects
Vancil (1987)	Relay, Horse race and outside succession processes	The type of successor who assumes the position
Friedman & Olk (1995)	Crown Heir, Horse Race, Coup d'état and Comprehensive search succession process	The dominant coalition controlling the process and the predetermination of the process outcomes in terms of who should be the successor and the selection criteria
Shen & Cannella (2002b)	Follower, Contender and Outsider succession processes	The type of successor who assumes the position
Finkelstein et al. (2009)	Relay, Horse race, Early Horse race and Relay and Crisis succession process	The type of successor who assumes the position

3.4.2 Remarks on the Differentiating Aspects used by the Previous Studies

As demonstrated in the previous subsection, the succession process typologies used three aspects to differentiate the various succession processes. The first aspect is the *type of successor* that follows the office incumbent in the position under consideration, such as insider/outsider, heir apparent/winning contender, follower/contender or permanent/temporary. This is the aspect most often used to differentiate succession processes, as it was used, either explicitly or implicitly, in the typologies of Vancil (1987), Shen and Cannella (2002b) and Finkelstein et al. (2009). The type of successor reflects both *who* the successor is and *how* the successor assumed the position (the precise events and actions that led to the appointment of the particular type of successor). By differentiating the succession processes according to type of successor, scholars identified several types of process. For example, Relay, Crown Heir or Heir Apparent succession processes were identified by recognising the follower successor. Similarly, the Horse Race process was identified by recognising the successor who wins an internal contest for the position; Coup d'état was identified by recognising the contender successor who challenges the office incumbent; and outside succession process was identified by recognising an external successor who is promoted from outside the organisation to assume the position under consideration.

As discussed above, the first differentiating aspect mainly reflected the type of successor: either by explicitly labelling the process according to the successor or by highlighting the precise event and actions that led to the appointment of a specific type of successor. However, the other two aspects,

highlighted in Friedman and Olk (1995), were directed at reflecting how the succession process was executed. The first is the dominant coalition controlling the process, which reflects the decision-maker of the succession process. In addition, this aspect reflects, to some extent, the type of successor. For example, according to the authors, when the succession process is dominated by the office incumbent's coalition, the successor is most probably is an internal candidate, who assumes the position via either a relay or a horse race succession process. However, the significance of the dominant coalition aspect in differentiating the succession process is its ability to capture an important element in the complexity of the succession process, which is the power struggle over the succession process. This, in turn, sheds light on how the succession process decisions are made. The second key differentiating aspect highlighted in Friedman and Olk's (1995) typology is the predetermination of the succession process outcomes in terms of the successor who should assume the position and the selection criteria. This aspect also reflects how the succession process decisions are made.

In addition to the abovementioned three key differentiating aspects of the succession process, the following subsection highlights additional aspects to differentiate how the succession processes were executed. As discussed below, these additional aspects reflect important issues of the process that could enhance our understanding of the complexity involved in the succession process.

3.4.3 Proposed Key Differentiating Aspects for the Succession Process

This subsection identifies certain key differentiating aspects of the succession process to reflect how the process is executed. Rather than focusing on specific events and actions that led to the appointment of a particular type of successor, the focal point here is to grasp *how the execution* of the succession process may significantly differentiate the process. In other words, this subsection focuses on identification of the key aspects that determine variations in the *execution* of the succession process in general.

A good starting point in recognising such aspects is the research by Rhodes and Walker (1984). As stated earlier, the authors differentiated four approaches to executing succession planning, namely, informal, decentralised, centralised and integrated planning. In addition, Friedman (1986) highlighted seven dimensions that characterise the succession system. These dimensions are

formalisation, control systems, resource allocation, information systems, political criteria, technical criteria and staff role. By reflecting these four different approaches for executing the succession planning and these seven dimensions for characterising the succession systems, key differentiating aspects in the execution of the succession process could be identified. However, some of these approaches and dimensions overlap with Friedman and Olk's (1995) two key differentiating aspects highlighted earlier. Nevertheless, as is discussed below, three additional key differentiating aspects were recognised as reflecting how the succession process is executed.

Both of the abovementioned studies highlighted the formality of the process. According to Friedman's (1986) definition, the formality of the process relates to the degree to which the succession process is carried out according to prescribed, written rules and procedures that specify clear responsibilities and accountabilities. Accordingly, the formality of the process encompasses the control systems used to ensure effective succession management. Thus, the formality of the process was selected as a key differentiating aspect to reflect how the succession process is executed. Ocasio (1999), in his investigation into reliance on formal and informal rules in the succession process, highlighted the appropriateness of using formal/informal aspects of the process to describe how the process is executed. He stated, "rule-based action characterises organisational decisions is an established conception in the organisational literature" (p. 384). Furthermore, findings by Ocasio (1999) affirmed that succession decisions rely on such formal and informal rules; however, "their application is far from inevitable" (p. 413). This suggests that there are variations in the adopted succession processes in terms of the formality of the processes.

With regard to the second key differentiating aspect, Rhodes and Walker (1984) differentiated between centralised/decentralised approaches. However, this aspect can be categorised under Friedman and Olk's (1995) first differentiating aspect: the control over the process by the dominating coalition. In addition, Friedman's (1986) political criteria dimension forms part of the dominating coalition aspect of the process. According to Friedman (1986), the political criteria reflect "the extent to which selection decisions are based on loyalty, network ties and other non-ability factors" (p. 204). Thus, due to the significance of the dominating coalition aspect in reflecting the power struggle in the succession process, the centralisation/decentralisation of the

process and the political criteria dimension were overlooked, whilst for a similar reason, the resource allocation and technical criteria highlighted by Friedman (1986) were also overlooked. According to Friedman (1986), resource allocation reflects “the extent to which time and energy are devoted to managing succession issues” (p. 201). This clearly overlaps with one of the indicators used by Friedman (1995) to reflect the predetermination of the succession process outcomes, namely, the time and effort spent by decision makers on deliberations. This is also the case for the technical criteria dimension. According to Friedman (1986), technical criteria reflect “the extent to which selection decisions are based on past performance [of the successor], range of experience and other ability factors” (p. 204).

However, the information systems dimension used by Friedman (1986) highlights an important aspect of the process, which is the *transparency of the process*. This aspect reflects the extent to which the process was executed in an overt manner and information was shared openly among those involved in the process. Therefore, the transparency of the process was identified as the second key differentiating aspect to reflect how the succession process is executed. It is noteworthy that one of the three indicators used by Friedman and Olk (1995) to reflect the dominant coalition was information symmetry. However, this indicator is more relevant to transparency of the process than to the dominant coalition controlling the process.

The third key differentiating aspect relates to the integration of the process, again highlighted by Rhodes and Walker (1984). Friedman (1986), moreover, highlighted the staff role as the last dimension for characterising the succession system. In this dimension, the author emphasised the role of HRM professionals in supporting and managing the succession system. Specifically, Friedman (1986) defined this dimension as “The extent to which internal and external human resource professionals are involved in the support and management of the succession and development issue” (p. 205). This dimension, implicitly, reflects the extent to which the HRM function is integrated in the succession system. Thus, *integration of the process* was selected as the third key differentiating aspect. This aspect reflects the extent to which the succession process is carried out in coordination with or to complement other aspects of the organisation such as strategy, career development programmes and day-to-day tasks and activities.

Accordingly, six key differentiating aspects of the succession process were identified. Table 3-3 below reflects how the various succession processes identified in the above description of succession typologies may vary on the basis of these six differentiating aspects. It is noteworthy that, while in some of these succession processes these aspects were explicitly stated, in other processes such aspects were understood from the context.

TABLE 3-3: SUMMARY OF THE SIX DIFFERENTIATING ASPECTS AND THE HIGHLIGHTED TYPES OF SUCCESSION PROCESS

Type of Succession Process	The Key Differentiating Aspects of the Succession Process					
	Decision-maker	Type of Successor	Predetermination of process outcomes	Formality	Transparency	Integration
<i>Relay, Crown Heir, Heir apparent, or Follower</i>	Office Incumbent	Internal successor	Varies*	Varies*	High*	High*
<i>Horse race</i>	Office Incumbent	Internal successor	High*	HIGH	High	High*
<i>Early Horse Race-Relay</i>	Office Incumbent	Internal successor	High*	Varies*	High*	High*
<i>Coup d'état</i>	Coup Coalition	Normally, Internal successor	High*	Low	Low	Low*
<i>Contender</i>	Contender	Internal successor	High*	Low	Varies*	Low*
<i>Temporary Executive Succession</i>	Office Incumbent	Internal interim	Not applicable	High*	Varies*	Varies*
<i>Comprehensive Search</i>	Board of Directors	Normally, external successor	Varies	High*	Varies*	Varies*
<i>Crisis</i>	Board of Directors	Not specified	Varies*	High*	Varies*	Varies*
<i>Marathon Succession</i>	Board of Directors	Internal or external interim successor	High*	Low*	Varies*	Varies*
<i>Outsider</i>	Board of Directors	External successor	Varies*	High*	Varies*	Varies*
<i>Outsider Heir Apparent</i>	Board of Directors	External successor	High*	Varies*	Varies*	Varies*
<i>Outsider Heir Apparent with Public Announcement</i>	Board of Directors	External successor	High*	High*	High	Varies*

* This aspect was understood from the context

3.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The succession literature was reviewed to facilitate detection of variations in the succession process. Initially, early perceptions of the succession phenomenon as reflected in three succession theories (Vicious Cycle, Common-Sense and Scapegoating) were reviewed. The recognition of the time dimension, which led to the succession phenomenon being perceived for the first time as an evolving process rather than an instantaneous and discrete event, was highlighted. Four lines of inquiry were identified in the succession process studies, namely, the succession planning, the systematic classification of the stages of the process, the timespan of the process and the typologies of the succession process. The available definitions of the succession process were reviewed to determine a frame of reference. The succession process was defined as a dynamic and complex course of individual and collective events, actions and activities that result in the replacement of an office incumbent by a successor, with the accumulated effects of all the interactions between those who are involved in the process and the context determining how the process unfolds.

The review of the available succession process typologies facilitated the identification of three key differentiating aspects. These aspects were the dominant coalition (decision-maker of the succession process), the type of successor (such as insider/outsider or follower/contender) and the predetermination of the process outcomes (in terms of who should be the successor and the selection criteria used). In addition, the formality, transparency and integration of the process were identified as key differentiating aspects that reflect how the succession process is executed.

CHAPTER 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ACTING UPON THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

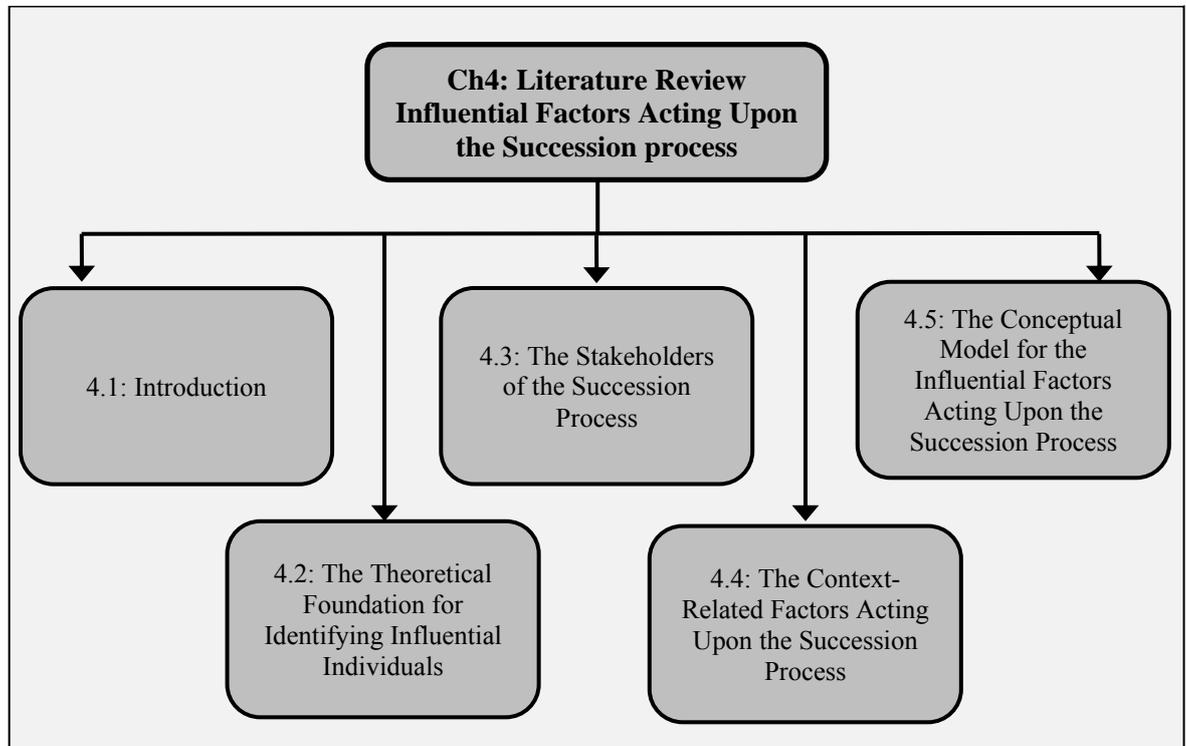
This is the second chapter of the literature review. The main aim of the literature review is to facilitate answering the research questions and to highlight the gaps in the body of knowledge regarding the inquiry of the research. In the previous chapter, the succession process was defined and the key differentiating aspects were determined to facilitate the detection of the variations in succession processes. Thus, the current chapter is dedicated to revealing the gaps in the body of knowledge regarding the influential factors acting upon the succession process.

In order to accomplish this aim, the literature is reviewed to highlight the potential sources of these influential factors. According to the adopted definition, the succession process is influenced by the accumulated effects of all the interactions between those who are involved in the process and the context in which the process occurs. Thus, there are two sets of potential sources of the influential factors shaping the succession process. The first comprises the individuals who are involved in the process and have the potential to influence it. The second set reflects the factors that are imposed by the context of the process. Accordingly, the current chapter was organised in five sections, as illustrated in Figure 4-1 in the following page.

The following section discusses the theoretical foundation for identifying the individuals who have the potential to influence the succession process. Specifically, the section discusses the stakeholder theory and its appropriateness for identifying those influential individuals acting upon the succession process (or the stakeholders of the succession process). The third section reviews the literature to highlight the stakeholders of the succession process. The fourth section highlights the potential context-related factors that may influence the succession process. Finally, the fifth section

summarises the highlighted stakeholders and context-related factors that may influence the succession process and presents a conceptual model to illustrate the succession process, in terms of the key differentiating aspects and the potential influential factors acting upon it.

FIGURE 4-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 4



4.2 THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR IDENTIFYING THE INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS

There are several theoretical approaches available for identifying those who have the potential to influence an organisational issue. For example, Resource Dependence theory could be used to identify these influential individuals based on power/dependence relationships that exist between the organisation and the various parties involved in the focal organisational issue. In addition, based on the interactions of the focal organisation with other parties, the Actor-network theory could be applicable to the task.

However, the Stakeholder theory was found more appropriate for the current research in identifying the influential individuals acting upon the succession process. While the resource dependence and the actor-network theories may highlight the human relationships or interactions involved in the

process, the stakeholder theory is more about actual identification of the influential individuals. Furthermore, the researcher presumed that due to the complexity of the succession process not all the relationships and interactions in the process are clear or palpable. This, in turn, limits the applicability of the resource dependence theory and the actor-network theory in the current research. However, the stakeholder theory provides a holistic view that embraces various influential individuals within and outside the organisational boundaries. Thus, the stakeholder theory was adopted in the current research to identify those individuals who have the potential to influence the succession process. In the following subsections, the stakeholder theory is discussed.

4.2.1 The Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory is one of the most promising theories in management literature, and has consequently received considerable attention in academic circles during the last two decades (Agle et al., 2008; Laplume et al., 2008). Laplume et al. (2008) stated, “Interest in stakeholder theory took root in the field of strategic management, then grew into organisation theory and business ethics” (p. 1156). They added that although some indications of the concept of the stakeholder had emerged prior to Freeman’s (1984) work, Freeman’s contributions to the theory have earned him the right to be called the father of the stakeholder theory and its senior trustee. Moreover, other scholars, such as Donaldson and Preston (1995), Mitchell et al. (1997), Frooman (1999) and Steurer (2006), have also highlighted the contribution of Freeman’s work to the stakeholder theory.

In his classic book, Freeman (1984) argued for a new approach to strategic management, which he labelled the *Stakeholder Approach*. According to Freeman (1984), “The stakeholder approach is about groups and individuals who can affect the organisation, and is about managerial behaviour taken in response to those groups and individuals” (1984, p 48). Then, he stressed the managers’ need to “take into account all of those groups and individuals that can affect, or are affected by, the accomplishment of the organisational purpose”, whom he called *stakeholders* (p 25). Freeman (1984) defined the stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievements of the organisation’s objectives” (p. 46). Furthermore, the author highlighted various stakeholders, such as owners, customers, employees, suppliers, governments, local community

organisations, competitors, special interests groups (e.g. activities groups, political groups, unions, trade associations, environmentalists) and media (p. 25 and p. 55).

According to Mitchell et al. (1997), this approach to understanding organisations is a powerful heuristic device intended to broaden management's vision of its roles and responsibilities beyond the profit maximisation function to include the interests and claims of the various stakeholders of the organisation. Donaldson and Preston (1995) highlighted that the literature advanced and justified the theory on the basis of its descriptive accuracy, instrumental power and normative validity and that the author achieved this by differentiating the stakeholder theory according to four central theses. First, the theory is descriptive as it describes the organisation as a constellation of cooperative and competitive interests. Second, the theory is instrumental as it establishes a framework for examining the connection between the practice of stakeholder management and the attainment of the performance goals of the organisation. Third, the theory is normative as it interprets the function of the organisation and offers guidance for operating and managing the organisation on the basis of certain underlying moral or philosophical principles. Finally, the theory is broadly managerial as “It does not simply describe existing situations or predict cause-effect relationships; it also recommends attitudes, structures, and practices that, taken together, constitute stakeholder management” (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p. 67).

In the following subsections, the stakeholder literature is reviewed to define the stakeholder and the stake (who is considered a stakeholder and what stakeholders want). In addition, the review highlights the influential means used by the stakeholders (how stakeholders try to bring about what they want) and the factors that determine the stakeholders' influence (what determines their ability to do so).

4.2.2 The Stakeholder

In an attempt to distinguish among the various stakeholder groups, many scholars have addressed the question of what constitutes a stakeholder. In addition to Freeman's (1984) broad definition, which includes virtually anyone who can affect or be affected by the organisation's activities, other scholars offered alternative narrow definitions for the stakeholder. Some of these definitions were

based on stakeholder-organisation relationships, which are “built on acknowledged transactional conditions, such as the existence of a legal or implied contract, an exchange relationship or an identifiable power-dependence relationship” (Mitchell et al., 1997; p. 862). For example, focusing on the stakeholder’s stakes in the stakeholder-organisation relationship, Clarkson (1995) defined the stakeholder as any person or group that has, or claims at any point in time, ownership, rights, or interests in the organisation and its activities. In addition, focusing on power-dependence in the stakeholder-organisation relationship, Pajunen (2006) defined the stakeholders as those who possess resources and network power.

Other definitions were based on the organisation’s moral responsibilities. For example, Donaldson and Preston (1995) stated, “Stakeholders are identified through the actual or potential harms and benefits that they experience or anticipate experiencing as a result of the firm's actions or inactions.” (p. 85). In addition, some scholars identified the stakeholder based on the possession, or the attributed possession, of certain attributes. For example, stakeholders for Mitchell et al. (1997) are those who possess, or are attributed as possessing, at least one of the following three attributes: the power to influence the organisation, a legitimate relationship with the organisation or an urgent claim on the organisation. For a comprehensive review of stakeholder definitions refer to Friedman and Miles (2006b).

Furthermore, several typologies were proposed for categorising the stakeholders. For example, based on the predominant stakeholder-organisation relationship, Freeman (1984) differentiated between *internal* stakeholders (e.g. the boss, the boss’s boss, subordinates and related units within the organisation) and *external* stakeholders (e.g. customers, suppliers and competitors), whilst Clarkson (1995) differentiated between *primary* and *secondary* stakeholder groups. According to Clarkson (1995), primary stakeholders are those whom the organisation cannot survive without, such as shareholders, customers and suppliers. The secondary stakeholder group comprises such as media and special interest groups, who affect or are affected by the organisation, but are not essential for its survival.

Friedman and Miles (2002), also focusing on stakeholder-organisation relationships, distinguished among stakeholders on the basis of whether the interests of the stakeholder and the organisation are compatible or incompatible (whether they help or hinder each other) and whether the stakeholder-organisation relationship is necessary or contingent. Accordingly, four stakeholder groups were distinguished, namely, *Necessary compatible* (i.e. shareholder, top management and partners), *Contingent compatible* (i.e. the public and organisations connected through common trade associations), *Necessary incompatible* (e.g. trade unions, customers and governments) and *Contingent incompatible* (i.e. some non-governmental organisations and aggrieved or criminal members of the public). Moreover, in differentiating between normative and derivative legitimacies of the stakeholders, Phillips (2003) distinguished between normative and derivative stakeholders. According to the author, normative stakeholders are those individuals to whom the organisation has a moral obligation simply by virtue of their being human, whereas derivative stakeholders are those who have the potential to affect the organisation (such as competitors, activists and media).

In addition, Mitchell et al. (1997) developed a theory of stakeholder identification and salience. The author argued that the three attributes of the stakeholders (i.e. power, legitimacy and urgency) derive their saliency from the perspective of the organisation's management. Accordingly, the authors classified the stakeholders into eight groups based on the possession, or the attributed possession, of those three attributes. The stakeholder groups are *Dormant* (power), *Discretionary* (legitimacy), *Demanding* (urgency), *Dominant* (power and legitimacy), *Dangerous* (power and urgency), *Dependent* (legitimacy and urgency), *Definitive* (power, legitimacy and urgency) and *Non-stakeholder* (those who possess none of the three).

However, while stakeholder typologies facilitated the task of distinguishing between the various stakeholder groups (e.g., shareholders, employees and customers), some scholars criticised the theoretical bases for such classifications and called for reconsideration of these generic groups. For example, Harrison and Freeman (1999) highlighted this notion as one of the theoretical challenges facing the theory. The authors stated,

“By examining large stakeholder groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, investors, and the like, researchers ignore many differences within stakeholder groups. We need fine-grained ideas about each stakeholder group.” (p. 484)

Winn (2001), Wolfe and Putler (2002) and Perrault (2012) affirmed this notion and highlighted the heterogeneity and conflict of interests within these generic stakeholder groups. For example, Perrault (2012) stated,

“Much of the stakeholder literature treats groups [of stakeholders] as homogeneous generic types with no overlap between groups ... As a result, the literature on stakeholder identification and existing typologies ... fail to provide a true understanding of how groups can be more accurately envisioned in their efforts to influence firms.” (p. 60).

In addition, Wolfe and Putler (2002) demonstrated, empirically, the heterogeneous interests of the members of a stakeholder group. Nevertheless, and despite the pitfalls of the existing generic stakeholder groups, such categorisation of stakeholder groups is useful as a starting point for stakeholder analysis. Winn (2001) stated:

“Still, if recognized as working definitions, existing categories of stakeholder groups are a good starting point. And regardless of their scientific precision or accuracy, they are part of common language and reflect in the terminology taught in business schools and used in daily and weekly business magazines the effects of social construction.” (p. 136)

Wolfe and Putler (2002) also affirmed the usefulness of these generic stakeholder groups in their proposed steps for stakeholder analysis. In addition, Winn (2001) and Wolfe and Putler (2002) argued that the classification of stakeholder groups is situation and issue specific. Specifically, the authors stressed the need for recognising the stakeholders' stakes (or interests) when forming such stakeholder groupings. For example, Winn (2001) stated, “By definition, stakeholder groups exist around shared objectives (stakes and interests)” (p. 134, the brackets are original). She added:

“Discarding the a priori assumption of internal homogeneity of stakeholder groups makes the heterogeneity of objectives, specifically, the plurality of stakes, the subject of research and allows us to refocus attention inside stakeholder groups.” (p. 134)

Similarly, Wolfe and Putler (2002) stressed this notion by stating:

“This [the development of an acceptable definition of stake] is of importance to us because stakes are what motivate stakeholder groups, and thus are important determinants of stakeholder group priorities and the degree to which members of a stakeholder group are likely to have common priorities with respect to a given issue.” (p. 67)

One of the scholars who recognised the stakeholders stakes in categorising the stakeholder groups is Fassin (2009). The author differentiated stakeholders into three groups. The first is the *stakeholder* group, which comprises those who have, or at least expect to have, a real positive and loyal interest in the organisation, such as shareholders, employees and customers. The second group is the *stakewatcher* group, which comprises those “who do not really have a stake themselves but who protect the interests of real stakeholders, often as proxies or intermediaries”, such as trade unions, consumer associations and activist groups (Fassin, 2009, p. 121). The third group is the *stakekeeper* group, which comprises those who have no stake in the organisation, but they influence and impose responsibilities upon it, such as government agencies, courts, certification organisations and the media. In the following subsection, the stakeholder’s stake is discussed.

4.2.3 The Stake

The stake of the stakeholder reflects the reason for the stakeholder’s involvement in the organisational issue under consideration¹. Thus, the concept of the stake is a fundamental in the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). Frooman (1999) affirmed, “stakeholder theory is about managing potential conflicts stemming from divergent interests” of the organisation and the stakeholder groups (p. 193). Furthermore, many scholars, such as Frooman (1999), Winn (2001), Wolfe and Putler (2002), Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003)² and Fassin (2009), have argued that stakeholders’ actions are motivated by and directed toward protection of their stakes in the specific organisational issue.

¹ As demonstrated below, some of the stakeholder scholars expressed this notion in terms of the interests or claims of the stakeholder in the organisational issue, or simply in terms of what the stakeholders have at risk in relation to that specific issue.

² According to Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003), in addition to protecting their interests, stakeholders are motivated by the need to express their identity.

According to Freeman (1984), the stakeholder's stake is a multidimensional concept that "ranges across a broad spectrum of the phenomenon from more traditional dollar returns to stakeholder to call for a 'Voice' in running the affairs of XYZ" (p. 60 and 61, brackets are original). Yet, the author categorised the stakeholder's stake into three broad categories, namely, *equity*, *economic* and *influencer* stakes. Those who have direct ownership of the organisation possess equity stakes. Those who have an economic interest, but are without ownership rights, such as employees, customers, suppliers and competitors, possess economic stakes. Finally, influencer stakes are held by those who lack ownership and economic stakes, but are affected by the organisation, such as consumer advocates, government agencies and trade associations (Freeman, 1984). In addition, Mitchell et al. (1997) reflected the stakeholder stake in terms of what the stakeholder has at risk by stating, "A stake, in this sense, is only something that can be lost" (p. 857).

In addition, in response to the question of what stakeholders want, scholars have provided numerous lists of stakeholders' interests (Frooman, 1999). For example, Wood (1994; cited in Frooman, 1999) proposed several sorting schemes for the stakeholder's interests, such as concrete vs. symbolic, economic vs. social and local vs. domestic vs. international interests. It is noteworthy that different stakeholder groups may share similar stakes and interests regarding the focal organisational issue. This notion is affirmed in the concept of *Stakeholder Multicity* of Neville and Menguc (2006). The authors stated, "Different stakeholders may make the same, or complementary, claims upon the organisation, which may then strengthen and reinforce the salience of each claim." (p. 380).

However, according to Wolfe and Putler (2002) the concept of stake required further development. The authors affirmed that despite its pivotal role in the stakeholder theory, discussion and development of the concept of "stake" subsequent to Freeman's (1984) work has been minimal. They added, "Consequently, a primary challenge to further developing stakeholder theory is the development of a broadly acceptable definition of the term "stake"." (p. 67, brackets are original). In addition, one of the theoretical challenges facing the stakeholder theory, highlighted by Winn (2001), is the need for more robust ways to measure the stakeholder effect. In order to advance the

theory beyond the entrenched dichotomy of economic vs. social firm performance, the author advocated investigating the stakeholder stakes per se. She states:

“stakeholder objectives are logically and causally prior to stakeholder effects; measuring objectives and then tracing the effect of objectives on stakeholder action can open up the inquiry into the very relationship between objectives (stakes and interests) and the effects of stakeholder action. Empirically inquiring what the objectives of a stakeholder are allows us to potentially unravel the Gordian knot of the inextricable definitional link between stakeholder and stake” (2001, p. 134).

Furthermore, Winn (2001) encouraged researchers to study the organisation’s response to non-routine issues raised by the stakeholder. The author argued that routine issues tend to mask the underlying conflicts in the stakeholder-organisation interactions, whereas non-routine issues tend to require more explicit problem solving and decision-making. She stated, “although stakeholder research in routine and non-routine firm responses can offer important insights for stakeholder theory, focusing on non-routine issues may provide a more fertile area of research.” (p. 138).

One of the studies in this direction is the work of Eesley and Lenox (2006), where the stakeholder’s stake was reflected by the action requested by the stakeholder. In this study, the authors strived to advance the theory of Mitchell et al. (1997) regarding stakeholder identification and salience by redefining saliency in terms of the nature of the stakeholder’s request and by proposing that the stakeholder’s attributes (i.e. power, legitimacy, and urgency) arise out of the nature of stakeholder–request–firm triplets. Focusing on organisations’ responses to actions requested by secondary stakeholders (i.e. community activists, advocacy groups, religious organisations, and Non-Governmental Organisations), the authors highlighted four categories for stakeholders’ requested actions, namely, adopting principles or signing pledges, labelling products or processes, reporting on operations and making operational changes.

Another study in the same direction is the work of Perrault (2012). Building on the work of Eesley and Lenox (2006), Perrault (2012) described the stakeholder’s claims through three interrelated elements, namely, specific *requested actions* about an *issue* of concern, which is brought to the

attention of the organisation's management via a *request tactic*. The author differentiated between the requested action and issue of concern. According to the author, the requested action is the specific action to be taken by the organisation, according to the stakeholder (such as disclosing more information or changing a certain operation); whereas, the issue is the concerns of the stakeholder regarding the activities or policies of the organisation. With regard to the request tactic, the author defined it as the medium through which stakeholders make their issues and requested action known in attempts to influence the organisation, which may range from letter-writing campaigns to filing lawsuits (Perrault, 2012). In the following subsection, these request tactics (or influence mechanisms) are discussed in further detail.

4.2.4 The Influential Means used by the Stakeholders

Many scholars have investigated how stakeholders influence organisations. Most of them have focused on the stakeholder influence strategies. One of the first studies in this line was the work of Frooman (1999). Based on the resource dependence theory, Frooman (1999) provided a model for organisation-stakeholder relationships that specifies four types of dependence relationships, namely, stakeholder power (when the organisation depends on the stakeholder), firm power (when the stakeholder depends on the organisation), high interdependence and low interdependence. Hence, the author proposed that the choice of influence strategy to control the flow of the resources to the organisation is determined by the stakeholder's dependence on the organisation. Specifically, Frooman (1999) classified these strategies as withholding or usage, which can be direct or indirect.

According to Frooman (1999), when the stakeholder *does not depend* on the organisation, the stakeholder will choose withholding strategies. Direct withholding strategy is applied if the organisation *depends* on the stakeholder (stakeholder power). In this case, the stakeholder will discontinue supplying resources to the organisation, for example, by boycotting it or creditors withdrawing funds. Indirect withholding strategy is applied if the organisation *does not depend* on the stakeholder (low interdependence). In this case, the stakeholder works with an ally to manipulate the flow of the resources. A good example of this scenario is when consumer advocacy groups try to persuade customers to boycott an organisation.

However, according to Frooman (1999), when the stakeholder *depends* on the organisation, the stakeholder tends to choose usage strategies. Direct usage strategy is applied if the organisation is also dependent on the stakeholder (high interdependence). In this case, the stakeholder conditions the usage of the resources available for the organisation through negotiations. For example, Frooman (1999) highlighted a case of a tuna canning company restricting the type of fishing nets used by its suppliers. Indirect usage strategy is applied if the organisation *does not depend* on the stakeholder (firm power). In this case, the stakeholder works with an ally to influence the organisation. For example, shareholder resolution could be considered as an indirect usage strategy (Hendry, 2005). Laplume et al. (2008) affirmed that several studies, such as Sharma and Henriques (2005) and O'Connell et al. (2005), have in general supported Frooman's model.

Hendry (2005) asserted that stakeholders employ several influential strategies simultaneously. Furthermore, by focusing on how environmental non-governmental organisations work with their allies to influence focal organisations, Hendry (2005) highlighted the use of communication strategies. According to the author, by means of such strategies, stakeholders convey the organisation's problematic behaviour to their allies to encourage them to use a withholding strategy or a usage strategy, depending on the type of stakeholder-organisation relationship. As examples of communication strategies, the author cited protest, blockade and report production.

Friedman and Miles (2006) focused on the employment of communication strategies as a means by which stakeholders convey their concerns to the management of the focal organisation rather than to their allies. According to the authors, stakeholders may convey their concerns to the organisations' decisions-makers and demand for actions via *Voice Strategies*, such as formal/informal meetings, correspondence, letter-writing campaigns, complaints and suggestion boxes. Through these voice strategies, the stakeholders aim to "inform, educate or persuade organisations to change" (Friedman and Miles, 2006b; p. 191). In addition, the authors classified boycotts, direct hostile activism (which hinders organisational operations) and modified vendettas (the state of bitter and lasting hostility) as damage strategies. According to the authors, certain stakeholders, and environmental pressure groups in particular, carry out confrontational actions aimed directly at stopping the organisation's operations.

Whilst some scholars have focused on the stakeholder influence strategies, others have focused on determining when stakeholders act. For example, Rowley and Berman (2000) affirmed that stakeholders act when they are aware, willing, and capable to effectively mobilise against the focal organisation. The authors stated, “stakeholder groups must be cognizant of the firm’s behaviour, be willing to take action to influence the firm, and have the capabilities to do so” (Rowley and Berman, 2000, p. 409). In addition, Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003) argued that stakeholders’ mobilisation is motivated by the desire to express an identity as well as protect interests. Furthermore, Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003) highlighted four factors that increase the likelihood of collective action within a particular stakeholder group. These factors consist of past experiences in collective actions, the density of the relations among the members of the group, characterised by members who value the common identity conferred through their association with the group and a few members who belong to overlapping stakeholder groups with conflicting interests. Butterfield et al. (2004) argued that collaboration between the different stakeholder groups in their interaction with a focal organisation is influenced by the responsiveness of the focal organisation and the fulfilment of the prerequisites of collaboration.

Laplume et al. (2008) argued that stakeholders form coalitions to combine power and legitimacy to enhance their positions vis-à-vis the organisation. According to Eesley and Lenox (2006), stakeholders influence the focal organisation if they possess power and legitimacy. However, Friedman and Miles (2002) argued that stakeholders’ influence depends on the organisation-stakeholder relation. Specifically, the authors argued that some stakeholders have more influence over organisations than others due to: the structural nature of the organisation-stakeholder relation (in terms of being compatible/incompatible and necessary/contingent); the contractual forms existing (in terms of being explicit/implicit and recognised/unrecognised) and the institutional supports available.

The mechanisms via which influence occurs are relevant to how stakeholders influence the focal organisation. The review of the literature revealed numerous such mechanisms, including shareholder resolutions and divestitures, boycotts, letter-writing campaigns and strikes. However, whenever these mechanisms are highlighted, the authors most often list and briefly discuss these

mechanisms to demonstrate their viewpoints. Indeed, as stated earlier, most of the stakeholder literature addressing how stakeholders influence focal organisations has focused on the adopted strategies (Whetten et al., 2001); and little attention has been given to the employed mechanisms. “In the management literature the question of stakeholder tactics largely has been left unattended”, den Hond and de Bakker (2007) asserted (p. 901). The same notion was reaffirmed by van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010).

Recent refinements of the stakeholder theory focus on the stakeholder’s actions. Moreover, some of these refinements stressed the significance of the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders in determining stakeholder saliency. For example, Eesley and Lenox (2006) highlighted the request tactics and provided empirical evidence that coupled the legitimacy of the stakeholder with the adopted request tactics. Perrault (2012) argued that the legitimacy of the request tactic is one of the four elements that determine the stakeholder’s salience.

Nevertheless, despite such discussion of the mechanisms employed by stakeholders, very little of the stakeholder literature has concentrated on such mechanisms. Only three studies were found to go beyond the simple listing of the mechanisms to provide classifications. The first is the work of Green and Hunton-Clarke (2003). The authors advocated the potential benefits of stakeholders’ participations in organisational decision-making, and highlighted the need for developing a systematic approach for classifying these participations. They affirmed that there is “no systematic method for its [the stakeholders’ participation] application within companies and company decision-making” (p. 292). Thus, they proposed a typology that reflects the key purpose of the stakeholders’ participations from the perspective of the company. den Hond and de Bakker (2007) and Zietsma and Winn (2008) were the other two studies. Both studies developed typologies for the mechanisms employed by specific stakeholder groups, the activist groups, rather than stakeholders in general. Thus, there is still a lack of systematic classification of the mechanisms employed by stakeholders to influence organisational decisions.

4.2.5 The Factors that Determine Stakeholder Influence

The review of the stakeholder literature highlighted three factors that determine stakeholder impact on an organisational issue. The first is stakeholder awareness, which is a precondition for stakeholder involvement in any action. Stakeholder awareness is simply a question of whether the stakeholder is aware or not about his/her stake in the specific organisational issue. Such awareness of the threats to (or the opportunities for enhancing) the stakeholder's stakes determines, at the outset, whether or not the stakeholder will get involved and exercise any influence to protect (or enhance) such stakes and interests. Without such awareness and recognition, stakeholders are not expected to act to pursue their interest.

Mitchell et al. (1997) recognised the decisiveness of stakeholder awareness in determining the impact of the stakeholder by stating, "An entity may possess power to impose its will upon a firm, but unless it is aware of its power and willing to exercise it on the firm, it is not a stakeholder with high salience for managers" (p. 865). Rowley and Berman (2000) also stressed the significance of stakeholder awareness and argued that stakeholders' influence is a function of their awareness, willingness and capability. They stated, "We argue that stakeholder action is part of the mechanism linking social performance with FP [financial performance] ... stakeholder groups must be cognizant of the firm's behaviour, be willing to take action to influence the firm, and have the capabilities to do so" (Rowley and Berman, 2000, p. 409).

The second factor that determines the impact of a stakeholder on an organisational issue is the urgency of the stakeholder's claims regarding that specific organisational issue. The concept of stakeholder urgency was introduced by Mitchell et al. (1997) to reflect the extent to which a stake is critical to the stakeholder. In their theory of stakeholder identification and salience, Mitchell et al. defined the urgency of the stakeholder's claims as "the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention" based on the time sensitivity and the criticality of the stakeholder's claims (Mitchell et al, 1997, p. 867). The more pressing the stakeholder's claims the higher the urgency, and the higher the urgency the more likely organisations are to encounter serious stakeholders' interventions. Eesley and Lenox (2006) differentiated between the urgency of the stakeholder per

se and the urgency of the stakeholder's claims. The authors affirmed that the latter is more vital in eliciting an organisational response.

The third factor is the stakeholder's capability, which is a concept that embraces the power to bring about the desired outcomes as well as the legitimacy for bringing about these outcomes. Eesley and Lenox (2006) affirm this notion and state that stakeholder influence is determined by the relative power of the stakeholder to the organisation and by the stakeholder's legitimacy and the legitimacy of the claims. Mitchell et al. (1997) asserted that power and legitimacy are two different dimensions that sometimes overlap and enhance each other as "Power gains authority through legitimacy" and "Legitimacy gains rights through power" (p. 869 and p. 870).

Pfeffer (1981) defined power as "the relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not have otherwise done" (p. 3). Similarly, Mitchell et al. (1997) viewed power as a transitory attribute that reflects the ability to impose will in a relationship and bring about the desired outcomes. Moreover, the authors differentiated between three bases of power, namely, coercive, utilitarian and normative powers by stating "Therefore, a party to a relationship has power, to the extent it has or can gain access to coercive, utilitarian, or normative means, to impose its will in the relationship" (1997, p. 865). According to the authors, coercive power is based on physical resources; utilitarian power is based on material or financial resources and normative power is based on symbolic resources (Mitchell et al., 1997). However, while viewing power as access to resources, Eesley and Lenox (2006) defined stakeholder power as access to resources relative to both the resource base of the stakeholder and the organisation being targeted.

With regards to legitimacy, Suchman (1995) defined legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (p. 574). Some stakeholder scholars, such as Mitchell et al. (1997) and Agle et al. (1999), have adopted this broad definition to define stakeholder legitimacy in terms of the legitimacy of the entity itself. On the other hand, other scholars, such as Eesley and Lenox (2006) and Perrault (2012), have tended to differentiate

between the legitimacy of the stakeholder as an entity and the legitimacy of the stakeholder's claim and actions. Recently, Santana (2012) defined stakeholder legitimacy as:

“A composite perception by the focal organisation's management of the legitimacy of the stakeholder as an entity, legitimacy of the stakeholder's claim, and legitimacy of the stakeholder's behaviour at a certain point in time.” (p. 258)

To sum up this section, the impact of a stakeholder on an organisational issue is a function of three stakeholder-related factors. These factors are (1) the awareness of the stakeholder about the threats/opportunities to his/her stakes in the organisational issue, (2) the urgency of the stakeholder's claims in terms the time sensitivity and criticality of these claims and (3) the capability of the stakeholder in terms of the possession of power and legitimacy.

4.3 THE STAKEHOLDERS OF THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

In this section, the succession literature is reviewed to highlight the stakeholder of the succession process. Initially, the embracement of the stakeholder notion in the succession literature is illustrated. Then, the review proceeds to identify the stakeholders of the succession process and sheds light on the impact of the identified stakeholders on the succession process.

4.3.1 The Notion of the Stakeholder in the Succession Literature

The stakeholder notion is not unheard of in the succession literature. As demonstrated earlier, the ritual scapegoating theory of Gamson and Scotch (1964) highlighted the stakeholders' impact on the succession phenomenon. Specifically, the authors described the succession phenomenon as a ritual of scapegoating, which is partially motivated by the need to placate frustrated stakeholders and to demonstrate awareness of the need for change. In addition, Zald (1965) recognised the diverse interests of both formal and informal groups, different in-group allegiances and the competing claims over the succession process, which are fundamental notions in the stakeholder theory. The author stated:

“The finding of a social process to disengage forces is especially important when the people who have the most at stake in the succession process cannot directly affect the outcome (because of their legal disbarment). In a large-scale organisation, the strategy must be to specify the terms of the discussion and who shall participate in the election in such a way as to maximize the opportunities of the normally weaker group”(p 60).

Along this line, Cannella and Shen (2001) asserted the substantive and symbolic implications for the interests of the parties involved in CEO succession processes.

In addition, Gilmore and McCann (1983; cited in Kesner and Sebor, 1994) adopted a stakeholder perspective to investigate the succession process stages. Furthermore, the stakeholder notion is very evident in the stream of the literature addressing the succession phenomenon in family owned businesses, where both family members and other external stakeholders are considered. For example, Fiegener et al. (1996) reported that CEOs of family owned businesses prepare their successors by developing personal relationships with their successor and between the successor and the stakeholders of the business (i.e. customers and vendors). Sharma (2004) affirmed that family business studies have investigated various stakeholders and devoted attention to the next-generation members (successors) as one of the internal stakeholders' categories.

The stakeholder perspective is also found in those studies focusing on the consequences of succession, where some succession scholars have investigated the impact of the phenomenon on various stakeholders. For example, Greenblatt (1983) investigated the impact of succession on the organisational staff. Reinganum (1985), Lubatkin et al. (1986, 1989) and Worrell and Davidson (1987) focused on the stockholders to examine the market reaction to succession events. Moreover, Harrison and Fiet (1999) explored the consequences of the successor's decisions regarding the investment in the research and development, capital equipment and pension funds on the various stakeholder groups (i.e. creditors, suppliers, stockholders and organisational staff). In addition, the succession model of Kesner and Sebor (1994) highlighted the consequences of the succession phenomenon on both internal (i.e. executive officers and non managers) and external stakeholders (i.e. shareholders, other fiduciaries and non-fiduciaries).

To sum up, the review of succession literature highlighted various studies that dealt, in one way or another, with stakeholder's issues. However, most of these studies have focused on the consequences of the succession process on the various stakeholders. None of these studies investigated the impact of the various stakeholders on the succession process. Nonetheless, the impact of specific stakeholders, such as the office incumbent, the board of directors and the successor, was highlighted in the succession literature. Another noteworthy remark was made by Kesner and Sebra (1994) in their literature review. The authors, in their proposed model of the succession, underlined the dearth of succession studies addressing the involvement of the external stakeholders in the process. These two points stress the need for investigation of the impact of the various stakeholders on the succession process including external stakeholders, which is the aim of this research.

4.3.2 Identifying the Stakeholder of the Succession Process

As the approach of the current research to investigating the influential factors acting upon the succession process is holistic, the researcher adopted Freeman's (1984) stakeholder definition to identify the stakeholders of the succession process. Thus, the stakeholders of the succession process are all those who can affect or are affected by the succession process¹. This broad definition opens the door wide for investigating the impact of various stakeholders on the process, including those who were most often overlooked in the succession literature.

Furthermore, the researcher differentiated between two major groups of stakeholders, *internal* and *external* stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are those confined within the organisational boundary, such as the organisation's board of directors, top management and staff. External stakeholders are all those beyond the organisational boundary, such as interest groups, media and regulatory agencies. This distinction between internal and external stakeholders was made due to these two groups possessing different knowledge regarding the information needed to satisfy the aim of the current research. It should be recalled that the research aims to explain how the various influential stakeholders (along with context-related factors) influence the succession processes for executive

¹ While the current research focuses on those who can affect the process, the consideration of those who are affected by the process as stakeholders reflects the researcher's emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between the process and the various involved parties (actors).

positions in the Bahraini public sector. To accomplish this aim, the perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders are needed. However, only internal stakeholders are expected to possess the relevant knowledge to reflect how succession processes are executed in their organisations and to verify any detected variations. Thus, there is a need to approach these two stakeholders group differently in order to satisfy the aim of the research. In other words, the type of information needed from the internal stakeholders differs from that needed from the external stakeholders. On one hand, the external stakeholders' perspective is needed to explain how they influence the succession process. On the other hand, the internal stakeholders' perspective is needed to verify any detected variations in the succession processes and whether or not such variations are related to the involvement of those external stakeholders. Thus, such distinction between internal and external stakeholders facilitates the design of data collection methods that comply with the relevant knowledge of the two distinct stakeholder groups.

Furthermore, following the advice of Winn (2001) and Wolfe and Putler (2002) regarding the use of the generic stakeholders groups as a starting point for analysis of the stakeholders of an organisational issue, the researcher divided the two major stakeholder groups (internal and external stakeholders) into subgroups. This was done by reflecting the generic stakeholder groups highlighted in the previous section on the focal organisational issue being addressed here (the succession process) and by considering the influential actors in the Bahraini context that were highlighted in Chapter 2. Specifically, the researcher differentiated between three internal stakeholder subgroups, namely, (1) the organisation's top management, (2) officials of the Human Resources Management (HRM), and (3) executive class employees. This was done to reflect the perspectives of the decision-makers of the succession process (the organisation's top management), the coordinators/executers of the process (HRM officials) and the predecessor/successor (the executive class employees). In addition, the external stakeholder group was divided into five subgroups. These external stakeholder subgroups are: (1) political associations, (2) professional

associations, (3) social associations, (4) media organisations, and (5) policy-makers and regulatory bodies for succession processes in the public sector¹.

In the following subsections, the succession literature is reviewed to highlight the impact of the various stakeholders on the process. However, as stated earlier, no single succession study was found to address the impact of the stakeholders on the succession process, with only the impact of specific stakeholders being highlighted in the succession literature. Specifically, the succession literature devoted varying levels of attention to the office incumbent (predecessor), the board of directors and the successor. Other internal and external stakeholders were most often overlooked. Thus, the following subsections are dedicated to shedding light on the involvements of the office incumbent (predecessor), the board of directors and the successor in the succession process.

4.3.3 The Office Incumbent's (predecessor) Impact on the Succession Process

The impact of the office incumbent (predecessor) on the succession process and its outcomes has been long recognised, especially in cases where the office under consideration is at the top of the organisational pyramid. For instance, Kotin and Sharaf (1967; cited in Kesner and Sebor, 1994) highlighted the impact of the administrative style of the predecessor on the performance of the successor. It is noteworthy that the literature review revealed several influential factors that determine the office incumbent's (predecessor) impact on the succession process, which either explicitly or implicitly reflect the office incumbent's power.

From the early days of succession literature, the involvement of power issues has been recognised. Zald (1965) highlighted the power issues by stating, "At the very least the choosing of a successor has to reflect the power balance of the organisation" (p. 53). The author argued that how the appointment is made and who is appointed to the position are vital indices of the underlying political structure and reflective of the directions and processes of political change. The author also highlighted the role of the office incumbent in the succession process by asserting that:

¹ Policy-makers and regulatory bodies are those governmental organisations that influence the succession process in the public sector by establishing policies and regulations, supervising the execution of or have direct involvements. Specifically, these bodies are the Economic Development Board (EDB), Supreme Council for Women (SCW), Civil Service Bureau (CSB), and Bahrain Institute for Public Administration (BIPA).

“Although the chief staff member had little formal power in the decision, it is clear from the description of events that he played an important informal role. He not only helped define a method which favoured Leaf [the successor] but at key points he presented information and orientations favourable to Leaf” (p. 58).

According to Zald (1965), the following four factors facilitated this influential role for the office incumbent: (1) the long and confidential relationship with the board of directors, (2) the office incumbent’s high standard of performance means that his/her judgment about the successor appointment is not questioned, (3) the structure and the operation of the board, which dictate the degree to which board members are dependent on the office incumbent for administrative services, and (4) the information asymmetry between the office incumbent and the board members. These remarks by Zald (1965) have inspired other scholars to investigate the role played by the office incumbent in the succession process (Cannella Jr. and Lubatkin, 1993).

For example, Lamb (1987) highlighted the influence of the office incumbent’s (predecessor) personal power on the succession strategy. Lorsch and MacIver (1989; cited in Lorsch and Young, 1990) affirmed that the influence of the incumbent CEO over the selection of his/her successor is greater than that exercised by the board of directors. Fredrickson et al. (1988) and Ocasio (1994) emphasised the incumbent CEO’s power in mediating the link between the organisation’s performance and his/her dismissal. Moreover, Cannella Jr. and Lubatkin (1993) in extending Fredrickson et al.’s (1988) socio-political model to include the selection of the new CEO, confirmed the previous notion about the influential role of the office incumbent in selecting his/her successor. Also, Pitcher et al. (2000) affirmed, “Incumbent CEO power is thought not only to moderate the rate of succession in the face of poor performance but also to influence the process of the selection of a successor” (p. 627).

Furthermore, in addition to the socio-political factors, Zajac and Westphal (1996) highlighted the social psychological dimensions in the incumbent CEO’s involvement in selecting his/her successor, such as the similarity-attraction principle and self-categorization theory. Based on this integrated socio-political and social psychological perspective, Zajac and Westphal (1996) investigated changes in the characteristics of the CEO in the CEO succession context, where the

predecessor and the board of directors have divergent preferences. The findings indicated that the new CEOs are less likely to exhibit different characteristics and successors are demographically similar to their predecessors if the latter are more powerful than the members of the boards of directors (Zajac and Westphal, 1996).

As has been illustrated previously in the succession process typologies, the office incumbent is recognised as an influential stakeholder and sometimes presumed to have the upper hand in succession processes such as the relay process. For instance, (Vancil, 1987) noticed that succession planning often rests in the hands of the office incumbent, who most often controls the relay and horse race succession processes. Friedman and Olk (1995) implicitly referred to the office incumbent's power in their explanation of the need to keep the office incumbent in the dark about any insurgency in the coup d'état succession processes in avoiding powerful interventions on his/her part.

Cannella Jr. and Shen (2001), in their examination of the heir apparent tenure in the relay process, found that the influences on the outcome of the succession process in relation to the heir apparent (being promoted to CEO or exiting the organisation) are a function of the power distribution between the incumbent CEO and outside directors. Furthermore, according to Shen and Cannella Jr. (2002a), non-CEO inside directors may not always support the incumbent CEO when their own career advancement is at stake.

Another way that scholars have expressed the office incumbent's (predecessor) power is by focusing on his/her way of departure and post succession links with the organisation. For example, Gephart (1978), highlighted the impact of the way in which the office incumbent departs his/her office (i.e. retirement, voluntary resignation, firing, promotion or intra-organisational movement, or death) on both the succession process and its outcomes. Ashcraft (1999) investigated maternity leave as an additional way of departure. Kesner and Sebora (1994) considered the way in which the office incumbent leaves office as the initiation force for the succession process.

The way of departure is an indication both of the predecessor's influence over the succession process and the impact of the circumstances associated with the way in which he/she leaves office.

Each way of leaving also indicates the extent to which the predecessor maintains an influence after leaving the office through influence embodied in his/her post-succession power, legitimacy and relationship with the organisation. For example, Gordon and Rosen (1981a) highlighted the significance of the position of the predecessor after leaving office and affirm that “if the former leader is being promoted one level up in an organisational framework that includes his former unit, he remains in a position to influence what happens before and after his replacement arrives” (p. 244). A similar argument was put forward by Fredrickson et al. (1988) to support their notion about the predecessor’s subsequent influence enabling him/her to maintain varying degrees of connectedness to the organisation. The predecessor may enhance the influence deriving from such connectedness by becoming the chairperson of the board of directors, a member of the board or a consultant. Also, if the office incumbent has been forced out of office, then he/she would have very little to say regarding the person chosen as his/her successor or how that succession should occur. In addition, Brady and Helmich (1984) emphasised the importance of the office incumbent’s involvement in the succession process, as did Friedman (1986).

4.3.4 Board of Directors’ impact on the Succession Process¹

One of the earlier studies focusing on the relation between the board characteristics and the succession phenomenon was that of Zald (1969). In this conceptual study, the author argued that the board’s influence varies depending on external detachable resources, personal characteristics, and strategic contingency situations; and he highlighted the succession phenomenon as a good index of and stimulus for mobilization of the board’s power. According to the author, the power of the board members is based on their access to and control of relevant external resources (i.e. stockownership, external funding and facilities control, and community legitimation) and their knowledge about ongoing organisational operations (which is in turn conditioned by organisational aspects such as size and complexity). With regard to the personal characteristics, Zald (1969) highlighted socioeconomic status and sex; and argued that high-status members are more influential than highly involved and knowledgeable members.

¹ Highlighting the role of the board of directors in the private sector in the succession process illuminates, to some extent, the role of the parallel decision-makers in the public sector organisations.

Subsequent studies in this line have focused on the relationship between board characteristics (such as board size and insider versus outsider dominance) and the degree of involvement in succession decisions (Kesner and Sebor, 1994). Many scholars have addressed the link between board characteristics and the succession process. For example, Helmich (1974a) linked the expansion of board size as organisational growth measure to outsider successors. Moreover, in a later study, Helmich (1976) found that outsider successors are more associated with larger board and smaller executive span¹.

In addition to the size of the board, Brady and Helmich (1984) confirmed the impact of the board's composition, in terms of the proportion of inside to outside directors, on the appointment of the CEO successor. Weisbach (1988) argued that CEO succession is the responsibility of the board; however, since insider directors are unable or unwilling to challenge the incumbent CEO, with whom their careers are tied up, CEO removal is likely to fall mainly on outside directors. Weisbach's (1988) findings supported this proposition and suggested that under unsatisfactory performance, the CEO is removed by boards dominated by outsider directors. However, Ocasio's (1994) findings indicated that insider dominance of the board of directors would lead to an increase in CEO succession under economic adversity. Ocasio (1994) explained his findings by arguing that more information is available for the board to evaluate the incumbent CEO's performance via insider directors. The author stated:

“Inside board members serve several functions that may increase CEO succession under adversity: They are readily available candidates for the position, they have essential information on the company's operation, they are sources of social comparison in the board's evaluation of the CEO, and, under adversity, their rivalry with the CEO becomes manifest” (1994, p. 310).

Focusing on the impact of the board composition on the successor's origin, Boeker and Goodstein (1993) found that an outsider succession, even under poor organisational performance, is less likely to occur where insider influence is high in terms of board dominance and concentrated

¹ According to the author, executive span is identified by the average number of executives reporting directly to the president.

organisational ownership (inside directors and employees). Along this line, yet from the other way around, Puffer and Weintrop (1995) found that lower insider dominance of the board is associated with an external successor when the predecessor has most likely been dismissed. Moreover, Zajac and Westphal (1996) findings suggested that powerful boards are associated with board-successor demographic similarity, especially if the successors are outsiders. In addition, other scholars, such as Borokhovich et al. (1996), Huson et al. (2001) and Zhang and Rajagopalan (2003), reached the same conclusion about the composition of the board, in terms of insider and outsider directors, and successor origin. Yet, Bommer and Ellstrand (1996) found that neither outside dominance nor the distribution of stockownership between insider and outsider directors had an effect on a successor's origin.

In parallel to those studies focusing on the links between the characteristics of the board and the succession process, other studies addressed the board's involvement in the succession process. For instance, McCanna and Comte (1986) highlighted gender reasons for boards to step in and remove the incumbent CEO, including board-CEO personal incompatibility and scapegoating of the CEO by vocal and powerful board constituencies. Fredrickson et al. (1988) affirmed that CEO dismissal is mediated by the board's expectations, attributions, allegiances and values. Puffer and Weintrop (1991) confirmed the role of board expectations and that CEO turnover occurs when reported annual earnings per share fall short of expectations.

In general, the literature review showed that boards of directors are held more responsible for the decisions concerning CEO succession than for any other positions in the organisation¹. Yet, boards are not fulfilling their responsibilities (Zald, 1969) and they are powerless in comparison to the CEO incumbent (Weisbach, 1988). This was reiterated by subsequent studies. Kesner and Sebor (1994) reinforced this view by stating:

“While distinct in their coverage, these various studies confirmed what board researchers had acknowledged for years. In many firms, CEOs had the power and authority to offset the board's oversight duties and thereby influence the succession process” (p. 361).

¹ Helmich (1976) made the noteworthy suggestion that board members, in attempting to reduce incumbent CEO influence, might try to replace staff at subordinate levels.

More recently, Tonello, Wilcox, and Eichbaum (2009) asserted that boards heavily rely on the incumbent CEO to develop and lead the succession planning. This suggests that the core factor for determining the impact of the board director on the succession process is the extent to which board members, individually and collectively, possess and utilize power to enforce their preferences with regard to the successor appointment and the execution of the succession process. Giambatista et al. (2005) affirmed this notion by stating, “A central theoretical perspective focuses on power and politics within the firm in understanding the role of the board members in CEO succession” (p. 967).

4.3.5 Successor’s Impact on the Succession Process

Given the central role of the successor in the succession process, the impact of this key stakeholder on the outcomes of the process was highlighted even in the earliest succession studies, such as those of Whyte (1949), Lipset (1960), Carlson (1961), Grusky (1964) and Kotin and Sharaf (1967; cited in Kesner and Sebra, 1994). Some of the studies which investigated the impact of the successor on the succession process highlighted his/her power as the most significant factor in determining his/her impact on the process. For example, one of the four distinctive succession processes highlighted by Friedman and Olk’s (1995) typology, Coup d’état, is about a powerful successor who removes the office incumbent. Another example is the work of Shen and Cannella (2002a), which highlighted the power contest within the top management of an organisation in the contender succession process. The authors proposed that an insider successor (the contender) is more likely to follow a dismissed CEO if there are powerful executives. The authors reflected the executives’ power in terms of them being members of the organisation’s board of directors and having stake ownership.

However, dissimilar to other stakeholders of the succession process, all successors share a common interest in the process. For example, while predecessors have varying interests in the succession process (e.g. in terms of when or how to depart the office or who should be the successor), all the successors have a common interest in the process, which is to assume the position under consideration. In other words, successors could be considered as a homogeneous stakeholder

group. Successors' possession of this unique attribute necessitates a deeper look into the succession literature to identify any common factors determining the successors' impact on the succession process, beyond the three determinants identified for all stakeholders in general (awareness, urgency and capability).

Thus, in addition to the successor's power, the literature review revealed two additional factors that determine the successor's impact on the succession process. The first factor is straightforward; namely, the availability of candidates for the position other than the selected successor. However, the second factor, the appropriateness of the successor for the position, is obscured by heated discussion about successor classifications. The following parts discuss these two factors. However, before discussing the appropriateness of the successor, a brief account of the debate about successor classification (or in other words, types of successor) is presented.

4.3.5.1 The Availability of Candidates for the Position

The literature review indicated that the availability of appropriate candidates, as perceived by the decision-makers of the succession process, influences the succession process in several respects. For example, some scholars reflected the impact of the availability of candidates on the succession process in terms of the financial cost associated with retaining internal candidates and recruiting external candidates. For example, Parrino (1997) and Murphy (2002) highlighted the overall costs associated with hiring an outsider successor as a factor in determining the likelihood of an external succession process. However, the criterion most commonly applied to reflect the impact of the availability of candidates on the succession process is the number of appropriate candidates recognised by the decision-makers. Pfeffer and Moore (1980), Fredrickson et al. (1988), Kesner and Sebor (1994) and Sebor and Kesner (1996) argued that the availability of alternative candidates for the position of CEO mediates the dismissal of a CEO, and thereby the appointment of another. Furthermore, as illustrated earlier, in section 3.4.1 Succession Process Typologies, the number of candidates considered for a position is one of the variables in determining the type of succession process. Accordingly, if only one candidate is identified, the succession process is most likely to unfold as a relay (or heir apparent) process. Similarly, if two or more candidates are identified, the process is most likely to unfold as a horse race process.

Thus, one may argue that the number of available candidates for a position influences the extent to which the selected successor has an impact on the process. A successor who is the sole candidate for a position has more impact on the process than one who is selected from among other candidates. For example, the successor in the relay process (who is heir apparent and the sole candidate) may influence the duration of the succession process via the time he/she requires to be ready to assume the position. However, this is not the case when more than one candidate is being considered.

4.3.5.2 The Debate about Successor Classifications

Scholars differentiated among successors in attempts to link the succession phenomenon with its consequences (Kesner and Sebora, 1994). The literature review revealed different forms of classification of successors, which are summarised in Table 4-1 in the following page. Nevertheless, two main approaches were adopted.

The first and predominant approach differentiates successors on the basis of “*who they are*” with respect to the recruiting organisation, and categorises successors as *insiders* or *outsiders* based on their affiliation with a certain group representing the organisation’s insiders (the insider group). Most often, this successor-insiders group affiliation was reflected by the similarities between the successor and the members of the insider group in terms of tenure with the recruiting organisation or membership of the executive role constellation.

However, the findings of subsequent studies that investigated the consequences associated with insider/outsider successors were often inconsistent (Birnbaum, 1988; Davidson et al., 1990; Giambatista et al., 2005; Karaevli, 2007; Kesner and Sebora, 1994). According to Pfeffer and Leblebici (1973), the successor-performance relationship depends on how these basic terms are defined. Davidson et al. (1990) stated, “Other succession conditions may mediate the impact of the successor origin, but the source of these inconsistent findings may also be the lack of specificity of the successor origin variable” (p. 650). In addition, Kesner and Sebora (1994) stated, “Importantly, these differences in the way key variables were measured may have contributed greatly to the

mixed findings reported throughout the research” (p. 356). The same notion was echoed by other scholars, such as Zajac and Westphal (1996) and Shen and Cannella Jr. (2002b).

TABLE 4-1: SUCCESSOR CLASSIFICATIONS

Author(s)	Successor classification
Carlson (1961)	An insider successor is a place-bound individual who waits for a promotion opportunity within his/her organisation, while an outsider successor is a career-bound individual who seeks opportunities wherever they can be found.
Grusky (1964); Zajac (1990); Wiersema (1992); Zajac & Westphal (1996); Lauterbach et al. (1999)	An insider successor is an individual who is promoted from within the present staff, while an outsider successor is not.
Helmich & Brown (1972); Helmich (1974b, 1975a, b, 1976); Dalton & Kesner (1983, 1985)	An inside successor is an individual from the predecessor’s executive role constellation, while an outside successor is not.
Allen et al. (1979); Virany et al. (1992)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for at least one year directly prior to promotion; while an outsider is anyone else.
Huson et al. (2001)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for more than one year prior to promotion, while an outsider is anyone else.
Cannella & Lubatkin (1993); Williams et al. (2007)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for at least two years, while an outsider is anyone else.
Worrell et al. (1997); Sakano and Lewin (1999)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for more than two years, while an outsider is anyone else.
Datta & Guthrie (1994); Chaganti and Sambharya (1987); Vancil (1987)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for at least five years, while an outsider is anyone else.
Lubatkin et al. (1989)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for at least five years, while an outsider is an individual who has been with the organisation for one year or less prior to his/her promotion.
Davidson et al. (1990)	An insider is an individual who is promoted from within the organisation where he/she has been employed for at least six years, while an outsider is an individual who has been with the organisation for less than a year prior to his/her promotion.
Birnbaum (1971)	Proposed the concept of industry/contextual familiarity and argued that outsider successors were often insiders on critical criteria other than service within the recruiting organisation.
Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996); Finkelstein et al. (2009)	Successor’s <i>Outsiderness</i> is a continuum that ranges from extreme insider to extreme outsider based on his/her organisational tenure at the recruiting organisation and their industry backgrounds.
Shen and Cannella Jr. (2002b)	Successors are classified as followers, contenders, or outsiders based on power struggle within top management and how successors take over the position.

Author(s)	Successor classification
Zhang and Rajagopalan (2003)	Successors are classified into intra-firm, intra-industry and outside-industry. An intra-firm successor is an individual who served within the recruiting firm for at least two years before his/her promotion. An intra-industry successor is an individual who had firm tenure of less than two years but had industry tenure of at least two years in the same industry as the recruiting firm. An outside-industry successor is an individual who had industry tenure of less than two years in the same industry.
Karaevli (2007)	Successor's <i>Outsiderness</i> is the extent to which he/she brings different leadership style, knowledge, skills, and perspective to a firm based on his/her previous experience in other firms and industries.
Ndofor et al (2009)	Successors are differentiated according to their cognitive maps and those who share common backgrounds tend to share similar cognitive maps and are often classified as belonging to the same cognitive community.

Cosequently, other scholars, such as Dalton and Kesner (1983), Zajac (1990) and Zajac and Westphal (1996), called for re-examination of this approach to differentiating successors. Nevertheless, this fundamental dilemma over the distinction between insider and outsider has not been resolved (Giambatista et al., 2005; Karaevli, 2007) and its resolution may bring what Finkelstein et al. (2009) described as “the biggest breakthroughs in the study of insider versus outsider succession” (p. 190).

Furthermore, there is no consensus about the decisive criterion for such a dichotomy; neither is there agreement on the definition of what constitutes the dichotomised construct (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Finkelstein et al., 2009; Giambatista et al., 2005; Karaevli, 2007; Kesner and Sebora, 1994; Shen and Cannella Jr., 2002b; Zajac and Westphal, 1996). In other words, there is a lack of agreement on the boundaries of the insider group in terms of who the insiders are or the time it takes for an individual to become an insider.

It is noteworthy that scholars who adopted such an insider/outsider dichotomy recognised its limitations¹. Nevertheless, it satisfied their need for operational definitions as a means to explore successors' impact on organisations, especially when dealing with two contrasting states of affairs where the successor is undoubtedly either an insider of the recruiting organisation or a complete stranger to it. However, the grey area between those two extreme states of affairs is not only large

¹ For instance, Carlson (1961) described his dichotomized approach in differentiating successor origins as “gross and unrefined” (p. 227); Zajac & Westphal (1996) stated, “the traditional focus in succession research on insider/outsider distinctions is useful but incomplete” (p. 71).

enough to create a dispute about where to draw the line, but also large enough to encompass various shades of the insider/outsider dichotomy. This, in turn, has opened wide the door to arguments for a continuous spectrum stretching between those two extreme states of affairs (total insider and total outsider), which was materialised in the second approach to differentiating successors.

In the second approach, successors are differentiated based on “*what they bring*” into the recruiting organisations, and is most often reflected on a continuous spectrum stretching from total insider to total outsider. Specifically, it differentiated successors based on their experiences within/outside the recruiting organisation/industry to reflect the extent to which a successor may satisfy the organisation’s need to sustain/change the status quo. For example, Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996; cited in Karaevli, 2007) incorporated the successor’s industry background into their concept of *Successor’s Outsiderness* for classifying successors. Yet, instead of focusing on similarities between the successor’s industry backgrounds and the recruiting organisation as did Birnbaum (1971; cited in Kesner and Sebor, 1994), Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996) focused on the degree of change introduced by the successor’s outsiderness. According to Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996), successor outsiderness is the extent to which a successor brings a different leadership style, knowledge, skills and perspective to an organisation based on his/her previous experience in other organisations and industries. Accordingly, the authors differentiated successors based on their organisational tenure and industry background. The authors then plotted successor’s origin on a continuum stretching from extreme insider to extreme outsider. The longer the successor’s tenure at the recruiting organisation or the closer the relatedness of his/her industry background to that of the recruiting organisation the less the successor is expected to provoke change. The authors argued that such a continuum illustrates the degree to which a successor is expected to satisfy the organisation’s requirement for openness to change (successor’s cognitive and social/interpersonal openness to change) and shows the successor’s tendency for change (internal and external signals for change)¹. Thus, a new perspective on successor origin was introduced based on what the

¹ It is noteworthy that Finkelstein et al. (2009) reemphasised the same argument presented in Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996).

successor brings into the recruiting organisation as reflected by the successor's organisational tenure and industry background.

Other scholars followed the footsteps of Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996), such as Davidson et al. (2002), Bailey and Helfat (2003) and Zhang and Rajagopalan (2003). However, other scholars argued that this approach for differentiating successors classified successors according to their current membership of the recruiting organisation; and assumed that the greater the disconnection of the successors from the recruiting organisation/industry, the higher the expectation that they will bring change to the organisation, which is not always true. For example, Karaevli (2007) argued that Finkelstein and Hambrick's (1996) construct of successor outsidership used the successor's current membership of the organisation as the basis of successor classification. Thus, according to the author, the construct may imply that successor outsidership is a reflection of being in or outside a group rather than the extent of change in the characteristics of the organisation's leadership, such as leadership style, knowledge, skills and perspective. Furthermore, the author argued that appointments of insider successors do not always reflect the organisation's intention to maintain its strategic direction or the status quo, nor do appointments of outsider successors signal changes in the recruiting organisation. The author, then, proposed a construct of new CEO outsidership that emphasises the successor's industry background. He defined the new CEO outsidership as a "continuum ranging from new CEOs who have a greater combination of firm and industry tenure to those who have no experience in the firm and the industry" (p. 694).

Along this line, Ndofor et al. (2009) challenged the theoretical basis for the implicit assumption that outsider successors have, in general, a greater tendency to provoke change in the recruiting organisations. The authors argued that if the focal point is the degree of change brought by the successors, then it is not only outsider successors who initiate changes, but insiders as well; and thus, differentiating successors based on their organisational membership constitutes theoretical indeterminacy. The authors argued that in taking action leaders assess their organisational situation, and their actions are guided by the concepts and relationships found in their cognitive maps. The differentiation between insider and outsider, the authors argued, is intended to reflect the cognitive differences between the successor and the office incumbent. Therefore, the authors advocated

differentiating among successors based on their cognitive communities, which are made up of individuals who share highly similar cognitive maps. They stated, “Cognitive communities exist when executives have a common set of socially-shared beliefs that determines how they perceive relevant aspects of their environments and competition, and that guides their strategic choices” (Ndofor et al., 2009; p. 801). Furthermore, the authors argued that not all insiders share similar cognitive maps with their predecessors. It is also the case that not all outsiders differ from their predecessors.

4.3.5.3 The Appropriateness of the Successor

As demonstrated above, there are two approaches for differentiating successors, which both suggest that the factors related to the successor’s background are important to determining his/her impact on the recruiting organisation. However, by delving into the focal points of these two approaches for differentiating successors, an underlying construct for successor classification can be identified. The review of these two approaches revealed that each approach highlighted one aspect of the *appropriateness of the successor* for the position under consideration, whereby the successor’s appropriateness reflects the extent to which he/she *fits* the position¹.

Specifically, the insider/outsider dichotomy approach focused on the extent to which a successor *fits* into the recruiting organisation in terms of possessing similar characteristics to those of the insider group. This fit between the successor and the insider group could be described as *a person-group fit*. A person-group fit reflects the interpersonal compatibility between the person and his/her work group (Judge and Ferris, 1992; Kristof, 1996) and focuses on the similarities between the person and the group members, whether at surface level (e.g. race, age and gender) or at a deep level (e.g. goals and values) (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

In addition, the continuous spectrum approach focuses on the extent to which the abilities of a successor *fit* the demands of the job. This fit between the successor and his/her new job could be described as *a person-job fit*. A person-job fit reflects the extent to which the person’s knowledge,

¹ A more precise definition for the proposed appropriateness of the successor is provided in the following part.

skills and abilities are appropriate for executing the tasks of the job (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996).

In addition to the abovementioned forms of fit (person-group fit and person-job fit), the literature review highlighted two additional forms of fit that are relevant to the appropriateness of the successor for a position. The first is successor-superior fit. This portrays the person-supervisor fit, which is defined as the compatibility between the person's characteristics and those of his/her supervisor (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The second form of fit relevant to successor appropriateness is successor-organisation fit (or person-organisation fit). According to Kristof (1996), person-organisation fit is defined as "the compatibility between people and organisations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both" (p 4).

In addition, it is important to differentiate between the perception of fit and the actual existence of fit in reality. The literature of person-work environment fit differentiates between subjective (perceived) fit and objective (actual) fit. For example, French JR. et al. (1974; cited in Kristof-Brown et al. 2005) defined subjective fit as "the match between the person and environment as they are perceived and reported by the person", while objective fit is "the match between the person as he/she really is and the environment as it exists independently of the person's perception of it" (p 314). Thus, perceived fit is an individual's assessment of fit based on his/her own judgement (Kristof, 1996); while actual fit is the calculated assessment of fit via the comparison between the two entities (such as person and job) in terms of key variables determining fit as reported by different sources (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

While perceived and actual fit are both important, the proposed appropriateness of the successor adopts the perceived fit in reflecting the extent to which a successor is fit for the position for two reasons. First, perceived fit is more significant than actual fit in the succession process. Kristof (1996) affirmed that "perceived, rather than actual fit, is more influential during the selection process" in organisational recruitment and selection decisions (p. 24). Similarly, the findings of

Cable and Judge (1995) asserted that the perceived fit is more influential than the actual fit in the evaluation of the job candidates and organisational selection decisions.

The second reason for selecting perceived fit over actual fit relates to the information asymmetry involved in the succession process. Zajac (1990), by highlighting the principal-agent relationship that exists between succession decision-makers and successors, affirmed that decision-makers have less information about successors' characteristics and actions. Thus, an assessment of actual fit is hard to achieve. Furthermore, as fit is a multidimensional construct, the perceived fit is more suitable for the current research as it allows the fit assessor to use his/her own weighting scheme to assess fit. This, in turn, may capture important fit determinant variables that might have been overlooked by the researcher. Furthermore, for practical reasons in this research, adopting the perceived fit of the successor to the position, as reported by the decision-makers, facilitates avoidance of difficulties in defining the organisation's insider group or the key variables that determine the successor's fit into the position.

Therefore, the proposed appropriateness of the successor for the position is defined *as the extent to which a successor is fit for the position as perceived by the succession decision-makers*. Moreover, according to the weighting scheme of the succession decision-makers, *the appropriateness of the successor is reflected by at least one of the four forms of fit (successor-group fit, successor-job fit, successor-superior fit and successor-organisation fit)*.

Accordingly, if successors' backgrounds are major determinants of their impact on the recruiting organisations, as suggested by the successor classification line of studies, then it is not just a matter of "who they are" with respect to the recruiting organisation nor of "what they bring" into the organisation. Rather, it is both. Specifically, what matters is the extent to which successors' backgrounds reflect their appropriateness for the positions, whether in terms of sharing similarities with other organisational staff or satisfying job requirements and organisational needs. This notion about the appropriateness of the successor also finds support in the various succession studies that have emphasised the significance of matching the successor's knowledge, skills and attitudes with

the needs of the recruiting organisations, such as the research of Kotin and Sharaf (1967), Brady and Helmich (1984) and Allgood and Farrell (2003).

4.4 THE CONTEXT-RELATED FACTORS ACTING UPON THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

This section highlights the impact of the organisation's context on the succession process. Initially, the theoretical approach used to identify potential context-related factors influencing the succession process is discussed. Specifically, the Contingency approach is reviewed, as it forms the theoretical basis for the various organisational contingencies highlighted in the succession literature, such as organisational age, size, structure and performance. Then, the literature is reviewed to highlight the impact of those investigated context-related factors on the succession process.

4.4.1 The Contingency Approach

The contingency approach is one of the most widely utilized theoretical approaches to the study of organisations (Scott, 2003). This approach of studying organisations in context is based on the premise that there no single best way to organise or manage (Galbraith, 1973) as it depends on the circumstances (or the contingencies) of the situation (Scott, 2003). Donaldson (2001) stated:

“The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organisational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organisation, such as structure, to the contingencies that reflect the situation of the organisation.” (p. 1)

Accordingly, contingency theorists strive to identify the key contingencies in each situation in order to determine the best fit between organisations and their contexts (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). Lawrence (1993) highlighted various contingencies that have been emphasised in the literature, some of which are at the macro level (e.g. environmental uncertainty), whilst others are at the organisational level (e.g. organisational size and strategy).

Furthermore, the contingency approach has been applied to the study of various organisational issues, such as organisational structure, leadership (Fiedler, 1963, 1978) and decision-making (Vroom and Yetton, 1973), and has been widely applied in HRM literature (Delery and Doty, 1996;

Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990). In addition, Kesner and Sebra (1994) commented on the succession-performance studies by stating, “Rather, these event studies merely confirmed that succession was an enigmatic and complicated event best understood with complex contingency models” (p. 359). Indeed, after reviewing the succession literature, the authors proposed a succession model that embraced the contingency approach, whilst Giambatista et al. (2005) affirmed that “It is high time to move forward with contingency explanations” (p. 982). They added:

“Given the emphasis in recent years on contextual variables and succession, another promising venue could establish boundary conditions on contextual theory or attempt to integrate various contextual findings of scholars into an overarching contingency theory of succession, perhaps not dissimilar to contingency theories of leadership” (Giambatista et al., 2005, p 983).

4.4.2 The Impact of Context-Related Factors on the Succession Process

In this subsection, the literature is reviewed to highlight the impact of context-related factors on the succession process. Specifically, the review highlights six contingencies at organisational level, namely, organisational age, size, strategy, performance, structure and culture, whilst at macro level, the review highlights two contingencies: the characteristics of the organisation’s industry and the trends in the industry.

4.4.2.1 Organisational Age

Organisational age refers to the maturity of the organisation measured in years from the date of incorporation or reorganisation. Helmich (1975b) explored the interactive effects of succession rate, successor type and organisational age; and found that older organisations are associated with lower succession rates and higher incidence of insider succession than younger organisations. Moreover, Helmich found that successors in mature organisations are more likely to have personal growth and career development needs than those in growing organisations. Furthermore, Ocasio (1999) provided empirical evidence for the moderating effects of organisational age on the reliance on rules of CEO succession. The author explained, “The moderator effect of firm age on the reliance on rules of insider succession indicates that as the firm grows older, its commitment to

insider succession increases” (p. 408). In addition, Kesner and Sebra (1994) highlighted organisational age as one of the contingencies in their succession model.

4.4.2.2 Organisational Size

Another contingency highlighted by early succession studies is organisational size. The findings of Grusky (1961) suggested that organisational size is positively associated with succession rate, size being measured by net sales and total number of employees. Accordingly, the larger the organisation, the higher is its rate of succession. As an explanation, Grusky argued that large organisational size is associated with higher bureaucratization, which in turn facilitates transformation of succession to a more routine process with fewer disturbing consequences. In addition, according to Grusky, increases in bureaucracy necessitate frequent successions at the top in order to adapt to the external environment. This positive relationship between organisational size and succession rate was also supported by other researchers, such as Trow (1961), Kriesberg (1962), Grusky (1964), and Pfeffer and Moore (1980).

However, in replicating Grusky’s study, Gordon and Becker (1964) indicated that the relationship between the two constructs is neither simple nor direct. Moreover, Perrucci and Mannweiler (1968) findings revoked Grusky’s explanation. According to the authors, Grusky’s explanation is based on hypothesizing the association between organisational size and bureaucracy; however, when bureaucracy was measured as complexity, the findings showed no significance for complexity-succession rate hypothesis and only the previous positive association between organisational size and succession rate was supported (Perrucci and Mannweiler, 1968). In addition, Pfeffer and Salancik (1977) argued that organisational size does not reflect the degree of formalization. The authors found no statistically significant relationship between the two constructs, organisational size and succession rate; neither did Salancik and Pfeffer (1980) or Boeker (1992).

In addition to the link between organisational size and succession rate, Helmich and Brown (1972) highlighted the relation between organisational size and successor origin (insider/outsider). The authors indicated that organisational size is associated with insider successors. Pfeffer and Leblebici’s (1977) findings affirmed this positive relationship between organisational size and

insider successors. The authors explained that large organisations have a greater number of administrative positions, which encourages the emergence of internal candidates with the needed organisational expertise. In addition, they argued that abundance of administrative positions provides more power bases for insider contenders. Dalton and Kesner (1983) and Lauterbach et al. (1999) provided supporting empirical evidence for the positive relationship between organisational size and insider successors. In general, studies emphasised the impact of organisational size on succession; however, there was little consistency in explaining how and why this relationship existed (Kesner and Sebor, 1994).

4.4.2.3 Organisational Strategy

The link between strategy and succession has been stressed by many succession studies. For example, the successor origin line of studies has emphasised such links in explaining insider/outsider successor appointments. The general assumption has been that insider successors are selected to maintain current organisational strategies while outsider successors are selected to initiate change (Gursky 1963; Helmich, 1974a; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Chaganti and Sambharya (1987) findings suggest that the higher proportions of outsiders in the upper echelons are associated with prospector organisations that are actively seeking new product and market opportunities. However, Zhang and Rajagopalan (2003) found marginal support for the proposition that prior strategic persistence of the firm is positively related to the likelihood of intra-firm succession.

Another line of succession research highlighted that the link between organisational strategy and succession is related to the match between the successor's characteristics and organisational strategy. This line of studies held that successors were selected to best match the strategic needs of the organisations. For example, McCanna and Comte (1986) proposed that organisations need new capabilities in each strategic stage, which in turn triggers succession processes. Moreover, Smith and White (1987) found a positive relationship between the organisation's previous strategy and the successor's career specialisation and institutional experience; and thus, the authors considered organisational strategy a predictor of career specialisation among successors, with single-business and vertically integrated organisations more likely to have core specialist successors. Ocasio and

Kim (1999) supported this proposition by affirming that organisational strategy determines the new CEO's functional background. Nevertheless, White et al. (1997) findings suggested that organisational strategy is a poor predictor of career specialisation among CEO successors.

4.4.2.4 Organisational Performance

As illustrated earlier, organisational performance was one of the first contextual issues investigated in succession literature. For instance, the proposition of the Vicious Cycle theory of succession emphasised organisational performance as a stimulant for succession events. However, according to Rowe et al. (2005), relatively few studies have backed up this proposition. In addition, Fredrickson et al. (1988) and Ocasio (1994), among other scholars, affirmed that the link between organisational performance and the dismissal of executives is mediated by the office incumbent's power. Moreover, Kesner and Sebor (1994) highlighted organisational performance as one of the contingencies that must be considered in studying succession. Delery and Doty (1996) flagged the need for additional theoretical and empirical work to explore the relationship between internal career opportunities, strategy and performance. In addition, Karaevli (2007) argued that the link between organisational performance and succession cannot be understood in isolation from the "the turbulence and the munificence of the external environment", advocating the consideration of "*pre- and post-succession*" contextual factors to grasp such linkage.

4.4.2.5 Organisational Structure

Organisational structure was another of the first factors considered by early studies on the succession phenomenon. While some researchers, such as Gouldner (1954) and Guest (1962), investigated how organisational structure mediates the effect of succession on organisational performance, others, such as Meyer (1975), addressed the impact of succession on the organisational structure itself. Helmich (1978) found a significant positive relation between succession rate and merger activity involving structural changes. The author stated:

"Because of the association of succession rate with merger activity, one may infer that the frequency of executive transfers in key organisational positions is more linked to environmental contingencies than to such organisational dimensions reflecting changes in

either size, plant locations, or, of course, indicators of performance” (Helmich, 1978; p. 472).

However, focusing on how organisational structure influences succession processes, Vancil (1987) pointed out how the structure of the top management determines the type of succession process adopted. The author identified three common modes for the structure of top management: Solo, Duo and Team. In each mode, the number of executives holding the top five titles (Chairman, President, CEO, COO and Vice Chairman) varies. In the solo mode, only one executive holds one or more of these titles, while, as the labels indicate, in the duo mode there are two executives and in the team mode there are more than two executives, with each holding one or more of these five top titles. Focusing only on the duo and team modes, Vancil highlighted the relay and horse race succession processes. According to the author, a relay succession process is adopted in a duo mode structure, while a horse-race process is adopted in the case of team mode structure (Vancil, 1987).

Moreover, Fligstein (1987) found that in the years between 1919 and 1979 shifts in organisational structure from functional and unitary to multidivisional structures were accompanied by changes in executives' functional backgrounds. The findings demonstrated that executives with marketing and finance backgrounds were favoured in multidivisional organisations, but not in unitary organisations. The author justified these results by explaining how organisational structures are important resources in the power struggle within the organisation as they provide information and authority. Thornton and Ocasio (1999) argued that changes in institutional logic moderate the effects of economic and structural forces on succession. Through investigation of the shift in institutional logic in the higher education publishing industry from an editorial logic to a market logic in the period between 1958 and 1990, the authors illustrated how the effects of organisational size and structure on succession are moderated by editorial logic which emphasises author–editor relationships and internal growth.

4.4.2.6 Organisational Culture

The impact of the organisational culture on the succession process is a rarely investigated issue in the succession literature. Fancher (2007) stated that, despite the call for investigation of such issues by Kesner and Sebora (1994), “no known empirical progress has been made to study the link of organisational culture and succession although most authors allude to its importance for a successful outcome” (Fancher, 2007; p. 31). One of the very few studies to investigate the impact of organisational culture on the succession process is the work of Miller et al. (2003). In this study of family owned businesses, the authors distinguished between three succession patterns: conservative, rebellious and wavering. According to the authors, succession patterns are influenced by the organisational culture, and conservative patterns of succession are more likely in a tradition-bound, bureaucratic, centralized and stable culture; rebellious patterns are more likely in problem-ridden or turbulent situations; and wavering patterns are more common in confused, politicized and fragmented organisations (Miller et al., 2003).

Another researcher who linked organisational culture to succession was Fancher (2007). Fancher explored the effects of organisational culture on succession planning and found that it is an important contextual factor in the implementation of succession planning. Neville and Murray (2008), meanwhile, showed how the culture of non-profit organisations can affect succession processes in cases where it is part of the culture to help people grow and move on.

4.4.2.7 Characteristics of the Industry

As stated earlier, in the literature there is a dearth of succession studies addressing the impact of the organisation’s external context on the succession process. Nevertheless, some of these few studies highlighted industry characteristics as one of the factors that influence the succession process. For example, Pfeffer and Moore (1980), Fredrikson et al. (1988) and Finkelstein et al. (2009) highlighted the industry’s stage of development. According to these studies, due to the high level of uncertainty in growing industries in comparison to more mature industries, dismissals during episodes of poor organisational performance are more common in the growing industries as leaders are more likely to be blamed for such performance (Pfeffer and Moore, 1980; Fredrikson et al, 1988; Finkelstein et al, 2009).

Another characteristic that has been highlighted is size of the industry in terms of the total number of organisations within the industry. Fredrikson et al. (1988) argued that large industries are more capable of providing appropriate candidates to replace the office incumbent. In addition, the authors highlighted performance variation in the industry as one of the determinants of the expectations of the succession decision-makers of the new CEO. Furthermore, the impact of the homogeneity of the industry on the succession process was explored by Parrino (1997). According to the author, poorly performing CEOs are easier to identify and less costly to replace in homogeneous industries than in heterogeneous industries. Thus, the probability of forced turnover and intra-industry succession is greater in homogeneous industries (Parrino, 1997).

4.4.2.8 Trends in the Industry

Lamb (1987) identified two general trends in the organisational context that affect the succession phenomenon. The first trend relates to the successor's functional background. According to the author, there are times when certain skills and functional backgrounds are more appreciated and desired in successors than others. This remark was echoed in other studies, such as Fligstein (1987) and Ocasio and Kim (1999). The second trend highlighted by Lamb (1987) relates to executive tenure. Lamb noted that executive tenure is shortening and "job hopping" is becoming a crucial aspect of career promotion among executives. Finkelstein et al. (2009) also highlighted the effect of "fads and fashions" on the succession process by pointing to the large increase in the rates of CEO dismissal and outside succession, which, according to the authors, is a trend that emerged in the late 1990s and continues to this day.

In addition, Dawley et al. (2004) asserted that more female executives have reached middle management and top leadership positions in the last two decades as women leadership has become more culturally accepted. It is noteworthy that the ramifications of the gender issue on the succession process have been explored more extensively in the family owned business context than in any other organisational context. Early studies in this line suggested that women were excluded as potential candidates unless no other family members were available and hence the succession of a female family member was the only way to keep the business in the family (Vicente et al., 2009). However, a new trend is emerging whereby gender discrimination is no longer a factor in

succession issues in family owned businesses. According to Vicente et al. (2009), the most influential factors in choosing a successor are primogeniture, followed by skills, experience in business, and compliance with the requirements established by the family. The authors affirmed, “However, gender is not perceived, in general, as an important factor to become a successor for the respondents” (Vicente et al., 2009; p. 18).

4.5 THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ACTING UPON THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

Based on the review of the research context in Chapter 2 and the literature review in Chapters 3 and 4, this section presents a conceptual model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process. Initially, a summary of the current chapter is provided; then, the conceptual model is presented in the following subsection.

4.5.1 Summary of the Chapter

The literature review conducted in this chapter highlighted two sets of potential sources of influential factors shaping the succession process. Based on the Stakeholder theory, the various stakeholders of the succession process were recognised as one set of potential sources. The succession literature addressed the impact of certain stakeholders (i.e. the incumbent of the office under consideration, the organisation’s board of directors and the successor) and overlooked the impact of others, particularly those who are outside the organisation’s boundaries.

The stakeholder literature highlighted three stakeholder-related factors that determine the stakeholder’s influence. These factors comprise: (1) awareness of the stakeholder about the threats/opportunities to his/her stake in organisational issues; (2) the urgency of the stakeholder’s claims in terms of the time sensitivity and criticality of these claims and (3) the capability of the stakeholder in terms of possession of the power and legitimacy to satisfy their claims. Succession studies that investigated the impact of the office incumbent, the board of directors and the successors emphasised power as the main determinant of these stakeholders’ influence on the succession process. Two additional determinants were identified for successors, namely, the availability of other candidates and the appropriateness of the successor for the position.

In addition, the literature review highlighted the impact of context-related factors on the succession process. Specifically, the review highlighted the impact of six factors at the organisational level (i.e. organisational age, size, strategy, performance, structure, and culture) and two factors at the macro level (industry characteristics and trends).

4.5.2 Succession Process Conceptual Model

Succession scholars have called for the adoption of a holistic approach to understanding the succession phenomenon and underlined the dearth of research on how the phenomenon unfolds. Rowe et al. (2005) stated that without such a holistic approach researchers and practitioners may make unwarranted assumptions and decisions. Giambatista et al. (2005) asserted this notion by stating:

“We find intriguing the ideas on cross-level influences on the succession process. Attempts to link processes within firms, industries, and societal sectors to provide a more holistic picture of succession ... are laudable. Although most traditional succession research focused on micro-processes within the firm, we believe attempts to analyze macro-level factors would reveal new insights about succession patterns, which would be particularly useful in both uncovering larger historical trends and studying micro-processes in their proper context” (p. 972).

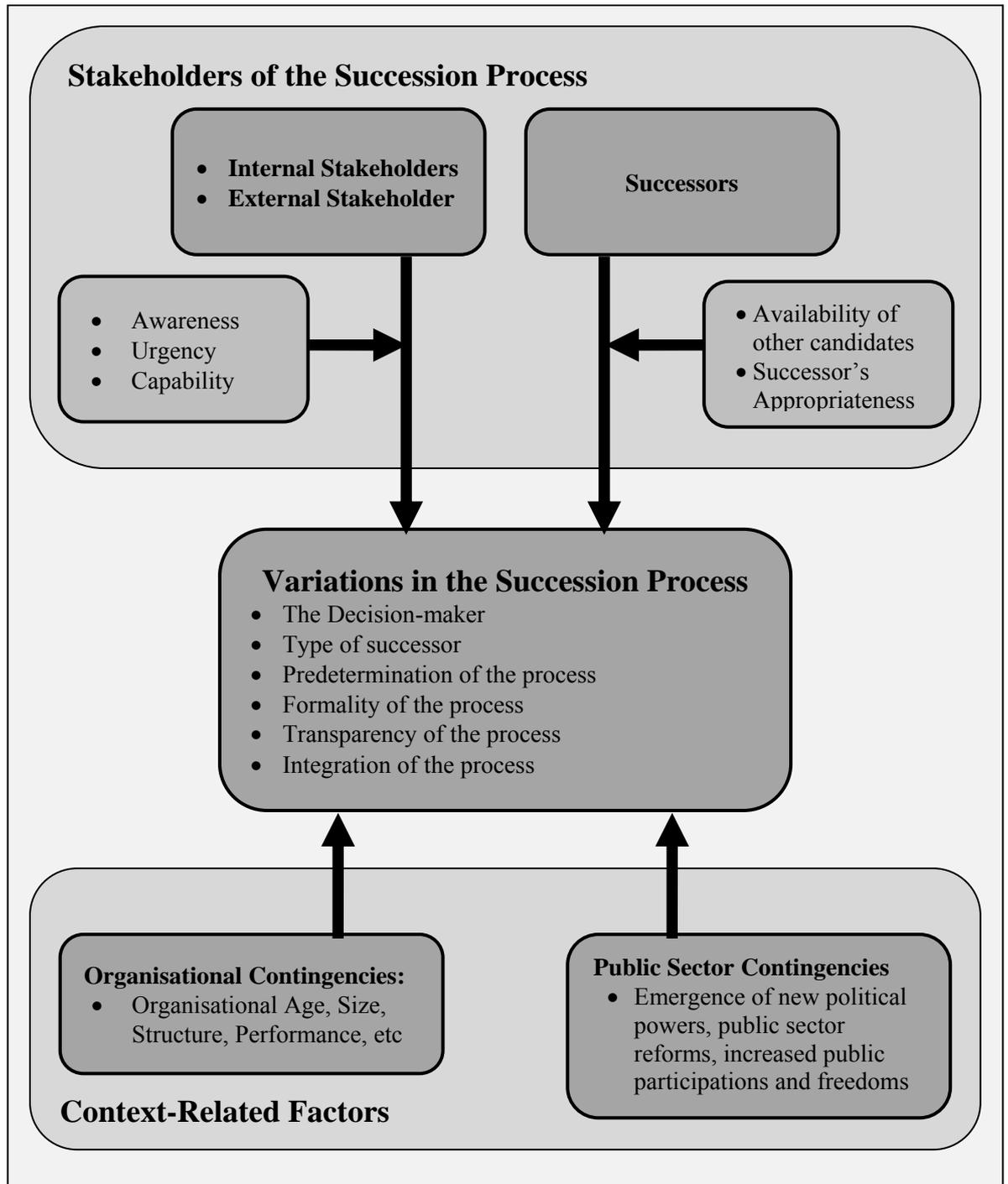
Thus, this research was based on consideration of the gap in the succession literature regarding the succession process and recognition of the potential for gaining understanding of the phenomenon by focusing on the way in which it evolves . Specifically, the research aimed to *explain how the various influential stakeholders and context-related factors influence the succession processes.*

To facilitate answering this inquiry, the research context and the relevant literature were reviewed. Based on the review of the Bahraini public sector context in Chapter 2 and literature review in Chapters 3 and 4, a conceptual model was developed. The model illustrates the influential factors acting upon the succession process, along with the possible variations in the succession process (in terms of six key differentiating aspects of the process) due to such influences. The model is shown in Figure 4-2 (page 138).

Initially, the literature review in Chapter 3 defined the succession process as a dynamic and complex course of individual and collective events, actions and activities that result in the replacement of an office incumbent by a successor; with the accumulated effects of the various interactions between the stakeholders of the process and the context-related factors determining how the process unfolds. Thus, two sets of sources for influential factors were recognised: the stakeholders of the process and the context in which it occurs. Moreover, in order to grasp the variations in the succession process, the literature review highlighted six key differentiating aspects of the succession process. These aspects comprise: (1) the decision-maker of the succession process; (2) the type of successor; (3) the predetermination of the process outcomes (in terms of who should be the successor and the selection criteria used); (4) formality of the process; (5) the transparency of the process and (6) the integration of the process.

In addition, the influential stakeholders and context-related factors were highlighted via the review of the Bahraini context and the literature review in Chapter 4. The review of the Bahraini context highlighted the ramifications of the State's reform Project on the public sector in terms of the emergence of new political power, public sector reforms, increased public participations and freedoms. The literature review in Chapter 4 highlighted various context-related factors on the organisational level. Furthermore, the literature review in Chapter 4 highlighted three factors that, in general, determine the stakeholder's influence (i.e. stakeholder's awareness, urgency of claims and capability to bring about the desired outcomes). In addition, two factors for determining the impact of the successors (i.e. the availability of other candidates and the appropriateness of the successor for the position) were identified.

FIGURE 4-2: MODEL FOR THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ACTING UPON THE SUCCESSION



CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the adopted research methodology in the research with more emphasis on the qualitative part of it. The term *methodology* refers to the philosophical framework and the fundamental assumptions upon which the research is based and which influence the entire research process (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Saunders et al., 2009). Clough and Nutbrown (2012), highlighting the operational description of the term, stated that, “A methodology shows how research questions are articulated with questions asked in the field” (p. 25). The authors described the methodology as a critical design attitude where the continuous selection processes are at the heart of all the interwoven research activities aiming “to uncover and justify research assumptions as far and as practicably as possible” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012; p. 38). Thus, the practical manifestation of the research methodology is the *research design*.

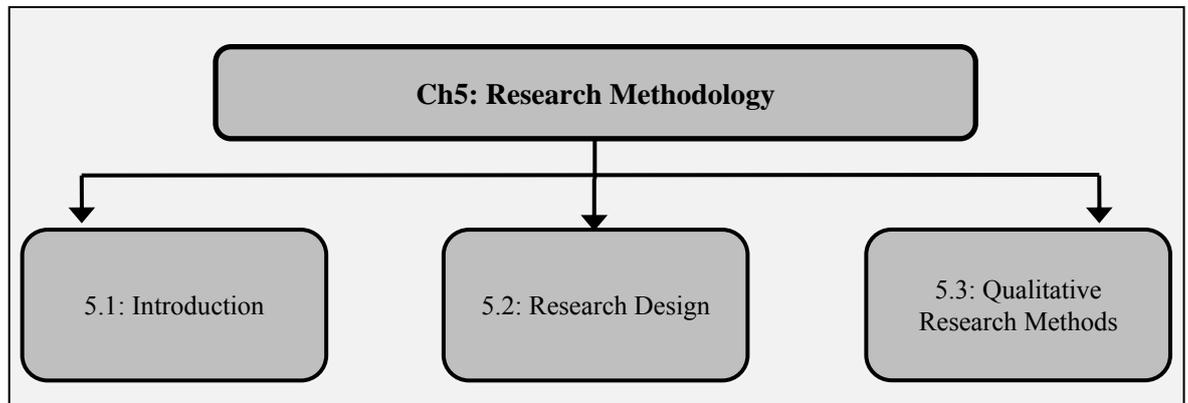
Saunders et al. (2009) described the research design as the general plan of how researchers go about answering their research questions. For Creswell and Clark (2007), the research design is the plan of action that links the philosophical assumptions underlying the research to the specific methods being employed in the research process; where methods are the techniques of data collection and analysis. Creswell (2009) argued that research designs are “plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collections and analysis”, where “the overall decision involves which design should be used to study a topic” (Creswell, 2009; p. 3).

In addition, Creswell (2009) argued that research design is at the intersection of the *philosophical worldview*, *strategy of inquiry* and *research methods* adopted in the research. Moreover, the author identified three types of research designs: *quantitative*, *qualitative* and *mixed methods*. According to the author, quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables that are measured quantitatively (numbers) to provide data analysable statistically. Qualitative research, on the other end on the spectrum, is a means for exploring and

understanding the meaning (words) attributed by individuals or groups to a social or human phenomenon. In between these two poles, mixed methods research exists as an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both quantitative and qualitative forms. Furthermore, Creswell (2009) highlighted the nature of the research problem being addressed as one of the criteria for selecting among these research approaches (where the other criteria were researcher's personal experience and the audience of the research).

Therefore, in order to present the adopted research methodology, this chapter was divided into four sections, as shown below in **Error! Reference source not found.** Following this introductory section, the second section illustrates the research design by highlighting the philosophical worldview adopted in the research and the selected strategy of inquiry. Then, taking into consideration the focus of the current thesis, the third section illustrates the employed methods for data collection and analysis in the qualitative part of the research.

FIGURE 5-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 5



5.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

As stated earlier, the research design is at the intersection between the adopted philosophical worldview, strategy of inquiry and research methods. Thus, the philosophical worldview adopted in this research is presented in the first subsection. The second subsection discusses the selected strategy of inquiry. However, as the focus of the current thesis is on the qualitative part of the research, the employed qualitative research methods are presented in the following section.

5.2.1 Philosophical Worldview

Creswell (2009) used the term worldview in reference to “the basic set of beliefs that guide actions” (p. 6)¹. Thus, the research philosophical worldview refers to the fundamental assumptions about how the world is viewed in the research. Johnson and Duberley (2000) affirmed this notion and argued that researchers assess the relevance and the value of different research methodologies based on internally motivated and internally justified beliefs about the world. In other words, these basic beliefs steer the research process (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2009), and most often lead to the embracement of a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2009).

Creswell (2009) highlighted four worldviews in social sciences studies, namely, *postpositivism*, *constructivism*, *advocacy/participatory* and *pragmatism*. The author’s summary of the main attributes of these worldviews in Table 5-1 is provided on the following page. Postpositivism is a deterministic philosophy that makes claims for knowledge based on the probability of the cause-effect relationship. Thereby, researchers narrow and focus the ideas into interrelated variables that comprise hypotheses and research questions. Accordingly, knowledge is developed via the objective observations and measurements of these variables to verify and refine the theories that govern the interrelationship of variables (Creswell, 2009; Creswell and Clark, 2007).

In the constructivism worldview, knowledge is based on the understanding or the meaning of the phenomenon as, subjectively, perceived by the participants. The intention of the researcher is to make sense or interpret the meanings that the people of a specific context have about the issue under consideration. Thus, according to the constructivism worldview, knowledge is advanced by the inductive development of theories, rather than verifying and refining theories.

The advocacy and participatory worldviews are based on political concerns, where “the research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and political agenda” to change the status quo of the participants (Creswell, 2009; p. 9). By focusing on the voice and needs of those who are marginalised or disenfranchised in traditional research inquiries about important social issues (e.g. empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression and alienation), researchers may

¹ Other scholars label these basic beliefs as paradigms.

collaborate with the participants to design the research questions, collect and analyse data or reap the rewards of the research (Creswell, 2009).

The pragmatism worldview argues that the most important issue in conducting a research inquiry is the inquiry per se, rather than the investigation method. Creswell (2009) stated, “Instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasise the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem” (p. 10). Therefore, pragmatist researchers are not committed to any one system of philosophy; rather they have the freedom to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best fit the research inquiry (Creswell, 2009).

TABLE 5-1: FOUR WORLDVIEWS USED IN RESEARCH¹

Postpositivism	Constructivism	Advocacy and Participatory	Pragmatism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Empowerment and issue oriented • Collaborative • Change oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of actions • Problem centered • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

Furthermore, philosophically, the abovementioned worldviews take different stances in viewing the nature of reality (ontology), how researchers gain knowledge of what they know (epistemology), the role of values in research (axiology), research methodology and research rhetoric (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Creswell and Clark (2007) provided a summary of these philosophical differences, which is illustrated in Table 5-2 in the following page.

However, the most emphasised philosophical issues in the comparison between these worldviews are ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. Some scholars adopt an objectivist view that social entities exist in reality independent of and external to social actors; other scholars adopt a subjectivist view that social phenomena and their meanings are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006; Saunders et al., 2009).

¹ The table is adopted from Creswell (2009; p. 6).

TABLE 5-2: COMMON ELEMENTS OF WORLDVIEWS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE¹

Worldview Element	Postpositivism	Constructivism	Advocacy and Participatory	Pragmatism
Ontology (what is the nature of reality?)	Singular reality (e.g., researchers reject or fail to reject hypotheses)	Multiple realities (e.g., researchers provide quotes to illustrate different perspectives)	Political reality (e.g. findings are negotiated with participants)	Singular and multiple realities (e.g., researchers test hypotheses and provide multiple perspectives)
Epistemology (what is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?)	Distance and impartiality (e.g. researchers objectively collect data on instrument)	Closeness (e.g. researchers visit participants at their sites to collect data)	Collaboration (e.g. researchers actively involve participants as collaborators)	Practicality (e.g. researchers collect data by “what works” to address research question)
Axiology (what is the role of values?)	Unbiased (e.g. researchers use checks to eliminate bias)	Biased (e.g., researchers actively talk about their biases and interpretations)	Biased and negotiated (e.g. researchers negotiate with participants about interpretations)	Multiple stances (e.g. researchers include biased and unbiased perspectives)
Methodology (what is the process of the research?)	Deductive (e.g. researchers test an a priori theory)	Inductive (e.g. researchers start with participants’ views and build “up” to patterns, theories and generalisations)	Participatory (e.g. researchers involve participants in all stages of the research and engage in cyclical reviews of results)	Combining (e.g. researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data and mix them)
Rhetoric (what is the language of the research?)	Formal style (e.g. researchers use agreed-on definitions of variables)	Informal style (e.g. researchers write in a literary, informal style)	Advocacy and change (e.g. researchers use language that will help bring about change and advocate for participants)	Formal or informal (e.g. researchers may employ both formal and informal styles of writing)

Saunders et al. (2007) defined epistemology as the branch of philosophy that is concerned “with what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study” (p.112). The authors differentiate among three epistemological stances, namely, positivism, realism and interpretivism. The positivist view adopts the philosophical stance of the natural scientist for knowledge development, which stresses the values of reason, truth and validity (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006; Saunders et al., 2009). Accordingly, researchers discover what truly happens in the world by using the scientific methods in developing and testing hypotheses (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006).

¹ The table is adopted from Creswell and Clark (2007; p. 24).

Similarly, the realist epistemology adopts the scientific approach to acquire knowledge where reality is independent of the human mind (Saunders et al., 2007). However, two forms of realism are distinguished. The first is the direct realism, which assumes that “what we experience through our senses portrays the world accurately (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 114). The second form of realism is the critical realism, which argues that our senses may deceive us and “what we experience are sensations, the images of the things in the real world, not the things directly” (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 115).

Finally, the third epistemological view is the interpretive epistemology. This view argues that knowledge about humans can only be acquired and understood from the point of view of the people (or social actors) involved in the phenomenon under consideration; where each individual acts and makes sense of what is happening based on his/her experiences and expectations (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). Thus, there are different understandings and interpretations of reality. Accordingly, a researcher who embraces an interpretive epistemology seeks knowledge by methods designed to grasp the meanings others have about the investigated issue and how these social actors come to these meanings (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006).

For conducting this research, the pragmatic philosophy was found to be the most appropriate stance to adopt. As illustrated above, pragmatism advocates researchers to focus on the research problem and permits the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to satisfy the inquiry of the research. It should be recalled that the rationale for conducting the research was based on the need to acquire a more comprehensive knowledge about the succession phenomenon by investigating the influential factors shaping the way in which this important phenomenon evolves. However, considering the fragmented state of theory in the succession literature (Giambatista et al., 2005) and the dearth of research exploring the influential factors acting upon the succession process, the need for quantitative and qualitative data to satisfy the inquiry of the research is obvious. A mixed methods research design, which is discussed in the following subsection, satisfies this need. According to Creswell and Clark (2007), pragmatism is the overarching worldview for mixed methods research. Thus, by considering the abovementioned issues, the most appropriate worldview for the current research was found to be pragmatism.

5.2.2 The Strategies of Inquiry

The strategies of inquiry are schemes that specify how to collect, analyse, interpret and report data in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research designs (Creswell, 2009). For example, in quantitative research design, researchers may adopt survey or experimental strategies to execute the research, whereas in qualitative research, researchers may adopt ethnography, grounded theory or case-study strategies. Furthermore, in mixed methods research design, researchers may adopt one of three strategies of inquiry in mixed methods research design, namely *sequential*, *concurrent* and *transformative*.

However, by considering the main inquiry of the research, the most appropriate research design was found to be a mixed methods research design. As stated in Chapter 1, the main inquiry of the research is to explain how the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector are influenced by the various stakeholders and context-related factors. To explain how an “X” factor affects a “Y” phenomenon, the variations in the “Y” phenomenon should be identified beforehand; then the extent to which “X” contributed to these variations needs to be investigated. Therefore, the first research question was designed to focus on detecting the differences among these succession processes in the Bahraini public sector. Specifically, this question was articulated as “how do succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector differ?” To facilitate describing and comparing these succession processes (in terms of what happened and how it happened), this research question was divided into six sub-questions designed to describe the succession process in terms of the six key differentiating aspects identified in the literature review¹. To answer these questions, quantitative data were required. Quantitative data provide the needed statistical reliability and generalisation to reflect the differences among these processes across the public sector.

After detecting the variations in the succession processes, and in order to satisfy the main inquiry of the research, the second and third research questions strived to explain these detected variations. Specifically, the second research question focused on identifying the influential factors responsible

¹ It should be recalled that the six key differentiating aspects were the decision maker of the process, the type of successor, the predetermination of the process outcomes, the formality, the transparency and the integration of the process.

for such variations in the process; and it was articulated as “what are the factors that could be responsible for the detected variations in these succession processes?” This question was divided into five sub-questions, where the first two sub-questions focused on identifying the influential stakeholders within and outside the organisational boundaries and the other three sub-questions focused on identifying the context-related factors at three different levels of analysis: the macro, organisational and positional levels. The third research question focused on explaining how stakeholders’ involvement influences the succession process. Specifically, the question was articulated as “how do the stakeholders’ involvements in the succession processes contribute to the variations among these processes?” This research question was also divided into sub-questions. The first sub-question focused on identifying the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to influence the succession process. The second focused on exploring the impact of these influential mechanisms. The third sub-question focused on exploring how the various stakeholders interacted with each other and with the context to promote their interests.

However, to answer the second and third research questions and the associated sub-questions, the quantitative approach is inadequate for exploring the reasons behind such differences in the succession processes. In their methodological recommendation, Kesner and Sebor (1994) pointed to the limitations of the quantitative approach in explaining the “*succession puzzle*”, highlighting the need for adoption of new methodologies. The authors stated:

"Most succession research since the 1960s has relied on archival data sources and highly quantitative analysis techniques. While both the size and dimensions of the sample populations have enhanced the generalizability of results, the results themselves have not become clearer. This suggests that some of the questions necessary to understand the succession puzzle may be better handled using other approaches. More qualitative and longitudinal methods, for example, may improve our understanding of the phenomenon ... These new approaches to succession may be especially well suited to answering key process questions and improving our knowledge about CEO succession as a whole." (p. 365-366)

Moreover, the limitations of the quantitative approach are more palpable when the multi-level aspect of the inquiry of the research is considered, where the influential factors are investigated at

macro, organisational and positional levels. In such multi-level analysis, a quantitative approach may produce erroneous interpretations of results in terms of causality (Giambatista et al., 2005). Thus, to explain the reasons behind such variations, qualitative data were needed to highlight the influential factors and explain their impact on the succession process.

According to Creswell (2009), the best research design for a research that requires both quantitative and qualitative data and where the evidence collected at one analysis level may differ from that collected at another level is mixed methods research design. As well, Giambatista et al. (2005) advocated mixed methods research design for studying the succession phenomenon to avoid any erroneous interpretations. The authors stated:

“However, one safeguard against faulty interpretations would be an increased emphasis on qualitative investigation (through interviews, surveys, etc.) to complement large sample quantitative analysis. Causality issues are particularly difficult to interpret in situations where cross-level processes are at play, and given that the current succession literature is sorely lacking in terms of qualitative studies, we encourage researchers to place more emphasis on such methodologies.” (Giambatista et al., 2005; p. 972)

Therefore, a mixed methods research design was adopted for the research. The combination of the quantitative and qualitative data provides the needed holistic view of the succession process that reflects the variations in the succession processes and provides in-depth explanations for such variations. The mixed methods design was selected to furnish a complete story of how the various stakeholders and context-related factors influence the succession process, as the qualitative data collected via the second and third research questions build on and explain the quantitative results from the first research question. Nevertheless, focusing on explaining how succession processes are influenced by the various influential stakeholders and context-related factors, only the qualitative part of the research was reported in the current thesis.

Focusing on the adopted research design, there are three strategies of inquiry in mixed methods research design, namely *sequential*, *concurrent* and *transformative*. According to Creswell (2009), the researcher in sequential mixed methods seeks to build on or explain the findings of one method by using another research method. For example, a researcher may first test hypotheses

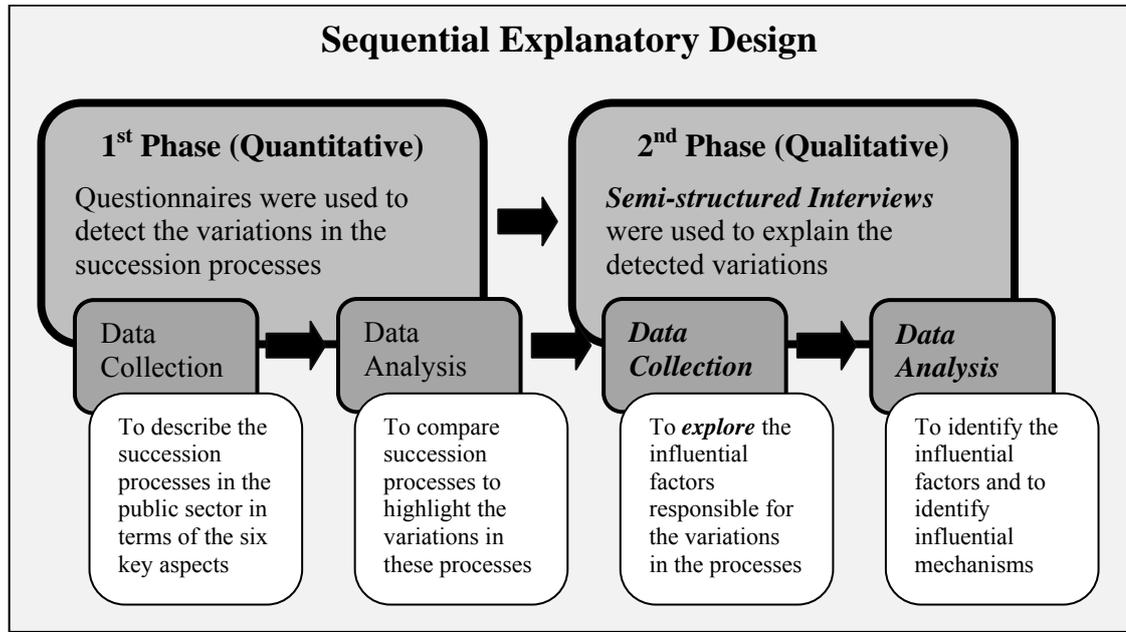
quantitatively and then elaborate on the quantitative findings by employing a qualitative research method. In concurrent mixed methods, “the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem” (Creswell, 2009; p. 14). Hence, a researcher may obtain qualitative and quantitative data to contrast or validate the quantitative findings with the qualitative findings. In transformative mixed methods, “the researcher uses a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective within a design that contains both quantitative and qualitative data” (Creswell, 2009; p. 15). For example, a researcher may use gender or race/ethnicity as a theoretical perspective to guide a study that uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

In selecting among these strategies of inquiry for a mixed methods research design, Creswell (2009) highlighted four factors. The first is the timing and the order of the quantitative and qualitative data collections and whether they are sequential or concurrent phases. The second factor is the relative weight or priority given to quantitative and qualitative data in the research. The third factor is concerned with when and how quantitative and qualitative data are mixed, in terms of merging the data sets, embedding data at the design level or connecting the data analysis of one set with the data collection of the other set. The last factor is whether the strategy of inquiry is guided by a larger theoretical perspective (Creswell, 2009).

By reflecting these factors on the current research, a sequential strategy of inquiry was selected. The reason was that the collection and the analysis of the quantitative data (that reflect the variations in the succession processes) needed to be done before the collection of the qualitative data (that explain these variations). Hence, there were two phases of data collection; the first was dedicated to collecting quantitative data, whereas the second was dedicated to qualitative data collection. In addition, the need to analyse the quantitative data before the collection of the qualitative data required their separation into data sets that were, nevertheless, connected. In other words, the nature of the mixing of the data in the adopted research design was in terms of the connecting the outcomes of the quantitative data analysis to the collection of the qualitative data. Moreover, considering the explanatory aim of the inquiry of the research, the adopted strategy of inquiry was of an explanatory nature, which gave more weight to the qualitative data. Finally, no

theoretical lens was adopted as an overarching theoretical perspective in the research. Thus, given these conditions, a sequential explanatory design was adopted as the strategy of inquiry for the current research. Figure 5-2 illustrates the adopted strategy of inquiry. As shown in the figure, the research adopted a two-phase sequential explanatory design.

FIGURE 5-2: THE ADOPTED STRATEGY OF INQUIRY



In the first phase, quantitative data were collected and analysed to detect any variations in the succession processes in the Bahraini public sector. Specifically, the researcher conducted a survey, *Executive Employees Survey*, to collect quantitative data needed to answer the first research question, how do succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector differ? In this survey, the researcher developed a questionnaire to detect any variations in the succession processes by describing these processes in terms of the six key differentiating aspects identified in the literature review. The questionnaire was distributed among 780 executive class employees in 16 the public sector organisations, which is about 67% of the targeted population (the 1,161 executive employees across the entire public sector). For a record of the participated organisations, refer to Appendix B. Out of the targeted executive population within these 16 organisations 212 executive employees participated in the survey, and thus, the response rate was about 27%.

The collected questionnaire responses were analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Statistical tests were performed to ensure the validity of the survey and internal

reliability of the data. The quantitative analysis of the survey revealed that four aspects of the succession process have significant variations among the investigated cases. Specifically, these varying aspects were: (1) the decision makers (in terms of who was in charge), (2) the type of successor (in terms of the extent to which they were heir apparent successors), (3) the formality of the process and (4) the transparency of the process. However, as discussed earlier, the current thesis focuses on explaining how the various influential factors shape the succession processes, and thus, only limited account of the first phase of the data collection and analysis is presented in the current thesis¹.

Therefore, the current thesis focuses on the second phase of the research, where qualitative data were collected and analysed to explain the detected variations in the succession process highlighted in the first phase of the research. Specifically, in the second phase, qualitative data were collected to explain detected variations in light of the influential factors acting upon the succession process. In the following section, the research methods used to collect the qualitative data are discussed.

5.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

In the second phase of the data collection, qualitative research method was used to collect the data needed to explain the detected variations in the succession process cases. As the inquiry of the research was of an explanatory nature, more emphasis was placed on this phase of the research. In the following subsection, the adopted qualitative research method is discussed.

5.3.1 The Research Method: Semi-structured Interview

Due to the explanatory nature of the research questions being addressed in the second phase of the data collection, a semi-structured interview research method was used. According to Saunders et al. (2009), semi-structured interviews are tailored to satisfy the explanatory needs of the researchers. In such research method, researchers use interview agendas to conduct purposeful discussions with the interviewees. The agenda guides the researchers to address specific themes and questions. However, depending on how the interviewees are related to the research topic, these themes and

¹ For further information about the quantitative part of the research, contact the researcher via email: phd10ha@mail.wbs.ac.uk

questions may vary from one interview to the other. Furthermore, the order of the questions in the interview is not fixed and it depends on the flow of the conversation (Saunders et al., 2009). In the following subsections, the interview agendas that were used in this phase of the data collection are presented. Then, the sources of the collected data are highlighted, followed by brief descriptions of how the data were collected and analysed.

5.3.2 Interview Agenda

As discussed in Chapter 4, with regard to the stakeholders of the succession process, the researcher differentiated between internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. This distinction was made due to these two groups of stakeholders possessing different knowledge regarding the information needed to explain the detected variations in the succession process cases in light of the influential stakeholders and context-related factors. Only internal stakeholders were expected to possess the relevant knowledge to reflect how succession processes were executed in their organisations and to verify any detected variations. However, external stakeholders' perspectives were needed to explain how these stakeholders influence the succession process. In other words, the perspectives of those two stakeholder groups provide a panoramic view of the succession process and the influential factors acting upon it along with the effects of these factors. Accordingly, each stakeholder group was approached differently in terms of the agenda of the interview.

5.3.2.1 The Interview Agenda for the External Stakeholder Interviews

The external stakeholders were interviewed to explore their claims and interests in the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector and to reveal their means to realise such claims and interests. Thus, the interviews focused on three themes, namely, identifying the external stakeholder's claims and interests in the succession process, exploring the influential mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to realise their claims and interests, and exploring the stakeholder's interactions with other stakeholders and organisational context in their efforts to realise their claims and interests in the succession process. The interview agenda for the external stakeholders is illustrated in Table 5-3 in the following page.

TABLE 5-3: THE INTERVIEW AGENDA FOR THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Themes	Major Issues	Key points
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanking the participants • The interview framework • Recording permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of this interview • Ethical Responsibilities • Data access, storing, utilisation and ownership
External Stakeholder Claims and Interests in the Succession Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Perceived Importance of the succession process • The Justification for such perceived importance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in the successor • Interested in how the succession process is executed • Interested in where the succession is occurring • For the good of stakeholder • For the good of society
Stakeholders' Mechanisms to Realise their Claims & Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do to realise your claims and interests? • What influences your ability to realise your claims and interests? 	
Stakeholder's Interactions with other stakeholders and the organisational context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with other Stakeholders • The nature of the interactions with other stakeholders • Interaction with Context Issues • The Nature of the interaction with the context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal/External stakeholder • Facilitating/Hindering realisation of the claims and interests • Macro, Organisational and Positional issues • Coping with/amending the issue
Ending the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Remarks • Thanking the participant 	

5.3.2.2 The Interview Agenda for the Internal Stakeholder Interviews

The internal stakeholders were interviewed to explore further any variations in the succession process that were detected by the questionnaires. Accordingly, the interview agenda was based on the findings of the quantitative analysis in terms of the varying aspects of the succession process. The interview agenda for the internal stakeholders was also influenced by the external stakeholders' interviews, as these interviews highlighted potential explanations for the detected variations in terms of influential stakeholders or their mechanisms in realising their claims and interests in the succession process. In addition, the review of the context of the Bahraini public sector highlighted the aftermath of the State's reform Project for the public sector. Thus, the State's reform Project was also addressed in these internal stakeholder interviews as a potentially

influential factor. At this point of the research, the interview agenda for the internal stakeholders was designed as illustrated in Table 5-4 below.

TABLE 5-4: INTERVIEW AGENDA FOR THE INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Themes	Major Issues	Key points
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanking the participants • The interview framework • Recording permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of this interview • Ethical Responsibilities • Data access, storing, utilisation and ownership
Explaining the Variations in Key Aspect 1, 2, ... and Nth Varying Aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal/Abnormal • Explanations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting examples • Explanation related to macro, Organisational and Positional issues • Explanation related to internal/external stakeholder
Influential Factors acting upon the Succession Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder • Influential mechanisms • Context-Related factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal/External stakeholder • Macro, Organisational or Positional issues
Ending the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Remarks • Thanking the participant 	

5.3.3 The Sources of the Qualitative Data

In this subsection, the sources of the qualitative data collected via the semi-structured interviews are illustrated in terms of organisations and interviewees. As stated earlier, the perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders were needed to explain the reported variations in the succession processes. Accordingly, this subsection was divided into two parts dedicated for those two stakeholder groups.

5.3.4 The Representatives of the External Stakeholders

The review of the context of Bahrain and the Stakeholder Theory helped to identify the external stakeholders of the succession process for executive positions in the public sector. These external stakeholders were categorised into five subgroups that embraced the potential external stakeholder organisations within the context of Bahrain. These subcategory groups were political associations, professional associations, social associations, media organisations and policy makers and

regulatory bodies. To reflect the perspectives of these external stakeholders, the researcher analysed 19 interviews with officials from 15 organisations, representing the five external stakeholder subgroups. Table 5-5, below, illustrates the distribution of these organisations among these subcategories.

TABLE 5-5: EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' ORGANISATIONS

The Subcategory groups	Organisations
Political Associations	Al-Asalah Islamic Society Al-Member National and Islamic Association The Independent Bloc in Al-Nuwab Council
Professional Associations	Bahrain Medical Society Bahrain Nursing Association Bahrain Society of Engineers Bahrain Teachers Society
Social Associations	Bahrain Young Ladies Association
Media	Akhbar Alkhaleej Newspaper Al-Ayam Newspaper Al-Waqet Newspaper
Governmental Org. & Authorities	Civil Service Bureau Economic Development Authority Supreme Council for Women Bahrain Institute of Public Administration
Total Number of Organisations	15

The main reason for selecting the abovementioned organisations as external stakeholders was their potential to influence the succession process, highlighted in the review of the Bahraini context. The researcher identified several criteria to select among the various organisations embraced by each of the external stakeholder subgroups. For example, political associations' potential to influence the succession process was reflected by the size of their representation in parliament. The bigger their bloc in parliament the more potential political associations have to influence the succession process for executive positions in governmental organisations. Thus, political associations were selected specifically based on the size of their representation in the 2002, 2006, and 2010 parliaments (refer to the review of the Bahraini context for more details about the selected political associations).

Professional associations were selected based on the size of their general assembly relative to that of their professional body as a whole. For instance, the Medical Association's general assembly

accounts for around 60% of its professional body overall as about 1,300 of the 2,200 doctors in Bahrain are members of the association. In addition to the relative size of their general assembly, professional associations were selected based on their involvement in the various issues related to career development of their members, such as participation in the development of the professional cadre as reported by their own publications as well by the local newspapers.

The main reason for selecting social associations was their link with the trend in the Bahraini public sector for empowering women. The selection criteria among the various social associations focusing on women related issues also included the size of the association's general assembly and the association's organisational age. Although two women's associations were approached, the researcher was able to interview only the representatives of the Bahrain Young Ladies Associations.

With regard to media organisations, all the six daily newspapers in Bahrain were approached by the researcher. The researcher was successful in interviewing representatives of three of these newspapers, which reflect diverse press orientations regarding the government's policies. Specifically, one newspaper is considered pro-government, the other is considered a promoter of the opposition viewpoint and the third is somewhere in between those two standpoints.

For the policy makers and regulatory bodies, the main criteria were the organisation's assigned role as a supervisory authority over the succession process (i.e. the CSB and BIPA) or the organisation's direct involvement and clear participation in the process as determined by their functions and jurisdictions (i.e. the EDB and SCW).

The main criterion for selecting those particular 19 interviewees to represent the abovementioned external stakeholder organisations was based on their positions in the organisational hierarchy. For example, the interviewed representatives of the political, professional and social associations were most often occupying positions at the helm of the organisational pyramid. With regard to the newspapers, the researcher interviewed the Chief Editors or the Editor of the pages related to the public and governmental affairs. These individuals were considered the most likely to be able to reflect their newspaper's perspectives concerning succession issues in the public sector. To gain the

perspectives of policy makers and regulatory bodies, the researcher interviewed those officials who were occupying positions closely related to the role of their organisations concerning the succession processes in the public sector (such as the Director of the Administrative Audit Directorate in the CSB).

All the interviewees were university graduates and many of them held postgraduate degrees. Of the 18 interviewees, only 5 were females. This could be explained by the fact that the Bahraini society is still a male-dominated society. Table 5-6 on the following page summarises the information on the interviewees.

TABLE 5-6: EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES

No.	Interviewees	Org. Position	Tenure	Educ.	Other Related Qualifications	Sex
1	Political Figure 1	Current President	Founding Member, two terms in Presidency	PhD	Representative on Al-Nuwab Council, 2002, 2006 & 2010	M
2	Political Figure 2	Former President	Founding Member, One term in Presidency	Univ. Degree	Representative on Al-Nuwab Council, 2002 & 2006	M
3	Political Figure 3	Member	4 years Membership	Univ. Degree	Representative on Al-Nuwab Council, 2006 & 2010	M
4	Rep. of Prof. Org. 1	Current President	One term in Presidency	Post-Grad. Degree	Cadre Development Committee Membership	M
5	Rep. of Prof. Org 1	Former President	Two terms in Presidency	Post-Grad. Degree	Career development participations	M
6	Rep. of Prof. Org 2	Current President	Two terms in Presidency	PhD	Cadre Development Committee Membership	F
7	Rep. of Prof. Org 2	Former President	Founding Member, One term in Presidency	Post-Grad. Degree	Cadre Development Committee Membership	F
8	Rep. of Prof. Org 3	Current President	Founding Member, 5 terms in Presidency	Post-Grad. Degree	Cadre Development Committee Membership	M
9	Rep. of Prof. Org 4	Current President	One term in Presidency	Post-Grad. Degree	Cadre Development participation Career development participations	M

No.	Interviewees	Org. Position	Tenure	Educ.	Other Related Qualifications	Sex
10	Rep. of Social Org. 1	Former President	6 terms in Presidency	Univ. Degree	Member of first Supreme Council for Women Board	F
11	Rep. of Newspaper 1	Chief Editor	Founding shareholder, Chairman of Board of Directors	Univ. Degree		M
12	Rep. of Newspaper 2	Editor	2 years in position	Univ. Degree		M
13	Rep. of Newspaper 3	Chief Editor	4 years in position	Univ. Degree		M
14	Rep. of Gov. Org 1	Vice President, Undersecretary level	5 years tenure in position	Post-Grad. Degree	Position's involvement in Public org. career development	M
15	Rep. of Gov. Org 1	Top Management, Chief Executive Office	3 years tenure in position	Post-Grad. Degree	Position's involvement in Public org. career development	M
16	Rep. of Gov. Org 2	Top Management, Director level	2 years tenure in position	Post-Grad. Degree	Position's involvement in Public org. career development	M
17	Rep. of Gov. Org 3	Deputy General Secretary, Undersecretary level	9 years tenure in position	Post-Grad. Degree	Position's involvement in Public org. career development	F
18	Rep. of Gov. Org 3	Top Management, Undersecretary Assistant level	9 years tenure in position	Univ. Degree	Position's involvement in Public org. career development	F
19	Rep of Gov. Org 4	President, Undersecretary level	4 years tenure in position	PhD	Position's involvement in Public org. career development	M

5.3.5 The Representatives of the Internal Stakeholders

In addition to BIPA, all the 16 governmental organisations that participated in the Executive Employees Survey conducted in the first phase of the data collection were approached in the second phase. By the end of the second phase of the data collection, the researcher had interviewed 20 officials from 15 organisations. Table 5-7 illustrates these internal stakeholder organisations and the number of interviewed officials during the second phase of the data collection.

TABLE 5-7: INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' ORGANISATIONS

No.	Internal Stakeholders' Organisations	Number of interviewed officials during the 2 nd phase of the data collection
1	Broadcast & TV Corporation	1
2	Central Informatics Organisation	2
3	Civil Aviation Affairs	1
4	Civil Service Bureau	1
5	Ministry of Commerce & Industry	1
6	Ministry of Finance	1
7	Ministry of Health	2
8	Ministry of Labour	3
9	Ministry of Al-Shura & Al-Nuwab Councils	1
10	Ministry of Social Development	2
11	Ministry of Transportation	1
12	Ministry of Works	1
13	Ministry of Justice & Islamic Affairs	1
14	Ministry of Municipality & Agriculture Affairs	1
15	Bahrain Institute of Public Administration	1
Total		20

As it was stated earlier, the internal stakeholders were categorised into three subgroups, namely, the organisations' top management, HRM officials and the executive class employees. The interviewees were selected to represent these three internal stakeholder subgroups. Interviewees were considered representatives of the organisation's top management if they were holding positions at, or above, the Assistant Undersecretary level. Thus, the organisation's top management subgroup included the organisation's Head, Undersecretaries and Assistant Undersecretaries. All those officials who held executive positions below the Undersecretary Assistant level (such as Directors and Section Heads) were included in the third internal stakeholder subgroup as executive class employees. To represent the HRM, the researcher interviewed the Directors of the Human Resource directorates.

During this phase of the data collection, the researcher interviewed eight top management officials, nine directors of the Human Resource Directorate and three executives below the Undersecretary Assistant level.

To reflect the perspectives of the internal stakeholders, the researcher analysed 26 interviews with public sector officials who represented the three internal stakeholder subgroups. In these interviews, the researcher interviewed ten top management officials, ten representatives of HRM and six executives below the Undersecretary Assistant level. In addition to these 26 interviews, responses of the two public sector officials, who represented BIPA and CSB as external stakeholders of the succession processes in the public sector, were also analysed to reflect their perspectives as internal stakeholders. This decision was made because while those two officials (the head of BIPA and the Director of the Administrative Audit Directorate in the CSB) represented external stakeholder organisations, they were also internal stakeholders of the succession process within their organisations (where one represented the organisation's top management and the other represented an executive class employee below the Assistant Undersecretary level)¹. Thus, the total number of interviews analysed to reflect the internal stakeholders' perspectives was 28.

Table 5-8 provides further information about the interviewees' position level, tenure in the position, educational level and sex. All the interviewees were university graduates and many of them held postgraduates degrees. Of the 28 interviewees only two were female.

TABLE 5-8: INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES²

Interviewees	Position level	Tenure	Education level	Sex
Top Management 1	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Top Management 2	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	University Degree	Male
Top Management 3	Head of Organization.	≥ 2 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Top Management 4	Undersecretary	≥ 3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Top Management 5	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	PhD	Male
Top Management 6	Head of Organisation	≥ 3 years	PhD	Male
Top Management 7	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Top Management 8	Head of Organisation	≥ 3 years	PhD	Male
Top Management 9	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Top Management 10	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Top Management 11	Undersecretary Assistant	≥ 3 years	University Degree	Male
HRM 1	Director of HR Directorate	10 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male

¹ The researcher bore this notion in mind and modified the interview agenda for those two officials to address the themes of the external stakeholder interview as well as the themes of the internal stakeholder interview.

² Note, the interviewee listing does not reflect the organisation listing illustrated in Table 21 earlier.

Interviewees	Position level	Tenure	Education level	Sex
HRM 2	Director of HR Directorate	≥ 2 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
HRM 3	Director of HR Directorate	10 years	University Degree	Male
HRM 4	Director of HR Directorate	3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
HRM 5	Director of HR Directorate	4 years	University Degree	Male
HRM 6	Director of HR Directorate	5 Years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
HRM 7	Director of HR Directorate	≥ 2 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
HRM 8	Director of HR Directorate	≥ 2 years	University Degree	Male
HRM 9	Director of HR Directorate	3 years	University Degree	Male
HRM 10	Director of HR Directorate	3 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Executive Employee 1	Sec. Head	≥ 2 years	University Degree	Male
Executive Employee 2	Director	≥ 2 years	Post Graduate	Male
Executive Employee 3	Sec. Head	≥ 2 years	University Degree	Female
Executive Employee 4	Director	≥ 2 years	Post Graduate Degree	Male
Executive Employee 5	Sec. Head	≥ 2 years	University Degree	Male
Executive Employee 6	Sec. Head	≥ 2 years	University Degree	Male
Executive Employee 7	Sec. Head	≥ 3 years	University Degree	Female

5.3.6 Conducting the Interviews

The interviews in the second phase of the data collection were conducted in two rounds. The interviews with the external stakeholders were conducted before those with the internal stakeholders. This decision was based on two reasons. The first was to avoid unnecessary delays in conducting the external stakeholder interviews by interviewing the external stakeholders during the researcher's trip to Bahrain to perform the Executive Employees Survey. As illustrated earlier, the Executive Employees Survey focused on detecting the variations in the succession processes, whereas the interview agenda for the external stakeholders interviews focused on identifying the stakeholders' claims and interests in the succession process and on explaining the mechanisms employed by these stakeholders to realise such claims and interests. In other words, the interview agenda for the external stakeholders was independent of the quantitative findings of the Executive Employees Survey. Thus, there was no point in delaying these interviews until the end of the Executive Employees Survey.

The second reason was the potential to make improvements to the interview agenda for the internal stakeholders based on the findings of the external stakeholder interviews, which in turn would enrich the research outcomes. By addressing the issues that were raised in the external stakeholders' claims and interests in the succession process or in the mechanisms employed to realise these claims and interests, the themes and the questions of the interview agenda for the internal stakeholder interviews were refined. Thus, the external stakeholder interviews were conducted simultaneously with the Executive Employees Survey in the period between September and November 2010. The internal stakeholder interviews were conducted in the period between April and June 2011.

To facilitate the external stakeholder interviews, the researcher utilised his social network to approach the representative individuals in the targeted organisations. However, in order to access the representatives of the internal stakeholder subgroups, the researcher utilised his social network as well as the connections with the key individuals that were established during the first phase of the data collection involved in the Executive Employees Survey. All the interviews took place in the interviewees' offices, except for three interviews based on the preference of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted in Arabic; however, two interviewees preferred to speak in English. All the interviews were recorded, except for three where the interviewees preferred not to have recorded interviews. In such cases, the researcher took shorthand field notes to record the interviewees' responses. By the end of this phase of the data collection, the researcher had obtained 42 audio recorded interviews and three shorthand field notes.

The total length of these audio records is about 21 hours and 21 minutes, with the external stakeholder interviews lasting about 12 hours and 52 minutes and the internal stakeholder interviews lasting about 13 hours and 59 minutes¹. The length of the individual external stakeholder interviews varied from 21 minutes to 71 minutes, with an average length of 41 minutes. The length of the internal stakeholder interviews varied from 15 minutes to 57 minutes, with an average length of 31 minutes. Table 5-9 and Table 5-10 provide further details about the qualitative data profiles.

¹ Note that two of the external stakeholder interviews (i.e. the representatives of CSB and BIPA) were analysed as internal stakeholders as well.

TABLE 5-9: THE LENGTH OF THE INTERVIEW AUDIO RECORDS

Audio Records	2nd Phase of the Data Collection	
	Ext. Stakeholders	Int. Stakeholders
Number of Rec.	19	23
Longest Rec.	71 min.	72 min.
Shortest Rec.	21 min.	15 min.
Average time	48 min.	44 min.
Total Time	12 Hours & 53 Min.	13 Hours & 59 Min.

TABLE 5-10: GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE COLLECTED QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative Data	No. of Interviews	Stakeholder Groups / Subgroups	Collection Period	Interview Location	Interview Language	Interview Recording Method
External Stakeholder Interviews	19	3 Political Associations, 6 Professional Associations, 1 Social Association, 3 Media Org. and 6 Gov. Org.	Sep - Nov 2010	18 Interviewees' Offices 1 Public place	17 Arabic 2 English	19 Audio Recordings
Internal Stakeholder Interviews	26	10 Top Management Officials, 10 HRM Officials, 6 Executive Class Employees	April-June 2011	23 Interviewees' Offices 3 Public places	26 Arabic	23 Audio Recordings 3 Shorthand Notes
Total	45	19 External Stakeholders 26 Internal Stakeholders	8 Months	41 Interviewees' Offices 4 Public places	43 Arabic 2 English	42 Audio Recordings 3 Shorthand Notes

5.3.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data, whereby the data (such as interviewees' responses) are organised, categorised and meaningfully interpreted (Creswell, 2009). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activities, namely, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/ verification. Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data. Data display refers to the presentation of an organised and compressed assembly of information that allows conclusions to be drawn. In the last stream of analysis activity, and during the analysis process, the researcher realises as well as verifies his/her conclusions. Thus, data analysis comprises various activities that range from preparing the qualitative data for the analysis (e.g. transcribing and translating interviews) to applying a validation strategy (e.g. triangulation).

To prepare the interviews for the qualitative data analysis, the researcher transcribed the audio records word by word. The Arabic transcriptions were then crosschecked with the actual audio records to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Next, the Arabic transcriptions were translated to English by the researcher and certified freelance translators. Appendix C-3 illustrates a sample of an interview transcript. Then, the researcher uploaded the English version of the interview transcriptions into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software package.

The following step was to code the interviews. Coding is the process of attaching key words or tags to segments of the text that have the potential to answer the research questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). One way of coding the text is to use a *template analysis* method. King (2004) explained this type of thematic analysis of text by stating:

“The essence of template analysis is that the researcher produces a list of codes (“template”) representing themes identified in their textual data. Some of these will usually be defined a priori, but they will be modified and added to as the researcher reads and interprets the text. The template is organised in a way which represents the relationships between themes, as defined by the researcher, most commonly involving a hierarchical structure.” (p. 256)

Thus, following King’s (2004) method and by using the features of NVivo, the researcher coded the interviewees’ responses as nodes according to a preliminary analysis template, which was derived from the interview agenda. As the analysis process progressed, new nodes were created and others were abandoned. Thus, the template analysis was modified according to the changes made to these nodes. The template analysis went through several iterations during which the researcher rechecked the node coding of the previously coded interview transcripts.

To explore and compare the interviewee’s responses, the researcher used the Matrix Coding Query option provided in the Nvivo software package. The software generated tables illustrating the coding frequency of particular nodes for the designated interviewees. These tables were designed to illustrate the means used for drawing and verifying the findings of the qualitative analysis. In addition, the researcher used direct citations from these interviews to support his arguments about the findings of qualitative analysis.

5.3.8 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the qualitative findings, the researcher employed several strategies and techniques. Creswell (2009) stated, “Qualitative validating means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures” (p. 190). One of these procedures that Creswell (2009) specified is triangulating different data sources of information to build a coherent justification for the themes. As demonstrated earlier in the research design, the researcher strived to triangulate the data sources to ensure the accuracy of the qualitative findings. Furthermore, the final template analysis was developed by coding and recoding the interviewees’ responses until all the emerging themes representing the various interviewees’ perspectives had been incorporated.

During the interviewing process, the data were collected systematically. The interviewees were fully informed about the nature of the research and they gave voluntary and informed consent to participate. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and re-checked for accuracy of the transcript. The translations were executed by a certified translator along with the researcher. Moreover, the researcher ensured the trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative data by representing the interviewees’ perspectives as accurately as possible.

During the qualitative analysis, the researcher provided Matrix Coding Query tables to illustrate the frequency of coding specific nodes in the interviewees’ responses. This reflects the plausibility of interpretation of the data in terms of the majority views on the issue under consideration. In addition, the researcher provided a clear and detailed account of the research context, thereby enabling the reader to judge the external validity (or transferability) of the findings to other contexts.

With regard to the reliability of the qualitative findings, Creswell (2009) defined qualitative reliability as follows: the “researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (p.190). Thus, by using a systematic approach to collect, record and analyse the qualitative data, the researcher ensured the consistency of his approach. Moreover, the researcher avoided any drifts in the definitions of the coding nodes by specifying the definitions of these nodes in text.

CHAPTER 6 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES: TOP MANAGEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in the Research Methodology Chapter, the quantitative analysis of the Executive Employees Survey revealed that four aspects of the succession process have significant variations among the investigated cases. These varying aspects were: (1) the decision makers (in terms of who was in charge), (2) the type of successor (in terms of the extent to which they were heir apparent successors), (3) the formality of the process and (4) the transparency of the process¹.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach to explain the abovementioned detected variations in the succession processes from the perspectives of the various stakeholders of the succession process in the public sector. Acknowledging the differences among the various stakeholders, in terms of the relevant knowledge to explain the reported variations in the process, the researcher differentiated between internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholder group included three subgroups, namely, the organisation's top management, officials of the HRM and executive class employees. The external stakeholder group included five subgroups, namely, political associations, professional associations, social associations, media organisations and policy-makers and regulatory bodies for succession processes in the public sector.

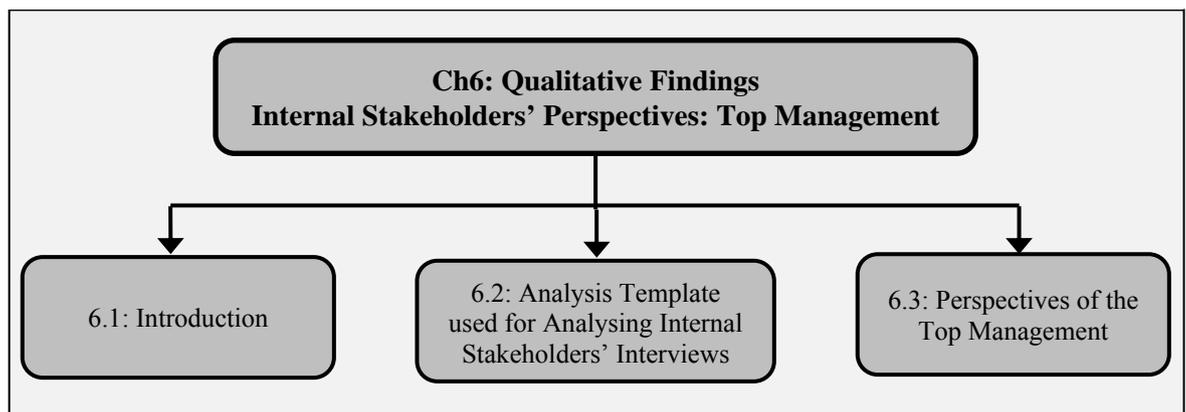
The qualitative data utilised in this study were obtained from the 45 interviews. The researcher used template analysis method to analyse the qualitative data. Due to the size of the qualitative data analysis, and in order to simplify the data analysis presentation, the qualitative findings were divided into five chapters. The first two chapters, chapters 6 and 7, aim to explain the reported

¹ For further information about the quantitative analysis, contact the researcher via email: phd10ha@mail.wbs.ac.uk

variations from the internal stakeholders' perspectives. The other three chapters, chapters 8, 9 and 10, aim to explore the influential factors acting upon the succession process from the external stakeholders' perspectives. Specifically, the chapters focus on the external stakeholders' claims and interests in the succession process and on the mechanisms employed to realise such claims and interests. Accordingly, this chapter is dedicated to presentation of the perspectives of the organisations' top management.

The structure of the current chapter is illustrated in Figure 6-1. Following this introductory section, the second presents the final analysis template used to analyse the internal stakeholders' responses. Then, the third section presents the perspectives of the top management that verify and explain the reported variations in the succession processes.

FIGURE 6-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 6



6.2 ANALYSIS TEMPLATE USED FOR ANALYSING INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' INTERVIEWS

After several iterations, during which the nodes and sub-nodes that were used to code the responses of the representatives of the internal stakeholders were revised, the analysis template was finalised (refer to Appendix C-1).

The final analysis template embraced five themes. The first four themes focused on the coding interviewees' explanations regarding the four reported varying aspects among the succession processes. Each of these four themes was divided into two nodes. The first node was for coding the interviewees' remarks regarding the extent to which the reported variations were existent in the real

world. This node embraced two sub-nodes that differentiated between the confirming and invalidating interviewees' remarks. In addition, another sub-node was designated for highlighting related supporting examples provided by the interviewees. The second node was for coding the explanations the interviewees provided for the confirmed variations in the succession processes. This node embraced several sub-nodes that reflect the potential influential stakeholder and context-related factors.

The fifth and last theme of the template coded the interviewees' responses regarding the influential factors that were highlighted in the review of the context of the Bahraini public sector. Specifically, this theme focused on coding the interviewees' comments regarding the impact of the state's reform project on the succession process. This theme embraced three nodes. The first two nodes were intended to code the interviewees' responses that highlighted stakeholders' impact on the succession process and the influential mechanisms employed by these stakeholders. The third node was designated for coding the interviewees' responses that highlighted the impact of the context-related factors on the succession process.

6.3 THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE TOP MANAGEMENT

To reflect the perspectives of the organisation's top management regarding the reported variations in the succession process, the researcher analysed the responses of 11 public sector officials (at Assistant Undersecretary level or above)¹. The analysis findings are illustrated in this section. The section is divided into six subsections. The first four subsections explain the reported variations in the succession process from the perspective of the top management representatives. Initially, the analysis findings regarding the variations among the decision makers are presented, followed by the presentations of the findings regarding the variations in the type of successor, the formality and the transparency of the process. The fifth subsection underlines the influential factors acting upon the process that were highlighted by these representatives. The last subsection summarises the perspectives of the top management.

¹ One of which was the head of BIPA, who was interviewed as external stakeholder as well.

6.3.1 Variations among the Decision Makers

As stated earlier, there were significant variations among the decision makers of the succession process, in terms of their organisational positions. In some cases, the decision makers were reported to be the predecessors (or the office incumbents during the succession process). In other cases, the decision makers were the superiors of the predecessors, the organisations' heads or external authorities beyond the organisations' boundaries.

This was supported by the results from the qualitative data; when the representatives of the organisations' top management were asked about the extent to which these findings existed in real life, their responses reflected a consensus affirming the reality of the findings. The interviewees presented several explanations for such variations among the decision makers. The analysis of the interviewees' responses highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors, which are presented below.

6.3.1.1 Variations among the Decision Makers: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The interviewees presented several explanations for the variations among the decision makers, which highlighted stakeholder-related factors. The majority of the interviewees' responses highlighted factors related to the Head of the organisation, with only two interviewees highlighting factors relating to the predecessor or the stakeholder of the succession process in general.

6.3.1.1.1 Predecessor-related factors:

Only two interviewees highlighted predecessor-related factors in their explanations for the variations among the decision makers, which both reflected the predecessor's power over the position that he/she was leaving. The data analysis suggested that predecessors are likely to be able to contribute more to the succession process decisions, and even become the main decision makers, if they have been promoted to higher positions in the chain of command in their previous positions. This notion was supported by the specific case presented by one of the two interviewees through his illustration of his role in appointing his successor. The interviewee testified that when he was promoted to his current position, he insisted that a specific candidate should succeed him in the

position. Equally, the reverse was true. The other interviewee asserted that predecessors would have less influence in selecting their successors if they were leaving the organisations. He stated:

“Of course, the predecessor’s recommendations and nominations would be considered in appointing the successor, particularly, if the predecessor was going to continue his/her career in the organisation. However, if the predecessors were leaving the organisation, such recommendations would not be very influential.”

6.3.1.1.2 Head of the organisation-related factors:

Most of the interviewees’ responses that highlighted stakeholder-related factors to explain such variations among the decision makers emphasised factors related to the head of the organisation. Specifically, the responses reflected the management style of these organisational heads in terms of the extent to which they delegate succession process decisions to their assistants and subordinates. For example, one interviewee stated:

“In general, some ministers say ‘I will choose who should follow who; I want to make sure myself that the successor is fit for the position’. However, other ministers say ‘I trust my executives to handle, responsibly, such decisions’; and thus they delegate the decisions to others.”

In addition to such explicit statements, some interviewees presented examples from their own work experiences emphasising the management style of the organisation’s head and their tendency to delegate succession process decisions to other executives and internal committees. However, one interviewee argued that the head of the organisation is the main decision maker when it comes to the executive succession process. The interviewee claimed that such internal committees are just a show and the decision has usually been finalised before the matter has even been passed to the committee. He stated:

“The most common is a one-man show by the top rank executives in the organisation, the minister or the undersecretary. Committees do exist, but they are very rare. There are committees on the paper, but I think it is only a mere formality, procedural rather than effective.”

Other interviewees indirectly supported this notion about the organisation's head being the main decision maker by highlighting the power of the head of the organisation to appoint whom he/she wants. For example, one argued that some ministers, in additions to their powers to appoint executives below the director level, might insist on the appointment of their nominees for positions at the director level or above. This is despite the fact that the Civil Service Law clearly states that the appointments for positions at the director level and above made are via decrees by the political leadership (H.H. the Prime Minister or H.M the King). However, according to these interviewees, some ministers are more capable than other ministers in appointing their nominees. As stated by one interviewee:

“Well, according to what I know, this varies from one minister to another. Some ministers have the ability to impose whom they want. ... I know some cases here in Bahrain, where the Minister has nominated names four years ago, but the individuals have still not been promoted to these positions and they are still working as acting officials. ... His[the minister] mind is set; he is not willing to bring anyone else from outside the organisation while there are worthy people inside.”

The notion of power held by the head of an organisation was echoed in other interviewees' responses. For example, one interviewee stated that some of the heads of the organisations “*lack the will*” to be responsible for nominating candidates to executive positions in their organisations, and thus open the door, inadvertently or not, for other stakeholders to become the main decision makers. He argued:

“From one side, I may say the will of top management, or I would rather say the top management's commitment toward proper succession management. From the other side, it is not just the will; it could be the power of that top management. This is because certain people might not have enough determination to push it and to take it aggressively. One may say let them appoint anyone whom they want, it is up to them, they know better”

6.3.1.1.3 General stakeholder-related factors:

The data analysis highlighted two responses that related such variations, generally, to the involvement of powerful stakeholders. In the first response, the interviewee asserted that the power

of those employees, who consider themselves rightful candidates for the positions, to stand up for their right to promotion had altered the decision making process for the appointment of executives. According to the interviewee, a candidate had complained to the royal court of being overlooked; which consequently led to the review of the appointment decision process and the creation of more checkpoints.

In the second response, another interviewee argued that the organisation's staff, or any stakeholder in general, may influence the decision process based on the power they possess via their individual status or social networks. The interviewee stated:

“That is to say, it is not the power of the position one has, but the power of the individual's personality. ... For example, in (the name of the organisation was omitted), a (junior staff), who is working there, his voice is heard regarding who should be a manager, why? ... He is a recognised religious scholar ... His opinion is respected and his voice is heard ... They [the organisation's top management] consider his opinion about who would be here and who would be there.”

6.3.1.2 Variations among the Decision Makers: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis reveals several explanations highlighting context-related factors. These factors emerge on two levels; namely, the macro level and the positional level.

6.3.1.2.1 Macro level factors:

Eight interviewees emphasised one macro level factor in their explanations for such variations among the decision makers, specifically the Civil Service Law. The interviewees emphasised the fact that this law specifies different appointing authorities for three different levels in the executive hierarchy; namely, below director, director and above director. For example, one interviewee stated:

“As I told you before, that depends on the position [the variations among the decision makers]. For example, from the director level, the appointment is made based on the nomination of the minister; however, the decision is up to the Ministerial Council. The minister, say, wants to appoint a Director, he will put forward his recommendations, yet, in many cases, they are not accepted.”

Furthermore, the variations among the decision makers could be also contributed to by the vagueness in the law regarding the decision making procedures for the succession process. The law does not specify how or on what basis succession decisions are to be made: decisions such as those related to selection criteria, candidate evaluation and successor selection. For example, one interviewee reinforced this notion in the following statement:

“This is true [such variations among the decision makers of the succession process], because the mechanism is not clear, there is no fixed mechanism for the succession process. This makes every case a unique case ... If there were a documented procedure for the succession everyone would follow it; but there is in none.”

6.3.1.2.2 Positional level factors:

The data analysis revealed two position-related factors for the variations among the decision makers. The first is the differences in the nature of the executive job in term of its role, consequences on the organisational performance and selection criteria. The interviewees argued that these differences in the job depend on where the executive position sits in the organisation's hierarchy. According to three interviewees, executive jobs shift from being supervisory to administrative to, finally, becoming political in nature with progression up the organisational hierarchy. Moreover, the higher the position is the greater the impact of the job on the organisational performance, the broader are the selection criteria and the greater the consideration of external issues in determining these criteria. Thus, these differences in the nature of the job, in turn, dictate that the appointment decisions for high executive positions are taken at a level higher than the organisational head in order to consider the full picture. As stated by one interviewee:

“As you go to higher positions, the career shifts from specialised to supervisory to administration and finally to political positions. Therefore, the higher the position the greater the impact on the organisation is. And therefore, appointments for these positions require a holistic view, taking into consideration a lot of factors and including external issues.”

Furthermore, another interviewee affirmed such differences in the nature of the executive job. In his statement, the interviewee asserted that the succession process for Section Head positions is an

internal process, with directors playing an important role in preparing, evaluating and appointing these executives; whereas, for high positions (director level and above), the organisation's top management can only nominate candidates and appointment decisions are made by the political leadership.

The second factor is the importance of the position as perceived by the organisation's competent authority. The data analysis revealed that the succession decisions for important positions from the perspective of the organisation's competent authority are usually made at high levels in the organisation's hierarchy, regardless of the positional level. As stated by one interviewee:

“Another issue is the importance of the position. For example, normally, the Section Head is appointed by the director, however, the minister or the top management of the organisation would be more involved in appointing the Section Head of Public Relations. Such a position could be linked directly with the minister, so there would be a higher ranked decision maker for these important positions than for other less important positions.”

The perceived importance of the position in terms of its importance to the core function of the organisation was also emphasised. For example, one interviewee stated that appointments for professional executive positions linked to the core function of the organisation are often based on the recommendations of the office incumbent¹. He stated:

“Some of the directorates have a certain sensitivity, which must be taken into consideration in the selection of their directors. For example, professional directorates, due to their importance to the core function of the organisation and the professional aspects of their work, consider directors to be the most influential decision makers with regard to whom should follow them in the position ... This is not the case for the administrative directorates, where roughly anyone could run them.”

¹ One can argue that the recommendations' of the office incumbents in these professional positions are considered due to the powers they possess in terms of professional knowledge. However, the counter argument is that powers based on professional knowledge would be less important if the succession decisions were related to non-professional executive positions. Thus, this factor was found to be more closely related to the professional position than to the professional powers of the office incumbent.

6.3.2 Variations in the Type of Successor

This aspect is the second reported varying aspect of the succession process. There were significant variations among the investigated succession cases, in terms of the extent to which the successors were heir apparent successors. In some cases, the successor was recognised by the organisational staff as the next office incumbent prior to the announcement of his/her appointment in the position. In other cases, the successor was not identified until such an announcement was made by the decision makers. When the representatives of the organisations' top management were asked to what extent they thought this finding is realistic, their responses reflected a consensus regarding such variations among successors. Some of the interviewees provided supporting examples from their work experiences, which highlighted a variety of stakeholder-related and context-related factors for such variations.

6.3.2.1 Variations in the Type of Successor: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data uncovered several explanations, which highlighted stakeholder-related factors. Most of the interviewees' responses pointed to factors that are related to the Head of the organisation and the successor.

6.3.2.1.1 Predecessor-related factors:

Only two interviewees highlighted a predecessor-related factor in their explanations for variations among the successors, with both interviewees specifying predecessor's power. According to one of the interviewees, some of the predecessors, during their tenure in the positions, may prepare and identify individuals as their heir apparent. He stated:

“So, Directors prepare those potential candidates gradually. And when the time comes and the Director is departing his office, he may recommend this individual to follow him in the position. This recommendation has a great impact on the decision-making process as the director has worked with and assessed the performance of the candidate for a long time.”

Nonetheless, other predecessors may purposefully hinder the development of their subordinates in attempts to avoid being replaced by one of them. This in turn influences the availability of

appropriate candidates to substitute for such office incumbents, as none of the subordinates would be recognised as the next successor for the office incumbent. The interviewee stated:

“But sometimes, those who hold these positions may try to put down and weaken those who are beneath them, to ensure they continue in their positions.”

The other interviewee affirmed this notion and stated that an external successor is appointed, usually, because no internal candidates have been recognised as heir apparent successors, due to the office incumbent's reluctance to prepare his/her successor. He stated:

“Usually, a Director who asks his General Director to appoint someone else to replace him during his leave does so because he has not prepared a substitute from within his team. Therefore, when such directors depart the office, it is normal for external individuals to assume the positions.”

6.3.2.1.2 Successor-related factors:

The data analysis indicated that the availability of appropriate successors for the positions is the key successor-related factor highlighted by the interviewees to explain such variations among the successors. The interviewees emphasised that the more appropriate the successors were for a position, the more likely they were recognised as heir apparent successors. For example, one interviewee who confirmed this notion highlighted acting as second in charge as an indicator of heir apparent successor by stating:

“For example, under each director there are three or four Section Heads. Usually, one of those Section Heads is the most likely candidate or the one who has proved himself most worthy to be the successor of the director. When would this Section Head become known as a candidate for the position? He would become known as a candidate if he replaced the director whenever the director went on leave or away from the organisation.”

Other interviewees affirmed this notion. They stressed that the executive who takes charge of the position, prior to appointment in the position, is recognised as heir apparent. For example, one interviewee stated:

“Normally, after being acting director for one year or so, he should be promoted to the position but he was not ... The whole ministry knew that (name of the individual was omitted) would become the director of the (name was omitted) Department instead - replacing (name of the predecessor was omitted); it was a settled decision.”

6.3.2.1.3 Head of the organisation-related factors:

With regard to explanatory factors related to the head of the organisation, most of the interviewees pointed to the head of the organisation's management style to explain variations among the successors. For example, one interviewee stated, “I think, at the bottom line, this variation is up to the decision maker. This is the number one reason”. Furthermore, the data analysis highlighted various issues reflecting the management style of these organisations' heads. One of these issues is the extent to which the organisation's head plans the succession process, prepares and identifies the successors. For example, one interviewee stated:

“I think this issue is linked to the planning. ... This is why you may find such variation. This is because the successors will be identified if there is preplanning in the succession process whereby successors are identified and allowed to proceed to the next stage as the second person.”

The influence of the management style of the organisations' heads was also reflected in the extent of centralisation and transparency in the decision process. The data analysis suggested that the less centralised and the more transparent the decision process, the higher the probability of heir apparent successors being recognised by the organisational staff. For example, one interviewee referred to a case he had witnessed in which a particular individual was expected by the organisational staff to be appointed to a position; nonetheless, another individual was appointed. The interviewee explained that this had occurred because of the combined effects of high centralisation and the lack of transparency shown by the head of the organisation during the decision making process. He stated:

“The Minister said, ‘No, I am the Minister in charge and I am the one who makes the decisions; and with regard to the issue of acting in office, it is not the only criterion for assuming the office, there are other criteria which we consider. One of these criteria is the

experience ... and there are other criteria, which I am not compelled to share with you.' ... This is one of the cases where the successor was unknown and was a surprise to the whole ministry."

6.3.2.2 Variations in the Type of Successor: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several explanations highlighting context-related factors. These factors emerged on three contextual levels; namely, macro level, organisational level and positional level. Yet, most of these factors occur on the macro level.

6.3.2.2.1 Macro level factors:

The interviewees highlighted several macro level factors in their explanations for such variations in the successors. A few of the interviewees mentioned macro level factors only in general terms. For example, one interviewee highlighted the general policy of the government, the political issues, and concerns about religious sect and gender balance. However, other interviewees emphasised specific macro level factors in their explanations for such variations among the successors. For example, with regard to the general policy of the government, the data analysis suggested that the government apparently strived to maintain religious (Sunni/Shea) and gender balance in the public sector. Despite the sensitivity of these issues, several interviewees mentioned sectarian and gender considerations as influencing the selection of successors. This, in turn, might hinder the recognition of heir apparent successors as organisational staff are, most often, not aware of the full picture in these areas. For instance, one interviewee illustrated a case where sectarian considerations had contributed to the appointment of an individual who had not been identified by others as the next office incumbent. He stated:

"For example, (name of the individual was omitted) became an Undersecretary Assistant due to the sect distribution issue. I am not saying that he is not qualified, he has got the needed academic qualification; but this position is not the next position in his career path. He had only been a few years in the ministry. He got the position without being a manager ... No one knew that he would be promoted to this position; however, sect distribution helped him as at that time there was a need for an Undersecretary Assistant from such a sect."

With regard to concerns about gender balance, one interviewee presented a case where female representation in the organisation's top management needed to be maintained. He stated:

“Such as the case, we encountered here, where the manager needed to be female. We had a female manager and she resigned, so now, they want to have a female replacement as it is a necessity to have at least one female director. That is it, a female director is needed, end of story.”

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, another supporting example is presented to illustrate sectarian and gender concerns in appointing executives. In this case, one interviewee presented his own experience as one of the decision makers for the recruitment of new trainees for executive positions¹ and stressed his concerns about sectarian and gender balance. He explained how the evaluation process had produced a balanced list of candidates in terms of sect and gender representation. However, when candidates were called in for the final selection process, it was discovered that some of the selected candidates had found jobs elsewhere, which disturbed the representational balance among the candidates. This was seen as a problem, despite the fact that these candidates were the most suitable for the positions. As described by the interviewee:

“So, when the results came out, I was pleased, because I know about the issue of sect distribution and I understand it. The results came out 11 (sect A) and 9 (sect B). So, I said it had been resolved, and thanks to Allah, the representing percentage was close, I was on the safe side ... What happened then, ... when we called them for the final interview, 7 to 8 (sect A) had already found employment and they did not want our offers ... In addition, male candidates were recruited before female candidates. So now, we are facing two problems ... the sect distribution has changed ... and the gender distribution has changed ... What happened is, we ended up with 20 out of which 16 were female and 15 (sect B) and 5 (sect A). I was in trouble because we did not want this many females, but we said it was regardless of gender, we were searching for fitness.”

Another macro level factor highlighted by the interviewees in their explanations was political issues. For example, one interviewee mentioned the intervention by political association in the

¹ Even though, this case does not relate to succession processes, the impact of sect and gender quotas in the recruitment for executive employees reflects the influence of such issues on the succession processes in the organisations.

succession process. He asserted that these associations put forward demands to the competent authorities of the public sector organisations to appoint certain candidates. Some of these candidates are not recognised as heir apparent successors by the organisational staff; and consequently, this may contribute to the variations among successors in terms of heirs apparent. He stated:

“I have heard from several parties, however we did not face it here, that political associations put forward a list of names for recruitment; this is a kind of pressure, and even for promotion issues ... They simply pick up the phone and call the minister in charge and say this is a list for recruitment, or you may consider this for that position. The message is indirect, ‘if you do not agree we may question you in the parliament’.”

However, the most emphasised macro level factor in the interviewees’ responses was the Civil Service Law. This factor was highlighted in several ways. For instance, one interviewee argued that since these laws specify that ministers can only nominate candidates for high executive positions, as the appointing authority is the political leadership, then the ministers would be reluctant to classify any candidate as an heir apparent successor, to avoid any embarrassment if they were not chosen. He stated:

“I cannot come and tell you I want you for this position and the next day you are not selected. Here in Bahrain, as we Arabs say, I cannot promise you what I cannot afford.”

The emphasis on the Civil Service Law was also echoed in other interviewees’ explanations but from a different angle. Some interviewees argued that such variations among the successors are due to the lack of specified mechanisms for selecting the successors. On one hand, some interviewees argued that this represents positive leeway in the law, which gives decision makers more room to manoeuvre. As put by one interviewee, “This has a positive side, when you have such leeway you may have an inside or outside successor. You can promote someone from the inside or you may recruit new blood.”

On the other hand, other interviewees considered such leeway in the laws as a legislation gap, which needs to be addressed - and they regarded this gap as contributing to the variations among

the successors. One of these interviewees stated, “Moreover, there is nothing in the Civil Service Bureau which regulates this issue [how to select the successor].” The same notion was affirmed by the other interviewees. For example, another interviewee argued that Civil Service Laws do not tackle the succession process issue in enough detail; and thus, the variations in the recognition of heir apparent successors are just part of the aftermath of such an inadequate approach. He stated:

“I think the succession issue in general was overlooked. The decision makers did not think about how to replace people. So, the steps which would follow such awareness did not materialise, and thus we did not have a programme in which we could prepare co-pilots.”

Another interviewee highlighted the lack of detail in areas of the Civil Service Law, such as not specifying definite lengths for assuming executive positions. This, according to the interviewee, had contributed to a failure to identify successors; particularly among the office incumbents who were performing well. He stated:

“This is our problem ... when someone assumed a position and performed well, they say keep him he is good. Two, three, and four years, keep him, but for how long? One day he will leave, who is the substitute? ... But, when it is set from the beginning, you will serve in this position this period of time, then, we will think about the successor ... So, this is why we need a system specifying how long an employee should serve in a position, a system which stresses the need to prepare a second line.”

6.3.2.2.2 Organisational level factors:

In their explanations for the variations among the successors, the interviewees’ opinions varied with regard to the extent to which organisational level factors were responsible. The data analysis showed that seven responses related to five interviewees were coded under nodes representing organisational level factors. Nevertheless, there was no emphasis on one specific factor; rather three organisational level factors were highlighted. The first factor is the variations in adopted procedures for executing the succession process. The data analysis indicated that there were variations among the organisations in the adopted procedures in terms of planning the process, preparing the second line of executives, the centralisation and the transparency of the succession process decisions. These variations, in turn, would facilitate/hinder the recognition of heir apparent

successors. Noteworthy are the variations in the succession process planning, preparation of second line, the centralisation and transparency of the decisions were highlighted earlier, as these issues reflect the management style of the organisations' heads.

The second factor is organisational performance. According to one interviewee, the likelihood of the appointment of an external successor increases in cases where the organisation is not performing well. This in turn may contribute to the variations among the successors, as external successors are less likely to be recognised as heir apparent successors. As was asserted by the interviewee:

“As you go up the hierarchal level, an external candidate could be better, especially if the organisation is suffering some problems. In such cases, the focus is on external candidates in order to bring in needed change.”

The third organisational level factor is the reaction of the organisation's staff. Decision makers in the organisation may test the water for reactions among their staff before the appointment decisions are made. This in turn would influence the recognition of candidates as heir apparent successors or not. One interviewee affirmed:

“In addition, usually, news [about plans to appoint a specific individual in an executive position] is leaked to pave the way and to test the extent to which an individual is accepted by other [organisational staff] ... Such tactics are tolerable in management and we have lots of cases in the government to illustrate this.”

6.3.2.2.3 Positional level factors:

Five interviewees highlighted two positional level factors in their explanations for the variations among the successors. The first factor is the nature of the executive job in terms of the job requirements. The data analysis suggested that such differences in the job requirements might facilitate/hinder the identification of heir apparent successors. For example, one interviewee asserted this notion in affirming that heir apparent successors are more likely to be identified for positions below the undersecretary level. In his explanation for the variations among the successors, the interviewee highlighted the differences in the nature of the executive jobs in these

low positions in terms of job requirements. He implicitly commented on the clarity of the job requirements for low positions. Then, he argued that, due to these differences in the job requirements, successors for high positions are most often not identified until the announcement of the appointment. He stated:

“But, as we go higher in the hierarchy, the issue [recognition of heir apparent successor] is somehow different. Take for example an undersecretary or an undersecretary assistant position. Those who are directly beneath him are directors, one is specialised in technical aspects, the second is dealing with HR and the third is handling the finance and so on. Each of these directors is working on and possesses a part of the whole picture. [Therefore, who should be the successor of the undersecretary assistant!”]

Another interviewee affirmed this notion about the differences in the job requirements by highlighting the professional knowledge required to assume executive positions in professional departments. According to this interviewee, candidates are often recognised as heir apparent successors in those executive positions which require professional “know-how”, such as the department of Information Technology. He stated:

“Nowadays, the successors more often come from the core business, if not from the same organisation, he would be from the same professional sector. He [the successor who is appointed in a professional executive position], is required to be a professional in the field. I cannot appoint, for example, an engineer as an IT director and ask him to manage it.”

The data analysis highlighted a second positional level factor. According to one interviewee, the variations among the successors in terms of heirs apparent are related to the structure of the executive office. The interviewee argued that heir apparent successors would be recognised if the structure of the executive office included a position for a deputy. He stated:

“We are, maybe, the only country in the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] where there are no Director Deputy positions; only for school principals do we have principals’ deputies. Kuwait for example, for every director there is a director deputy so 90% of the deputies will become the successor.”

6.3.3 Variations in the Formality of the Succession Process

Formality of the process is the third reported varying aspect of the succession process. It was found that there were significant variations in the formality of the process among the investigated succession cases. In some cases, the process was documented and followed prescribed procedures which specified clear responsibilities for those who were involved. In other cases, most of the process's decisions were not documented, no clear prescribed procedures were followed and the accountabilities were not specified. When the interviewees were asked about the extent to which these findings are realistic, they affirmed the existence of such variations; and some presented supporting cases illustrating such variations from their work experiences. Furthermore, some of interviewees argued that the variations in the process's formality exist within the process itself, as succession processes are most often informal until appointment decisions are finalised. As put by one interviewee:

“I am not familiar with any form of formality in the succession process, except the announcement in the Government Gazette and informing the CSB about the nominations for approving the decision ... This means that the succession process is most often executed informally and in the shadows until the decisions are finalised - then it will be formal and transparent. ... The process is carried out informally, as the decision makers will call this and that, the CSB, what do you think about X person? So there is a discussion, but there is nothing sequential, 1st step, 2nd step, etc.”

In their explanations for such variations, the interviewees highlighted various factors. All of these factors are context-related, except one, which is related to the heads of the organisations. The data analysis revealed only one stakeholder-related factor. Further information about these factors is presented in the following subsections.

6.3.3.1 Variations in the Formality of the Process: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data analysis uncovered seven responses, with five interviewees highlighting stakeholder-related factors. However, all of these responses explained the variations in the process's formality by stressing factors related to one specific stakeholder, the head of the organisation. As one interviewee explained: “I mean, this depends on what the organisation's leadership wants.”

6.3.3.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

In their explanations for such variations in the formality of the process, the interviewees emphasised the management style of the head of the organisation more than any other issue. According to these interviewees, the head of the organisation determines how to execute the succession process, which in turn affects its formality. For example, one interviewee highlighted two issues in his explanation for such variations in the formality of the process, one of which is the management style of the organisation's top management. The interviewee claimed that, in some organisations, the low degree of the formality in the process is a way to preserve the interests of powerful stakeholders. He argued that decision makers might avoid establishing clear policies and procedures for the succession process, to avoid being restricted by such formalities. He affirmed:

“This, from one side, has influenced the formality. However, from the other side, the question which is arising here is: Why are there not any clear policies and procedures in the old ministries. ... For X to maintain the powers, to do or not to do, to appoint and not to appoint, the policies and procedures will impede him and restrain his powers. However, on the other hand, if there were no restrictions, everyone would have the freedom to express his own opinion based on his own power.”

The management style of the organisations' heads was echoed in other interviewees' responses. For example, one interviewee argued that the way in which the succession process is executed is related to the honesty and sincerity of the organisation's head and that the head influences the way in which work is done in the organisation to a far greater extent than any other stakeholder, or even the organisation's culture. In his argument, the interviewee emphasised the positive impact of the honesty and sincerity of his organisation's head on the formality of the process. He stated:

“The environment exists in any organisation for years; but it is possible to change it by a ‘pen's stroke’ if there is a head who is a decision maker, strong and straight. If the head is corrupt, then the problem is that those who below him cannot fix him. The corrupt head creates the muddy and stagnant water in which only parasites live. ... In the last story which I shared with you ... If I hadn't had straight top management I would not have been able to suggest hiring a company to assess those who applied for the executive trainees' openings.”

6.3.3.2 Variations in the Formality of the Process: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several explanations that highlighted context-related factors. These factors emerged on three context levels; namely, the macro level, organisational level and positional level. Most of these factors were on the macro and organisational levels.

6.3.3.2.1 Macro level factors:

The data analysis highlighted only one macro level factor in the interviewees' explanations for such variations in the process formality, which was the Civil Service Law. The interviewees argued that the law opened the door for such variations in the formality of the process by not specifying how to execute the succession process, or on what basis the candidates were to be evaluated. Thus, in lieu of a clear path, each organisation adopted internal procedures to determine the decision makers and the selection processes. As one interviewee asserted:

“Therefore, because there are no clear instructions the variation in the process exists ... This is the only reason I could think of for the variation in the process formality. There are no clear instructions issued by the CSB specifying how to carry out the succession process. Therefore, personal issues, modes, certain ideas about the individual and management styles get involved in the execution of the process and these vary from one individual to the other.”

The same notion was echoed in other interviewees' responses. For example, one interviewee criticised the existing laws for not specifying mechanisms for executing the succession process or specifying selection criteria. Thus, according to this interviewee, succession is mere practices, which vary from one organisation to the other. He affirmed:

“It seems to me that there is no system for the succession, there are only practices. Thus, such practices vary from one organisation to the other. Practices are subjective, they are not objective. Take for example the selection criteria, some executives are appointed and when you ask why? There is no objective reason, not even common sense. What I see as appropriate you may see differently.”

6.3.3.2.2 Organisational level factors:

On the organisational level, the data analysis revealed that such variations in the formality are related to the procedures adopted in the various public organisations to execute the succession process and the means for communicating its execution within these organisations. In some organisations, the process is executed based on prescribed procedures and it is communicated via formal means within the organisation itself. For example, one interviewee stated:

“For example, there are clear policies and procedures for the succession planning at our institution. How is it going to be moving, who, how promotion is done and etc., are set issues for us. It is even linked to, and associated with, the career plan for each employee.”

However, in other organisations, the process is executed in a less formal manner. For example, one interviewee affirmed the existence of informal procedures for executing and communicating the nominations of the candidates for executive positions in his organisation. He stated:

“As the Undersecretary, you will ask your assistants to nominate candidates for the position ... Now, you got six, seven, or even ten candidates nominated by your Assistant Undersecretaries ... Therefore, everything is done verbally ... It is informal until a decision is reached about the candidates.”

6.3.3.2.3 Positional level factors:

On the positional level, only one factor was highlighted. The data analysis revealed that, due to the sensitivity of certain information, such information is communicated via informal means. This, in turn, would reduce the formality of the succession process. As reported by the interviewee:

“Moreover, the recommendations, which are sent from the officials to the decision maker, usually, focus on the qualifications, work experience, the candidate’s internal relationships, his attitude and behaviour in the organisation and his annual assessment. But, the recommendations will never say that the candidate is a female or male, for example, or the candidate is from that particular region or he/she is a Shea, Sunni or from Persian roots. Even though these issues have an impact, they are verbally conveyed and not written.”

6.3.4 Variations in the Transparency of the Succession Process

Variations in the transparency of the process are the fourth reported aspect of the succession process. It was found that there are significant variations in the transparency of the process among the investigated succession cases. In some cases, the process was executed in an overt manner and the information symmetry among the various stakeholders was high. In other cases, the process was executed in a secretive manner and the stakeholders were reticent about the process. When the interviewees were asked about the extent to which these findings are realistic, their responses affirmed the existence of such variations; and some presented supporting cases illustrating such variations from their work experiences.

In their explanations for such variations, the interviewees highlighted various factors. All of these factors are context-related, except one, which is related to the heads of the organisations. Further information about these factors is presented in the following subsections.

6.3.4.1 Variations in the Transparency of the Process: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data analysis uncovered ten responses, in which seven interviewees highlighted stakeholder-related factors. However, all of the responses explained the variations in the transparency of the process by stressing factors related to one specific stakeholder, the head of the organisation.

6.3.4.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

In their explanations for such variations in the transparency of the process, the interviewees emphasised the two key factors related to the head of the organisation. The first factor is the management style of the head of the organisation, which was also highlighted earlier to explain the variations in the formality of the process. For example, one interviewee stated, in his response explaining the variations in the transparency of the process, “The key reason is the mentality or the management style of the decision maker or the Bigwig.” The same notion was echoed in the other interviewees' responses. According to these interviewees, normally the head of the organisation instructs his/her staff regarding how to execute the succession process.

A second factor highlighted in regard to the heads of organisations was their power to conceal the process, to avoid being questioned by other stakeholders. For example, one interviewee stated that

such variations in the process transparency are due to the head of the organisation's lack of confidence in his/her succession decisions and the inability to confront other stakeholders of the succession process. He stated:

“I think the lack of transparency is due to anxiety of the decision maker about the reaction to the candidates. The lack of confidence in the decision and desire to avoid the reactions [of the organisation's staff], the decision maker tries to be secretive with regard to this issue.”

Another interviewee emphasised the power of the organisation's head, but he presented a different argument. The interviewee argued that powerful decision makers, in order to preserve their powers, would conceal the process to prevent others from challenging their decisions. He stated:

“If I wish to maintain my power, I will divulge less information about what needs to be done; how I am selecting and on what basis the selection is carried out; or even to share information about the process carried out for the appointment of people. I would not look at it as a matter of a succession process; it is a matter of exercising my power in appointing X or Y. If I were to say it is based on one, two, and three, you may argue these bases. I do not want you to argue with my decisions. I want to enforce my will and you have to accept it.”

6.3.4.2 Variations in the Transparency of the Process: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several explanations, which highlighted context-related factors. These factors emerge on three contextual levels; namely, the macro level, organisational level and positional level.

6.3.4.2.1 Macro level factors:

The interviewees' responses highlighted only one macro-level factor to explain the variations in the transparency of the process: the Civil Service Laws. According to three interviewees, the variations in the process transparency are explained by the failure of the law to specify how to execute the succession process. Another interviewee argued that the lack of transparency in the process is due to the deficiency in the law in specifying the length of tenure in the position. According to this interviewee, the process would be more overt if the date of the office incumbent's departure were known. He stated:

“It is unknown when the office incumbent will depart the office. You may hear rumours, they are going to move this or that; however, there is nothing official. Never ever happened that a decree was issued saying that so and so will depart the office.”

Another interviewee claimed that the organisations' top management might conceal the succession process to avoid losing face in their organisations, since the final appointing decisions, according to the Civil Service Laws, are not in their hands. He stated:

“Therefore, you cannot document the process, nor you can say to someone “I will nominate you”. Nominating 4 or 5 and having only one selected, could be shocking; it is a sensitive issue.”

6.3.4.2.2 Organisational level factors:

The data analysis revealed that two organisational level factors were highlighted by five interviewees to explain the variations in the transparency of the succession process. The first factor is the procedures which are adopted by an organisation to execute the succession process. In some organisations, the process is executed in an overt manner. For example, one interviewee commented on his organisation's procedure for recruiting new executive trainees by stating, “The degree of the transparency was very high and it was professional.” Yet, in other organisations, the succession process is considered a sensitive issue and thus, it is kept behind the scenes. As put by one interviewee “These issues are secretive, nobody knows about such issues until it is announced.”

With regard to the second organisational level factor highlighted by the data analysis, it appears that the transparency of the succession process is affected by the reaction of potential candidates for the position and the reaction of the organisation's staff in general. Three interviewees highlighted the concerns of the top management about reactions of their staff regarding the disclosure of the names of those being considered or nominated for executive positions. Another interviewee affirmed this notion regarding the reaction of the staff. However, he argued that due to such concerns, the top management might launch “test balloons” to explore staff reactions.

6.3.4.2.3 Positional level factors:

On the positional level, the data analysis revealed one factor, which was highlighted by four of the interviewees in their explanations for the variations in the transparency of the process. This factor is the sensitivity of the position as perceived by the decision makers. The more sensitive the position is, the lower the odds are that the succession process will be executed overtly. For example, one interviewee stated that the transparency of the process is affected by the sensitivity of the position undergoing the succession process. He stated:

"The sensitivity of the position requires matters to be less overt ... Consider for example appointing the head of the National Security. Who is going to succeed him? ... Another example is the position of the governor or the deputy of the governor - you may not find a proper succession plan due to the sensitivity of the position."

Furthermore, another interviewee affirmed that vacancies in sensitive positions are not announced. He stated:

"The same process [happens] for recruitment for a clerk position; you announce the vacancy and hundreds may apply for it. This may be formal, but for sensitive positions, you do not announce the vacancy."

6.3.5 The impact of the State's Reform Project on the Succession Process

In this subsection, the data analysis focused on the interviewees' comments about the impact of the state's reform project on the succession process. Specifically, it highlighted the interviewees' perspectives regarding how the aftermath of the reform project influenced the succession process in terms of the emergence of new powers and the trend toward women's empowerment in the public sector organisations. In general, the data analysis revealed a consensus among the interviewees' responses regarding the impact of the reform project on the succession process, which is illustrated in the following parts.

6.3.5.1 The emergence of new powers

The data analysis revealed that one of the aftermaths of the reform project has been that the succession process is now subject to the influence of new stakeholders, who either did not exist

before the reforms, or exerted minimal influence before the introduction of the project in 2001. Specifically, the data analysis highlighted the influence of the political associations, professional associations and the media.

6.3.5.1.1 Political Associations:

Due to the new constitutional amendments, the representative council was elected as the legislative authority. This in turn opened the door for political associations to be involved in the succession process, in order to gain more power over the executive authority. As summarised by one interviewee:

“As external factors, I also affirm the political pressures within the society, both individuals and organisations. Unfortunately, it is chaotic and inappropriate. The politicisation of the process for the sake of gaining extra powers has a great effect on the succession process.”

Other interviewees affirmed the intrusions of such political associations in the succession processes and highlighted specific cases. For example, one interviewee asserted:

“Yes, they have a big role. For example, the conflict between (the name of the representative in one of the political blocs in the Al-Nuwab Council) and the Minister of Finance is not a political conflict. It was about his brother’s promotion in the ministry. This is an intrusion. In addition, his conflict with the Minister of Education was about promoting one of his relatives and other business matters, the establishment of a new university.”

Such political involvements were not always imposed on the competent authorities of the public sector organisations, as some were described as “exchanging benefits”. As put by one interviewee:

“The political associations, in the past five years, were able to appoint many executives in the public organisations. It could be described as exchanging benefits. Some of the Ministers seek to please those political associations; they opened channels with them, even some of the opposition political associations. Maybe you noticed the incremental presence of people linked to those political associations in some of the ministries. This is an obvious and undoubted influence which I may have overlooked previously, but I emphasise heavily now.”

6.3.5.1.2 Civil Society Organisations:

The interviewees also highlighted the increasing involvement of civil society organisations, and professional associations in particular, in the succession process as one of the consequences of the reform project. The reform project strived to increase public participation in decision making and thus it enhanced the role played by civil society organisations. Yet, according to the interviewees, due to the current high pressure for politicisation in the society, most of these organisations have adopted a political orientation. For example, one interviewee stated that professional associations are striving to exert more influence on the succession process by affiliating themselves with political associations. He stated:

“I may say that not only do these political societies have powers but also all the civil society organisations, the trade unions nowadays have a role ... I am sorry to say that quite a few of the trade unions are actually professional, while almost 90 % of the professional societies and trade unions are not. They are politicised. It is not saying too much to say that they are politicised. And I would refer back to the same concept, exercising power; one can benefit from his position in a trade union or professional society and insist on appointing a specific minister or this official in this department or else ‘I will give you trouble’.”

6.3.5.1.3 Media:

The data analysis revealed that the press played a bigger role and influenced the succession process more after the reform project due to the raising of the ceiling of freedom of speech, which was an aftermath of the reform project. Interviewees highlighted such augmentation of press involvement in the succession process, with one such interviewee stating:

“They have great influence. The press is the most popular, widely read, and influential media means in Bahrain of reaching the people. ... If they do not want him, they can criticise him and highlight all the bad things about that specific individual. While for those whom they want, they defend them and they conduct a kind of propaganda campaign by marketing them and presenting good images of them.”

The same notion was highlighted by other interviewees. For instance, one interviewee argued that increased press involvement in the succession process can cause misunderstanding of democratic reform. He stated:

“Our understanding of the concept of democracy has a problem. The press has a great impact. Brightening the image of some and destroying the image of others. It has a big impact ... They can polish the thief to be the most honourable person. The press has positive and negative effects, settling accounts and so on.”

Another interviewee affirmed this by presenting a specific case where the press strove to promote certain individuals as candidates for executive positions, described as follows:

“I have witnessed myself an occasion where the press presented the name of an individual, with his personal photo, saying he was being considered for that position, meanwhile his name was never considered among the candidates for the position. They were only marketing him, and the news was passed from one journalist to the other, whilst it was not accurate. The marketing by the press of specific individuals is obvious.”

Similarly, due to an increase in the freedom of speech, the public now plays a bigger role than ever in the succession process. According to one interviewee, the public may pressure decision makers to dismiss those whom they considered incompetent executives. The interviewee emphasised the impact that pressure from social media would have on such decisions. He believed that this could initiate succession processes as vacancies would be created whenever decision makers submitted to such public pressures to dismiss those accused, by the public, of being incompetent executives. He affirmed:

“The social media had a huge and humongous effect on the succession management via [such as] Twitter, Facebook, Blackberry, SMS and all the digital media. For example, the competent minister of (the name of the organisation was omitted) and the CEO of the company - what scared them and made the parliament move and take action? It was the digital media ... ‘X or Y did so and so, if you do not dismiss him we will take action’ ... Yet, it has not reached a point where they say ‘dismiss this one and appoint that one’, - they can only insist on dismissing someone.”

6.3.5.1.4 Policy makers and regulatory bodies in the public sector:

The interviewees stressed the expansion of the government's role in supervising and controlling the succession process in the public sector. As put by one interviewee (in response to whether or not he had noticed any changes in the way in which the succession processes are executed):

"I think since the political reform, the level of transparency has increased - decision makers are now more concerned to be fair during the process as they are held accountable for every step taken in this regard. Now, decision makers are more aware about the necessity to execute the process according to the appropriate procedures and to be able to back up their decisions when they are held accountable for such decisions."

Other interviewees highlighted the expansion in the roles of the CSB and the National Audit Court in monitoring the public administration. For example, one interviewee stated:

"The National Authority for Auditing and Administrations Control is playing a role; it is helping to correct the mistakes. Their annual reports help us to avoid repeating our mistakes, this is not right, this is missing, and so on."

6.3.5.2 Trend for Women's Empowerment

The data analysis indicated that more women have been appointed to executive positions in the last decade. The interviewees affirmed this trend and related it to the involvement of the SCW most often associated with the reform project. For example, one interviewee stated:

"Through the presence the Women's Council, yes it [women empowerment] did affect the process. The SCW has annual awards for the ministries with regard to women's empowerment. They annually request us to send them reports about the number of women in the organisation, how many have been promoted, their training, what is their representation in leading posts, and so on. They have a great impact on the appointment decisions, such issues as the ratio of women and so on, are considered."

Other interviewees affirmed this notion. For example, one interviewee stated (in response to questioning on the extent to which the women's empowerment project has influenced the succession process):

“We witnessed a period of time in which we saw, in some organisations, ‘you must appoint women’. Yet, it was not imposed on every organisation, as the nature of the organisation may restrict this trend, unless the female candidate is high quality and has proven worthy of such a post. Some organisations, such as [the Ministry of] Education, [the Ministry of] Health and [the Ministry of] Social Development were especially subject to such influences.”

6.3.6 Summary of the Top Management Perspectives regarding the Reported Variations in the Succession Process

In general, the data analysis highlighted a consensus among the interviewees supporting the reality of the quantitative findings regarding the reported variations in the succession process. In addition, the data analysis revealed various stakeholder-related and context-related factors, which were highlighted in the interviewees' explanations for such reported variations. With regard to the stakeholder-related factors, interviewees' responses reflected the power of the stakeholders and the management style of the Head of the organisation to explain the variations among the decision makers. In other words, variations among the decision makers of the succession process are influenced by the power of the various stakeholders to impose their will, as well as the management style of the organisation's head in terms of delegating succession decisions.

In addition, the data analysis highlighted several context-related factors to explain the variations among the decision makers. On the macro level, the interviewees highlighted two factors. The first was the Civil Service Laws, which specify different appointing authorities for three different executive levels (below director level, director level and above director level). On the positional level, two factors were highlighted to explain such variations. The first is the differences in the nature of executive positions at different levels (ranging from supervisory to administration to political positions); which dictate that appointment decisions are taken at different decision making levels. The second is the sensitivity of the position as perceived by the competent authority of the organisation.

With regard to variations in terms of heir apparent successors, the interviewees highlighted three stakeholder-related factors. The first is the ability of the predecessors (or the office incumbents) to

hinder the development and therefore the recognition of their subordinates as heir apparent successors. The second is the availability of appropriate candidates likely to be recognised as heir apparent successors. The third factor is the management style of the head of the organisation, in terms of planning the succession process, and preparing and identifying candidates to assume executive positions.

Moreover, the data analysis highlighted several context-related factors to explain such variations in the successors. On the macro level, the data analysis revealed three factors. The first is the government's general policies to preserve sectarian and gender balance; which in turn delay the identification of successors and may contribute to variations among the successors. The second factor is interventions and pressures exerted by political associations for appointment of their nominees, which may also hinder the identification of the successors. The third, and most emphasised factor, is the Civil Service Laws, which fell short in specifying successor selection mechanisms and in determining the length of executives' tenure in their positions. On the organisational level, the interviewees' responses highlighted three factors. The first factor is variations in the organisations' procedures for executing the succession process. The second is poor organisational performance, which increases the probability of an external successor being appointed who is not recognised as an heir apparent successor by the organisational staff. The third is concerns about the reactions of the organisational staff, which may delay the identification of the successor.

With regard to variations in the formality of the process, the data analysis highlighted the management style of the head of the organisation as a stakeholder-related factor. According to the interviewees, the head of the organisation determines the internal procedures for executing the succession process, which in turn affects the degree to which the process is documented and in accordance to prescribed procedures. As well, the data analysis highlighted several context-related factors. On the macro level, the data analysis also highlighted the Civil Service Laws, which, as mentioned above, fell short in specifying how to execute the process and the bases for selection. This in turn resulted, on the organisational-level, in differences among organisations in terms of the procedures adopted for executing and communicating the succession process. On the positional

level, the data analysis highlighted that the sensitivity of information related to certain positions may dictate the adoption of informal means of communication.

With regard to variations in the transparency of the succession process, the data analysis highlighted two stakeholder-related factors, both of which relate to the head of the organisation. The first is his/her management style, as this largely determines the internal procedures for the succession process. The second factor is his/her power to conceal the process, to avoid being questioned by other stakeholders. Furthermore, the data analysis highlighted several context-related factors. On the macro level, the data analysis highlighted the Civil Service Laws, with interviewees stressing the previously mentioned legislations gaps and the concerns of the organisations' competent authorities about losing face by overtly nominating someone who could be rejected. On the organisational level, the data analysis highlighted two factors. The first is the differences in the adopted procedures for executing and communicating the process. The second factor is concerns about the reactions of the organisational staff. On the positional level, the data analysis highlighted the sensitivity of certain positions, which may lead to succession processes being less transparent.

Finally, with regard to the state's reform project, the data analysis revealed a general agreement about the impact of such projects on the succession process. The interviewees highlighted the influence of the new emerging powers, such as political associations, professional associations and the media. In addition, the interviewees confirmed the impact of the trend towards female empowerment, which has become more evident since the launch of the reform project and the establishment of the Supreme Council for Women, on the succession process for executive positions in the public sector organisations.

CHAPTER 7 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

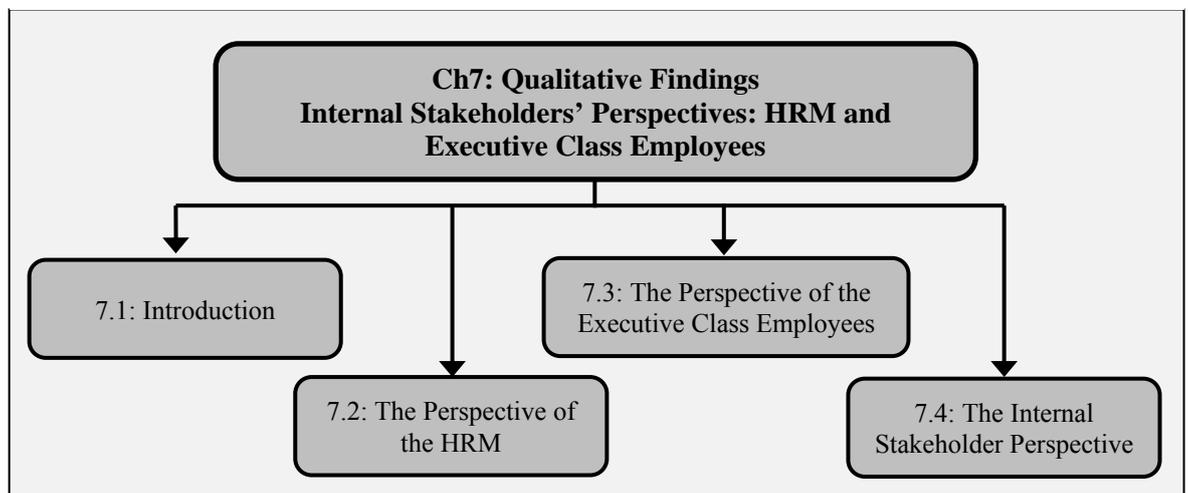
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES: HRM AND EXECUTIVE CLASS EMPLOYEES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the second chapter of qualitative findings. The qualitative analyses continue, in this chapter, to present the perspectives of the HRM and the executive class employees regarding the variations in the succession process. This was achieved by analysing the responses of ten public sector directors of the human resource directorates, as well as the responses of seven executives¹ below the undersecretary assistant level.

In addition to this introductory section, this chapter is divided into three sections as shown below in **Error! Reference source not found.** The first section presents the perspectives of HRM, while the second presents the perspectives of the executive class employees. Finally, the last section combines the perspectives of the three internal stakeholder subgroups (the organisation's top management, HRM and executive class employees) to provide the perspectives of the internal stakeholders regarding the reported variations in the succession processes.

FIGURE 7-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 7



¹ One of which was a director at CSB, who was interviewed as an external stakeholder as well.

7.2 THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE HRM

This section presents the perspectives of the HRM officials about the reported variations in the succession processes for executive positions in the public sector. Initially, the HRM officials' perspectives about variations among the decision-makers is presented; followed by the presentations of these officials' perspectives regarding the variation in the type of successor (in terms of heir apparent successor), the formality and the transparency of the succession process.

7.2.1 Variations among the Decision Makers

The responses of the HRM representatives revealed a consensus affirming the variations among decision makers of the succession process. The qualitative data analysis highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors in the interviewees' explanation for such variations, which are presented below. In general, the HRM interviewees emphasised similar factors to those highlighted by the organisations' top management, discussed in Chapter 6.

7.2.1.1 Variations among the Decision Makers: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed only one stakeholder-related factor. Specifically, seven out of the ten HRM representatives interviewed stressed the management style of the head of the organisation to explain variations among the decision makers. Most often, the management style of the organisation's head was highlighted as relating to the degree of centralisation in their decision making process. As put by one interviewee:

“The decision is in his [the head of the organisation] hands. Therefore, this depends on the level of centralisation in his management.”

The same notion was echoed in other interviewees' responses. For example, one interviewee expressed the same notion by stating:

“I think this depends on the organisation; I mean, you as a director, what is the kind of decision you are authorised to make? It depends on the decision; sometimes you are not the decision maker and you have to refer to the undersecretary assistant or the undersecretary, or even you have to refer to the minister to take the decision.”

7.2.1.2 Variations among the Decision Makers: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several context-related factors that explain the variations among decision-makers, which emerged on the three levels: macro, organisational and positional.

7.2.1.2.1 Macro level factors:

The data analysis indicated that, like the case of the top management, the most emphasised macro-level factor by the HRM representatives was the Civil Service Law. Six HRM representatives explained the variations among the decision makers by highlighting how this law specifies different appointing authorities for the three executive hierarchal levels. As put by one interviewee:

“There is a difference between the undersecretary, the undersecretary assistant, and manager as each of them has a different system [appointing authority]... Their appointment processes differ. ... The prime minister issues a decree for the appointment of ‘acting in charge’ ... On the other hand, appointing undersecretaries and undersecretaries assistants is carried out by a royal decree issued by H.M. the King ... [Regarding the appointment of Section Heads] it is within the minister’s authority.”

In addition, the HRM interviewees highlighted vagueness in the civil service regulations regarding succession process procedures. According to the interviewees, in comparison to other civil service regulations (such as those governing financial benefits and employee disciplinary procedures), there is a gap in the law with regard to determining standard procedures for the succession process decision making. The interviewees argued that this legislation gap, in turn, provides leeway for the top management in public organisations to adopt different approaches when making decisions regarding the succession process. As put by one interviewee:

“The reason for such variation is also the lack of a precise mechanism. The bureau [CSB] had not tackled this issue in enough detail; it entitled the president of the authority to submit recommendations, but it did not specify a mechanism on which these recommendations are based. There is no clear and definite mechanism and the matter is left for the ministries to establish and adopt their own mechanisms and the most appropriate procedures.”

7.2.1.2.2 Organisational level factors:

The data analysis revealed that the variations among the decision makers could contribute to the different procedures adopted to make succession process decisions. While, not stated explicitly, the interviewees described different procedures in their organisations for appointing and nominating employees for executive positions. These differences may contribute to the variations in two respects. First, these different procedures determine the level of centralisation in the succession process decisions making. Second, even when collective decision-making procedures were adopted, the procedures varied, both with regard to who participated in such procedures, as well as the degree of participation. For example, four interviewees affirmed that succession decisions are made via collective decision-making procedures. However, they all specified different procedures that vary in terms of the level of participation and stakeholder involvement. Take, for example, appointing an employee to a Section Head position - which is an internal procedure. One interviewee noted that in his organisation, recommendations and appointments were made via a long bureaucratic procedure involving various stakeholders. He stated:

“The promotion request should be submitted by the employee’s superior after he is totally convinced that this employee deserves it. The request should pass through his immediate superior or the manager, who submits it to the undersecretary assistant, and then to the undersecretary who agrees to submit to the competent committee. The members of this committee are undersecretaries. After they have convened on a pre-set date for discussing the issue, they prepare the minutes of the meeting and refer them to the Human Resources Department (HRD). The HRD, then, submits a brief report about the employee to be discussed by the committee. Next, the HRD amends the minutes of meeting if the request is approved. Finally, the amended minutes of meeting are submitted to the minister for approval and then sent to the Civil Service Bureau, which takes the final decision. Long bureaucratic procedures, I believe.”

The other interviewees specified different collective decision-making procedures, which involve less bureaucracy and stakeholders. For instance, according to one interviewee, section heads are appointed via direct dialogue between the Head of the organisation and the HRM, without involving the organisation’s Board of Directors. He stated:

“The variation exists, and the survey outcomes are very realistic. However, with regard to our organisation, we have a collective decision-making process. ... However, concerning those issues which are related to the recruitment and who should follow in the position, the decisions are made as collective decisions between the HR and the top administration.”

7.2.1.2.3 Positional level factors:

The data analysis revealed two factors on the positional level. With regard to the first factor, and similar to points raised by the top management officials, six HRM representatives emphasised differences in the nature of the job among executive positions. However, unlike the top management officials, the HRM representatives expressed these differences both in terms of the required competencies for assuming the position (which reflect the selection criteria), as well as the relative differences in the required direct supervisions over the incumbent of the position. The HRM representatives argued that, due to such differences, the decision-making authority could shift from the direct superior to a higher authority in the organisation hierarchal structure. For example, one interviewee affirmed that the hierarchal level of the position under consideration would ‘surely’ determine the succession process’s decision maker. The interviewees also claimed that, for low-level executive positions, the direct superiors of those positions are more likely to be involved and influential in determining the successors. He stated:

“I shall stress that, for the appointment of the Section Head, perhaps, the Director is the most appropriate decision maker, even more appropriate than the Minister. I think if the minister appointed a Section Head without involving the director of the directorate this would indicate problems. It is more acceptable for the minister to appoint a director, since the position is more related to administrative aspects, but when the minister appoints a Section Head without considering the director’s opinion, this would raise some concerns.”

Another interviewee stressed a similar point, with regard to explaining variations among decision-makers’ positions by highlighting differences in the nature of the executives’ job, and the extent to which this varies between high and low executive positions. Further, he pointed to differences between positions, in terms of the greater extent to which superiors of low executive positions supervise their subordinates. He argued that due to the nature of the job, which dictates close and

direct supervision by the superior officer, succession decisions for low executive positions are usually made by the direct superior of the position. He stated:

“It depends on the nature of the position. Maybe for low-level positions, the Section Head could be the decision maker because he is the most knowledgeable individual about his staff, he is the one who interacts directly with them the most. So, he knows their capabilities, limitations, performance and even their daily attendance; and thus, he is the closet individual to his/her staff.”

With regard to the second position-related factor, the interviewees stressed the sensitivity of the position, which was also highlighted by the top management. As well, the HRM representatives reflected the position's sensitivity in terms of the importance perceived by the organisation's competent authority. For example, one interviewee stated:

“Of course, there will be variations among the decision maker; this depends on the position in hand. For example, appointments to Section Head positions are normally based on the director's decision, as he is the direct superior of the position. In other cases, the position is sensitive, and the appointment is made at the higher level, the highest level in some cases, for even a section head position.”

7.2.2 Variations in the Type of Successor

The data analysis also revealed a consensus in the responses of the HRM representatives affirming the existence of variations in successors in terms of the extent to which these successors were recognised as heir apparent successors. In addition, the analysis highlighted some of the interviewees' responses, which provide supporting examples from their work experiences. In their explanations for variations among the successors, the interviewees noted various factors, which were either stakeholder-related or context-related factors.

7.2.2.1 Variations in the Type of Successors: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data uncovered several explanations that highlighted stakeholder-related factors. However, the most emphasised were those relating to the head of the organisation and the successor.

7.2.2.1.1 Predecessor-related factor:

With regard to variations in the type of successor, the data analysis showed two responses, by one interviewee, highlighting predecessor-related factors. According to the interviewee, variations with regard to recognising a successor as an heir apparent successor are related to the degree to which the predecessor (or the office incumbent during the succession process) identifies one of his/her subordinates as an appropriate successor. This idea that the ability of the predecessor can facilitate or hinder the development, and therefore, the recognition of, an heir apparent successor, is in line with responses, discussed in chapter 6, by the top management. The HRM interviewee asserted this notion by arguing that recognition of an heir apparent successor depends on the predecessor's tenure in office. He stated:

“I think this relates to the degree to which the office incumbent knows his staff. I may identify, as an office incumbent, an individual to be my successor based on my previous knowledge about the performance and the potential of such individual. This knowledge requires time, a year or two, or even more. ... The longer the office incumbent has been in office, the higher the probability for a successor to be identified - as the office incumbent would be more knowledgeable about his staff.”

7.2.2.1.2 Successor-related factors:

Like the top management, in their explanations for variations among successors the HRM representatives stressed the availability of an appropriate successor for the position as the key successor-related factor. Further, the interviewees referred to the availability of an appropriate successor by highlighting the existence of a knowledgeable individual as the second in command for the position. According to the interviewees, an individual is more likely to be recognised as an heir apparent successor, if he/she has first been identified as the second in command for the position. As stated by one interviewee:

“I have three sections under my span of control, human resources, financial resources and administrative services. Each section is specified in one field in the directorate. However, I have the Section Head of the Human Resources as the second in command for my position ... So, he is knowledgeable about all the procedures in the directorate, which is very important for the next in line for the position.”

7.2.2.1.3 Head of the organisation-related factors:

With regard to factors related to the head of the organisation, the HRM representatives emphasised points also mentioned by the top management representatives, namely, the importance of the organisation's head's management style. For example, one interviewee affirmed that the recognition of an heir apparent depends on the succession procedures and mechanisms established by the head of the organisation. He stated:

“Another reason [for such variation in the successor] is directly linked to the president of the authority. Whenever the president of the authority departs the office, the mechanisms for the selection and appointment change.”

Other interviewees also made this point, with one highlighting the degree to which heads of organisations prepare and identify individuals for the second line for executive positions. He affirmed:

“So, in most of the ministries, the determinant for such issues is the competent ministers or the undersecretaries, since their foresight and perspicacity in qualifying those who proved their competencies is important to building these second lines.”

7.2.2.2 Variations in the Type of Successors: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several explanations highlighting context-related factors. These factors can be seen on the macro-level and positional-level.

7.2.2.2.1 Macro-level factors:

Four interviewees highlighted the Civil Service Law in their explanations for the variations among successors, which was also the most emphasised macro level factor in the top management responses. According to one HRM representative, since the appointment decisions for executive positions at director level and above are in the hands of the political leadership, heir apparent successors are less likely to be recognised for these positions, as successors would not become known until the appointment decisions were announced. He stated:

“It is no secret that appointments for director positions require the approval from the Ministers Council. So even when the concerned ministry nominate A, B and C, it is not

certain that one of them will get the director position as the Ministers Council may have a different opinion. ... Thus, there is no certainty in the Ministry about who will be the director in this position.”

Another interviewee discussed variation among successors in relation to the Civil Service Law, highlighting the absence of legislation specifying mechanisms for selecting successors for executive positions. He stated:

“Honestly, one of the reasons behind such variation is the lack of a clear and precise mechanism. There is no clear and precise mechanism, and even if mechanisms are established, there is no guarantee or anyone responsible for ensuring that these mechanisms were implemented correctly.”

Furthermore, the interviewees presented supporting examples from their work experience that illustrated such variations among successors. For example, one interviewee argued that due to the legislation gap, the selection and appointment decisions were considered the exclusive right of the organisation’s head. This in turn, had contributed to variations among successors, as the organisation’s management might be reluctant to establish standard procedures for identifying successors. He stated:

“However, I cannot say that this case occurred in other ministries, as the selection process is the sole and exclusive right of the president of the authority. Perhaps, some of the ministries, when they realised that the process is restricted to the president of the authority, were not keen to develop a precise mechanism for the process.”

7.2.2.2.2 Positional level factors:

The data analysis revealed one factor at the positional level. Like the top management representatives, two HRM interviewees emphasised the nature of the executive job in their explanations for the variations in the successor. According to these two HRM representatives, heir apparent successors are more often recognised at low executive positions due to the nature of the executive job at these positions, which facilitates and requires the preparation of a second line. For example, one interviewee differentiated between high and low executive positions, with the nature of the job in low executive positions facilitating the recognition of the future successors. He stated:

“Regarding the hierarchy below the directors’ level, the top management and the HR should know who will follow who. For example, in this ministry and in all sections under my span of control, it has never happened that an individual will be absent tomorrow and I do not know who will substitute for him. ... No one is handling one file and lacking the knowledge about other files. In every quarter, there is a rotation in the positions to avoid the excuse that A is not available and I do not know how to do his work. ... Therefore, from Section Heads and below, we should know who will follow who.”

7.2.3 Variations in the Formality of the Succession Process

In general, the responses of the HRM representatives supported the existence of variations in the formality of the succession process. Furthermore, some of the interviewees provided supporting examples illustrating these variations. The interviewees highlighted various factors in their explanations for such variations, which were either stakeholder-related or context-related factors.

7.2.3.1 Variations in the Formality of the Process: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data analysis uncovered 14 responses, given by a total of six interviewees, which highlighted stakeholder-related factors. All of these responses stressed factors related to the head of the organisation.

7.2.3.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

Like the top management representatives, the HRM interviewees emphasised the management style of the head of the organisation more than any other issue in their explanations for the variations in the formality of the process. This was expressed in two ways. The first was by linking the adoption of formal prescribed procedures for executing the succession process to the organisation’s head. For example, one interviewee stated that his organisation adopts a formal procedure, which is based on the instructions of the organisation’s head. He stated:

“In this ministry, all the procedures are documented; this is according to the instructions of the top management. Everything is documented.”

In the second way, the interviewees were more explicit in relating such variations in the formality of the process to the head of the organisation. For example, one interviewee highlighted the limited

amount of detail in the Civil Service Laws, which opens the door for the competent authority of the organisation to decide how to execute the process. He stated:

“Such regulations do not specify a certain pattern. However, these regulations do specify the least level of what should be done, the minimum level of requirements to be met for making the appointment to the position and certain forms to be filled in and approved by the competent minister. So, these are the maximum specifications, with regard to the succession process - and whatever is beyond these specifications is left to the competent authority to determine.”

7.2.3.2 Variations in the Formality of the Process: Context-Related Factors

With regard to variations in the formality of the process, the data analysis revealed several explanations which highlighted context-related factors. These factors emerged on both the macro level and the organisational level. Five interviewees highlighted macro level factors, while seven interviewees highlighted organisational level factors.

7.2.3.2.1 Macro level factors:

Like the top management, the HRM representatives emphasised the Civil Service Law in their explanations for variations in the formality of the process. According to the HRM interviewees, these laws do not specify how to execute the succession process, which in turn, contributes to the variation in the formality of the process. As one interviewee commented:

“As I said previously, up to date there is no system to follow ... I do not think the succession, in the organisations we work for, is documented; and if it is documented it would not be implemented according to the documentation.”

The same notion was echoed in the interviewees' responses. For example, one interviewee argued that due to such a legislation gap, the formality of the process might vary within the same organisation, as there is no standard procedure to follow. He stated:

“Perhaps, this is due to the policy or the adopted system for appointment in the government, which, in general, is not clear and the procedures are indefinite; with every entity outlining its own system. This may be the reason behind the variation within the same entity - if the

procedure is clear then we are expected to execute the succession process at the same level of formality and the system is implemented and generalised for all the positions. However, if nothing was clear then it would vary. Thus, I may follow certain procedures for appointing Section Heads, which include assessments, interviews etc. ... Yet, I may adopt other procedures for appointing Directors.”

7.2.3.2.2 Organisational level factors:

On the organisational level, the data analysis revealed two factors that may contribute to such variations in the formality. The first is the various procedures adopted by public organisations to execute the succession process. The interviewees highlighted different procedures for executing the succession process, which vary in their documentation levels, restrictions, and determination of responsibilities and accountability. In addition to the supporting examples illustrating the different procedures adopted, this notion was also highlighted in the interviewees' responses explaining variations in the formality of the process. For example, one interviewee stated:

“However, if the CSB does not take a decision regarding an issue, then the issue will be binding for all those ministries related to the CSB. Thus, these ministries will have the choice to do whatever they please; they would choose to what level they should document the process, as the matter would be considered an internal affair - and it will continue this way until the CSB makes a decision.”

In addition to the legislation gap, some of the interviewees highlighted the organisational culture in a given organisation as causing variations in the formality of the adopted procedures for executing the succession process. For example, one interviewee related these variations in the formality of the process to the maturity of the organisation. Then, when the interviewee was asked to explain what he meant by the maturity of the organisation, the interviewee highlighted the organisational culture by stating:

“It is a culture, and what I mean by culture is the type of organisation it is and the type of people who are working in this organisation. For example, the Ministry of Works, as an organisation, is a professional organisation and most of the staff are professionals, such as engineers and specialists, similar to the Ministry of Health.”

Other interviewees indirectly pointed to the organisational culture by relating the way in which the process is executed to various organisational aspects. In this regard, one interviewee highlighted issues surrounding professionalism when executing the process. He stated, “What matters in the formality of the process is the professionalism within the organisation that is executing the process.” Another interviewee highlighted the nature of the organisation by stating:

“Furthermore, the appointment procedures differ from one ministry to another as each organisation has its own nature. In some organisations, the appointment is just a process of “stamping” the paperwork and the work flows as it is, while in other organisations they pay more attention and check the appointment processes.”

7.2.4 Variations in the Transparency of the Succession Process

The data analysis revealed a consensus in the responses of the HRM representatives affirming the existence of variations in the transparency of the succession process. In addition, the interviewees illustrated specific cases from their work experiences that support the existence of such variations. In their explanations, the interviewees highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors.

7.2.4.1 Variations in the Transparency of the Process: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data analysis indicated that six interviewees highlighted stakeholder-related factors. However, all of the responses explained the variations in the transparency of the process by stressing factors related to one specific stakeholder, the head of the organisation.

7.2.4.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

The interviewees’ responses highlighted two factors related to the head of the organisation. Like the top management representatives, the HRM interviewees stressed the management style of the organisation’s head as a key factor with regard to process transparency. The interviewees expressed this notion by directly relating variations in the process to the head of the organisation. For example, one interviewee stated, “The variation is related to the competence of the minister.” Another interviewee reinforced this notion and related such variations to the head of the organisation by stating:

“It is realistic and a living fact, that the level of transparency differs. Sometimes, several individuals may know about the issue ... Sometimes, the decision maker may tell others that he is responsible for it, and the issue should be kept as a hush-hush topic, “I am responsible and I want it to be this way”.

With regard to the second factor, the data analysis highlighted power held by the organisation's head as key, which was also emphasised by the top management representatives. For example, one HRM interviewee stated that the head of the organisation has the right to, and might, directly contact the civil service bureau about nominations for executive positions, without informing his/her subordinates. In another example, one of the HRM interviewees stated that the succession process would be more covert if there were conflicts between the decision makers regarding the issue. The interviewee implied that in such cases, and based on the power of his/her position, the superior executive may execute the process without sharing information with others. He stated:

“I think if there were conflict between the director and his direct superior regarding the appointment of a section head in terms of who should assume the position, then this would affect the process transparency.”

Another issue which reflected the power held by the head of the organisation was the confidence of the organisation's head with regard to the correctness of his/her succession decisions. It would seem that the higher the level of the confidence in the decision, the more transparent the process. For example, one interviewee stated that the transparency of the process would be high if the decision makers were confident about their succession decisions. He stated:

“A high level of transparency would be the best policy as there is nothing to be afraid of and the candidate is the most appropriate candidate.”

7.2.4.2 Variations in the Transparency of the Process: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis also revealed several explanations which highlighted context-related factors. These factors can be seen on the three context levels; yet, most of the interviewees' responses highlighted the organisational level.

7.2.4.2.1 Macro level factors:

The interviewees' responses also highlighted the Civil Service Law as the one macro level factors to explain the variations in the transparency of the process. Three interviewees in particular also reinforced the top management representative's comment regarding the failure of these laws to specify how to execute the succession process. For example, one interviewee argued that the succession process would be more covert in cases where several candidates are considered due to the lack of clear mechanisms specifying how to select among these candidates. He stated:

“I think the increment in the number of candidates may influence the transparency due to the lack of a clear system specifying how to assess the various candidates or a clear mechanism for career development.”

Another interviewee confirmed this notion in his response about the minimum level of transparency required in executing the succession process - such as public announcements of vacancies. He affirmed that these laws do not obligate the decision makers to adopt a certain level of transparency in appointing executive to positions below the director level. He stated:

“During the process, I am not required to do anything, as these laws and regulations are flexible. So, I may carry out the required process in a way which includes setting up committees, publishing in the newspapers, etc; and I may also involve the CSB in such a process. On the other hand, I may do it myself, as I may appoint someone whom I believe to be competent and acknowledge the bureau of my choice in order to approve it and go ahead with the paperwork.”

7.2.4.2.2 Organisational level factors:

On the organisational level, the data analysis also revealed two factors that were highlighted by five interviewees to explain variations in the transparency of the succession process. With regard to the first factor, like the top management representatives, the HRM representatives emphasised the various procedures adopted to execute the succession process and their transparency level as a factor explaining variations. This notion was supported by the interviewees' responses illustrating different levels of transparency in the adopted procedures, such as information symmetry and public announcements of vacancies. For example, one interviewee confirmed the existence of such

variations in the transparency of the succession process and highlighted the different procedures adopted by the organisation to execute the succession process. The interviewee stated, “All of the abovementioned examples occurred in our real work. We had this and we had that.”

However, the second and most emphasised factor on the organisational level was the culture of the organisation. According to three interviewees, the organisational culture determines the norms within the organisation regarding information symmetry and openness when executing the process. For example, one interviewee related transparency within the organisation to the organisational culture, and he expressed this culture in terms of the maturity of the organisation, as explained in another part of the interview earlier. He stated:

“The maturity means that there is transparency at all levels. Nothing is hidden and everyone knows what is happening, even with regard to succession. If someone has been selected, everyone would know why we selected this individual, it would be known, the criteria on which the decision was made ... So the process is overt for the public. Some organisations are not mature enough and it needs more time.”

Another interviewee also affirmed that variations in the transparency of the process were common. He related it to the organisational culture by stating:

“This is a natural thing; the level of transparency is related to the organisational culture, the leadership mentality, it is a natural thing to have such variation in the transparency.”

7.2.4.2.3 Positional level factors:

On the positional level, however, only one HRM interviewee highlighted the sensitivity of the position in his explanations for variations in the transparency of the process. The interviewee claimed that the more the sensitive the position is, the less transparent the succession process. He stated:

“I think this depends on the nature of the job and the sensitivity of the position. For example, there are sensitive jobs and therefore the appointment for these jobs undergoes a thorough examination, taking into consideration various aspects. For instance, this is a Human Resource, and even a Section Head is in a sensitive position where he deals with

important issues and can do harm to the organisation as a whole. ... So, with regard to transparency, of course not everything would be transparent.”

7.2.5 The Impact of the State's Reform Project on the Succession Process

As with the top management representatives, there was consensus among the HRM representatives with regard to the impact the reform project had on the succession process. In general, seven interviewees stressed the impact of emerging powers on the transparency and accountability of the process. For example, one interviewee highlighted the effects emerging powers had on the transparency of the process. He stated:

“We are living in a reform era, we have a vision to follow to 2030, we are moving toward more transparency and we are trying to do things better as there are many agencies monitoring the government’s performance.”

Another interviewee stressed the impact of the reform project on the accountability of the process by stating:

“Generally, whenever one realises that there is an entity monitoring his/her performance, he/she would be cautious. Nowadays, not only are the councils monitoring the public sector’s performance, we have also the National Audit Court. So, this has led to a lot of improvement with regard to executives’ appointments as ministries have become more careful in these matters.”

Moreover, the HRM interviewees highlighted the current trend in the public sector to empower females to take up executive positions. Further information with regard to emerging powers is presented in the following parts.

7.2.5.1 The emergence of new powers

The HRM representatives affirmed that stakeholders who either did not exist, or only had minor influence before the induction of the state’s reform project, now influence succession processes for executive positions. Specifically, the data analysis highlighted the influence of political associations, professional associations and media. In addition, the data analysis reflected an

increase in the role of some of the governmental agencies in supervising and executing the process, specifically the CSB, the National Audit Court and the EDB.

7.2.5.1.1 Political Associations:

Seven of the ten HRM representatives highlighted the political associations' influence on the succession process for executive positions in the public sector, which was also pointed out by the top management representatives. The data analysis indicated a consensus among the HRM representatives that political associations influence the succession process by applying pressure on the competent authorities of the public organisations in the representatives' council (Al-Nuwab Council). Thus, these associations depend on their blocs in the council in exerting such influence.

As it was put by one interviewee:

“This depends on whether or not the association is represented in the council. Those that are represented in the council affect the process. Directly or indirectly, but we cannot deny that there is an influence.”

Furthermore, the interviewees reflected such influences by highlighting the effort of the political associations' blocs in the council, to question the competent authority of the organisation about issues related to the succession process. For example, these blocs may question the suitability of a particular office incumbent for an executive position. One interviewee stated:

“For example, in one of the hearings, which I witnessed in Al-Nuwab council, the undersecretary of one of the ministries was questioned: “How did you appoint that particular individual to assume this executive position? What is her qualification?” After that hearing, many changes happened in that particular directorate.”

The data analysis also indicated that such involvement, by the political associations in the succession process, is founded on two issues. The first, and the most emphasised issue, is the rise of accountability in the public sector, which was directly linked to the state's reform project. As one interviewee articulated:

“We know that the decision makers, now, are held accountable for any action by many entities and organisations ... such as the Ministerial Cabinet, the National Audit Court and the parliament.”

The other issue was the political nature of the executive positions. According to one interviewee, due to the political nature of these positions, external involvement of politicians in appointments to positions at the top of the hierarchy is evident. He stated:

“I think the external factors will be more evident when it comes to succession processes for leading positions, such as Director, Undersecretary Assistant and Undersecretary. The appointments for these positions have a political dimension as they are issued by a political authority, such as the Prime Minister’s Council.”

7.2.5.1.2 Civil Society Organisations:

Among the various civil society organisations, the interviewees only highlighted the involvement of professional associations in the succession process, which is a notion echoed in the responses of the top management. According to four HRM interviewees, these associations are exerting more influence than ever before. As one interviewee commented, “Of course, their voice is heard now. They have a loud voice nowadays.” Moreover, the data analysis revealed that some of the professional associations are striving to take on the role of trade unions. For example, one interviewee emphasised the contradictions between the stated role for these associations, as promoters of their profession, and their practices. He stated:

“Unfortunately, such associations are not supposed to do what they are doing now. They should focus on developing the profession and contributing to the whole society. Now, they are only focusing on negative issues. When I was in the Accountants Association, we used to have educational activities.”

Another interviewee confirmed that such attempts were being made by some of the professional associations to change their role. He differentiated between professional societies and trade unions by referring to the Trade Union Law of 2002, which prohibits the formation of unions in the public sector.

However, despite the general increase in the involvement of these professional associations in the public administration, the data analysis indicated that their influence on the succession process issues was minor. This could particularly be seen by comparing their influence on the succession process with the associations' contributions in developing their professional cadres. For example, one interviewee stated:

“Well, being a member of a professional society could be an advantage as it illustrates the employee’s professional experience and demonstrates his activeness and dedication to his work. However, would the professional society be able to help its members when it comes to appointments? I do not think so.”

In addition, three interviewees argued that some of these professional associations have political agendas. For example, one interviewee highlighted the stand some of these professional associations took during the period of political unrest which started in February 2011. He stated:

“Sometimes, they lined up with political orientations, as we saw in the latest events. They were supposed to look after their members rather than taking part in political unrest.”

Another interviewee presented a specific case where a professional association collaborated with a political bloc to question the competent authority of the public sector organisation related to the profession the association represented. According to the interviewee, the collaboration was serving a political agenda aimed at supporting those affiliated with the political association. He stated:

“Unfortunately, they are lobbying for non-professional objectives. They tried this [influencing the succession process] through their connections with the representatives in Al-Nuwab Council. On one occasion, representatives of (name was omitted) bloc, with all due respect, submitted a request for us to provide them with information about our staff, and specifically about those in the (name was omitted) Directorate, regarding the promotions, the size of the staff and their names, their positions and ranks and what we do for them. Unfortunately ... it was for propaganda purposes.”

7.2.5.1.3 Media:

The data analysis also indicated that, given the extension of the freedom of speech, the press has a greater influence on the succession process than ever before. However, the HRM representatives

did not grant the press as much weight as did the top management, probably because the top management were more concerned about the impact of publicity on their organisations and the reflections of this publicity on their own image. For example, one of the HRM representatives pointed to the limited impact of the press on the succession process decision making, due to that fact that the press usually report on the decision after it has made, rather than during the decision making. Another interviewee affirmed this notion by stating:

“I do not feel there is a strong role for the press, but this does not mean the press has no effect on the succession process. There is influence from the press but it is not that much. Furthermore, if you notice, columns in the newspapers tackle the issue of the appropriateness of an executive for the positions only occasionally; journalists are more concerned about issues related to the lack or the quality of the services provided.”

Nevertheless, the HRM interviewees indicated that the press may influence the decision; specifically in raising doubts about the appropriateness of the executive employee for the position. For example, one interviewee hypothesised the impact that negative press coverage can cause:

“For instance, say someone publishes this matter in a newspaper. When the Minister reads it, he would definitely say, “I have got myself into a problem”. He may also change his mind about the appointment of the inappropriate employee. These things influence the decisions.”

In addition, the HRM representatives referred to the role of social media in flagging up those whom the public considered unsuitable for assuming executive positions. Two HRM interviewees discussed social media pressures on the decision makers and reinforced the statements of the top management representatives. For example, one interviewee highlighted the aftermath of the political crisis that started on the 14th of February 2011. The interviewee talked about the public pressure on the decision makers to take action against those employees who left their work posts to participate in the demonstrations and strikes. He stated:

“The public opinion is another non-official factor, which nowadays is considered to be as influential as the official entities, if not more. ... Public opinion via such as the media, press, or BlackBerry services [e.g. social media, such as twitter] has a great influence,

claiming that this entity or that is not taking the appropriate measures, or claiming that those individuals are covering up for those employees who violated the law. So, this has great impact now.”

7.2.5.1.4 Policy makers and regulatory bodies in the public sector:

All HRM interviewees highlighted the government’s increased awareness about the importance of regulating the succession process. Such awareness led the government to enhance its role in monitoring the succession process. The data analysis confirmed that such role enhancement had indeed materialised, and the government had since influenced/was influencing the succession process in three ways. First, it has adopted a new approach to managing the public sector. The interviewees highlighted a shift in the public sector administration, which they linked to the “2030 Vision” for the government, its strategic initiatives and key performance indicators. According to the interviewees, this shift in the public administration is due to a new focus that strives to increase accountability, transparency and implementation of standard procedures for the succession process across all organisations. As one interviewee reported:

“Now, every ministry has clear initiatives to fulfil, which are directly connected to the 2030 Vision. So, all these organisations are doing something like streamlining to reach certain standards. There are some variations [in executing the succession process], but with the implementation of the 2030 Vision and the monitoring of those competent agencies, we will reach a stage where everything is transparent.”

The second way in which this enhanced role has been materialised is through the government’s efforts to enact a new system governing the succession process. The interviewees affirmed that new regulation of the process is being developed. For example, the representative of the HRM in the CSB stated:

“Nowadays, we are working on a system, here in the CSB, to ensure scheduled succession planning - similar to that in leading organisations. The bidding for the project was opened for consulting firms, so that a newly recruited employee would be able to foresee his position after 10 years. The career plan will be clear, where the office incumbent would move to and who will follow in the position will be clear. This is one of the projects of the CSB among the ongoing initiatives of the 2030 Vision.”

The third way in which the government's enhanced monitoring role is reflected is through the empowerment of some entities, and the establishment of others, to monitor the succession process. Thus, the government is not only developing a new system for the succession process, but also it is setting up bodies accountable for ensuring its implementation. Recently, the National Auditing Court, in addition to performing its original function of monitoring governmental financial aspects, was reorganised to take on the role of administrative control. The CSB was given more powers to supervise the government administration, with a new directorate established to take on this task. As was reported by one interviewee:

“The monitoring covers all aspects. The National Auditing Court has been established, the councils have been formed. Moreover, the processes and procedures are being monitored internally due to the establishment of the Directorate of Administrative Control. So, we have now an internal auditing body concerned with the public organisations. The transparency will be better, especially with the development of the Directorate of Administrative Control, which will monitor the government organisations regarding the implementation of the rules and regulations.”

7.2.5.2 The Trend for Women's Empowerment

The HRM representatives also emphasised the trend to empower women, which was highlighted by the top management representatives earlier. The data analysis showed a consensus among the interviewees affirming that more women have assumed executive positions in the last decade. Furthermore, most often, the interviewees related this trend to the involvement of the SCW. For example, one interviewee stated:

“Recently, women, in general, have been emerging and more light has been shed on them. I think, before, the people were not aware of women's roles. But, when the SCW was established and more light was shed on women, some prominent female figures in certain fields, those who proved their professionalism and competencies, have been recognised.”

This was echoed in other interviewees' responses. For example, another interviewee highlighted the role of the SCW and stated:

“To be honest with you, certainly, this has influenced the process. It is observable everywhere. The activation of women’s roles, the persisting questions concerning the development of female workforce and the frequent enquiries about the representations of the women in leading positions all imply that organisations are responsible and, I would honestly say, being held accountable for this issue.”

7.2.6 Summary of the HRM Perspectives regarding the Reported Variations in the Succession Process

As illustrated, the data analysis revealed a consensus among the HRM interviewees regarding the variations in the succession process. The interviewees highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors in their explanations for such variations. With regard to stakeholder-related factors explaining variations among the decision makers, the interviewees’ responses reflected the management style of the Head of the organisation in terms of delegating succession decisions as key.

As well, the data analysis highlighted four context-related factors to explain variations among the decision makers. On the macro level, the interviewees highlighted the Civil Service Law, which specifies different appointing authorities for three different executive levels (below director level, director level and above director level). On the organisational level, the data analysis highlighted the different procedures adopted by these organisations to execute the succession process. On the positional level, two factors were highlighted. The first is the differences in the nature of the job among executive positions in terms of the required competencies and the relative differences in direct supervision. The interviewees argued that such differences dictate the appointment decisions taken at different decision making levels. The second position-related factor is the sensitivity of the position as perceived by the competent authority of the organisation.

With regard to variations in terms of heir apparent successors, the interviewees highlighted three stakeholder-related factors. The first is the ability of the predecessor (or the office incumbent) to facilitate the recognition of one of his/her subordinates as an heir apparent successor. The second is the availability of appropriate candidates who are recognised as the second in command for the position, and the greater likelihood that they will be recognised as heir apparent successors. The

third factor is the management style of the head of the organisation, in terms of planning the succession process, preparing and identifying candidates to assume executive positions.

Moreover, the data analysis highlighted two context-related factors to explain variations among the successors. On the macro level, the data analysis indicated the impact of the Civil Service Law, which places the final appointment decisions in the hands of external authorities; and thus, successors are not identified until the appointments are made. In addition, the interviewees highlighted the lack of legislation specifying successor selection mechanisms. On the positional level, the interviewees' responses highlighted the nature of the executive job in terms of hierarchal level. The data analysis also indicated that their apparent successors are more likely to be identified for low executive positions due to the preparation of a second line for these positions.

With regard to variations in the formality of the succession process, the data analysis highlighted only one stakeholder-related factor, namely, the management style of the head of the organisation. However, three context-related factors were highlighted. On the macro level, the data analysis emphasised the Civil Service Law and the failure of this legislation to specify how to execute the process. Consequently, the procedures adopted for executing the succession process varied among different organisations, and this was also highlighted as a factor on the organisational level. The third factor, which is also related to the organisation, is the organisational culture. The data analysis indicated that the formality of the process may vary based on the culture of the organisation.

With regard to variations in the transparency of the succession process, the data analysis highlighted two stakeholder-related factors. Both factors are related to the head of the organisation. The first is his/her management style, as this largely determines the internal procedures for the process, and their level of transparency. The second is his/her power to conceal the process to avoid being questioned by other stakeholders. Furthermore, the data analysis highlighted four context-related factors. On the macro level, the data analysis highlighted the Civil Service Law, with the interviewees emphasising the gaps in this law. Further, on the organisational level, the data analysis highlighted differences in the adopted procedures for executing the process and in the organisational culture. On the positional level, the data analysis indicated that the sensitivity of certain positions may cause processes to be less transparent.

Finally, the data analysis revealed a general agreement in the interviewees' responses regarding the impact of the state's reform project on the succession process. The interviewees affirmed the influence of the new emerging powers, such as political associations, professional associations and the media. Moreover, the interviewees asserted that the government is now more concerned about regulating a suitable system for the succession process: one which overcomes the drawbacks of the existing law and increases the accountability, transparency and implementation of standard procedures. As well, the interviewees highlighted the trend of female empowerment, relating it to the efforts of the SCW, and affirmed the impact of such trends and efforts on the succession process for executive positions in public sector organisations.

7.3 THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE EXECUTIVE CLASS EMPLOYEES

This section presents the perspectives of the executive class employees about the reported variations in the succession processes. Initially, the perspectives of these employees about the variations among the decision-makers are presented; followed by the presentations of their perspectives regarding the variation in the type of successor (in terms of heir apparent successor), the formality and the transparency of the succession process.

7.3.1 Variations among the Decision Makers

The qualitative data analysis revealed a consensus in the responses of the executive class employees regarding variations among the decision makers. Furthermore, the data analysis highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors in the interviewees' responses provided to explain such variations. In general, the interviewees emphasised those factors highlighted by the representatives of the organisations' top management and HRM. Further information about these factors is presented in the following subsections.

7.3.1.1 Variations among the Decision Makers: Stakeholder-Related Factors

7.3.1.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

The data analysis revealed only one stakeholder-related factor. Specifically, four out of the seven interviewed executive class employees highlighted the management style of the head of the organisation in their explanations for the variations among the decision makers. While one

interviewee related such variations to the personality of the head of the organisation, the other three interviewees were more explicit. They described the management styles of the organisations' heads in terms of their tendency to delegate and involve other top management officials in the succession process decision making. As put by one interviewee:

“Of course, this depends on the heads of the organisations. They may delegate the nomination decisions to other officials who are also part of the top management. ... In some organisations, the human resource departments are providing the training needs. In other organisations, these departments are involved in putting in place the career plans for the employees and preparing the second line of leadership. This also depends on the top management of the organisations, in terms of how they create their pool of talent.”

7.3.1.2 Variations among the Decision Makers: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis also revealed several explanations that highlighted context-related factors. These factors emerged on the macro level and the positional level. Further information about these factors is presented in the following parts.

7.3.1.2.1 Macro level factors:

Like the top management and HRM, the executive class employees also emphasised the Civil Service Law in their explanations for variations among the decision makers. Four out of the seven interviewees highlighted the Civil Service Law in their responses. In their explanations, the interviewees related the variations among the decision makers to the law, which specifies different appointing authorities for the different executive levels. For example, one stated:

“Even in the law, these three positions are specifically mentioned; the appointment of the director is via a Prime Minister’s Decree and the Undersecretary and Undersecretary Assistant via a Royal Degree.”

7.3.1.2.2 Positional level factors:

Only two interviewees highlighted position-related factors in their explanations. The interviewees highlighted two position-related factors, which were emphasised earlier by other representatives of the internal stakeholder subgroups. The first factor is the differences in the nature of the job among the executive positions. Like the HRM representatives, these two executive class employee

representatives reflected on differences in the nature of executive jobs by emphasising the selection criteria, which were expressed in terms of the job requirements. Furthermore, they presented the same argument as the HRM representatives in affirming that when job requirements are more specialised, the succession decisions most probably involve those who are capable of evaluating the candidates' capabilities. However, if these requirements are general requirements, such as those required for administration, the decisions are more likely to be made solely by the organisation's top management. For example, one interviewee stated:

“This is normal. Variations among the decision maker are expected. I think there is little variation with respect to the decision maker when it comes to professional jobs such as medicine, engineering, accounting. However, it varies more for intangible competencies related to the more general jobs. Likewise, in lower hierarchal positions, where the work is straightforward and the duties are determined, the decision is made through the normal chain of command.”

The second position-related factor is the sensitivity of the position. For example, one interviewee referred to the sensitivity of the position by highlighting the consequences of appointing incompetent individuals, as well as differentiating between the implications for low and high executive positions. The interviewee also highlighted the differences in the follow-up measures needed in the wake of such appointments. He stated:

“At such low levels, the decision is easy. However, as you go up the hierarchal levels, you need to be more careful in the selection process to make the right choice. For example, if you make a mistake in selecting a section Head, the consequences are not big and you can fix the problem easily, in comparison to director or general director. ... These three positions are sensitive [Undersecretary, Undersecretary Assistant and Director], yet, directors' positions are the least sensitive.”

7.3.2 Variations in the Type of Successor

The data analysis revealed a consensus among the representatives of the executive class employees where their responses affirmed that there were variations among the successors, in terms of their recognition as heir apparent successors. Moreover, the data analysis produced supporting examples

provided by the interviewees to illustrate such variations. In their explanations, the interviewees highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors, which are presented below.

7.3.2.1 Variations the Type of Successor: Stakeholder-Related Factors

The data analysis uncovered several explanations that highlighted factors related to the successor and the head of the organisation.

7.3.2.1.1 Successor-related factors:

The representatives of the executive class employees stressed the availability of an appropriate successor for the position as the key successor-related factor in their explanations regarding variations among the successors. As was discussed earlier, the same factor was emphasised by the top management and HRM representatives. The executive class employees defined the availability of an appropriate successor in terms of the existence of a qualified individual as the second in command for the position. According to the interviewees, such qualified individuals are more likely to be recognised as heir apparent successors. As was stated by one interviewee:

“The availability of a qualified individual close to the office incumbent would make it obvious that he would follow him in the position when he departs the office.”

Other interviewees reinforced this notion. For example, one interviewee explained such variations among the successors by highlighting the lack of appropriate successors. He stated:

“At the present time, this [the identification of the successor prior to the departure of the office incumbent] may vary. Some competent authorities have determined already who will be the successor of the office incumbent, everyone knows who will follow, the picture is clear, while other competent authorities have not determined who will follow whom. This could be explained in light of the fact that some of those competent authorities who have still not determined the successor have not found the right successor.”

7.3.2.1.2 Head of the organisation-related factors:

Like the representatives of the top management and HRM, the representatives of the executive class employees also emphasised the management style of the organisation's head as a key factor, specifically, how the second line of executives are prepared. For example, one of the interviewees

argued that the preparation of the second line rests on instructions from the head of the organisation. Thus, if a second line for executive positions has been prepared, heir apparent successors would be identified. She stated:

“This also depends on those who are in senior positions and their way of controlling the organisations. If they say, “Prepare a second line”, then the others will follow and a second line will be identified.”

The same notion was echoed in the responses of the other interviewees. For example, one interviewee affirmed that the recognition of an heir apparent depends on the extent to which the top management of the organisation identifies and prepares individuals to be second in line for executive positions. He stated:

“We have certain individuals who are targeted to be something in the future. They are being prepared by intensifying their training programmes and participation in internal committees. ... The focus by the top management on their training, their assignment for the various committees, and their commissions for the important tasks, are all indicators that these individuals are considered to be potential candidates to replace their superior. Thus, others would recognise them as the second line of the leadership.”

7.3.2.2 Variations in among the Type of Successor: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several explanations highlighting context-related factors. These factors can be seen on all three levels, namely, the macro, organisational, and positional levels.

7.3.2.2.1 Macro level factors:

Only one interviewee highlighted a macro level factor in his explanation for variations among the successors. This was the Civil Service Law, which was also highlighted by the top management and HRM representatives as a key factor. The interviewee highlighted the legislation gap in the law and argued that such variations among successors are due to the lack in the law of a specific mechanism for selecting successors. He stated, “But to be frank with you, the way, or the system, which identifies the successor is not clear”. Thus, some of the successors would be identified prior to the succession process and, thereafter, recognised as heir apparent successors, while others were not.

7.3.2.2.2 Organisational-level factors:

Five out of the seven interviewees also highlighted the different procedures adopted by public sector organisations, in terms of preparing the second line for executive positions. The interviewees affirmed that these procedures vary among the different organisations. Some of the organisations, according to these interviewees, prepare second line of executives, while others do not. Therefore, such variations in the procedures adopted by a specific organisation are likely to contribute to variation among the successors. For example, as was illustrated earlier when discussing factors related to the head of the organisation, successors to executive positions are most often recognised *prior* to the announcement of the appointment decisions, due to the preparation of second line executives by the organisation's top management. However, one interviewee stated that in his organisation successors are not identified until the appointment is announced. He stated:

“It differs from one place to another. My experience is limited to this ministry. Nonetheless, as you said, there is variation in the identification of the successor. However, in this ministry, it is more often the case that the successor is not identified.”

7.3.2.2.3 Positional level factors:

The data analysis revealed four responses, provided by two interviewees, which highlighted position-related factors as explaining variations in successors. However, these responses did not identify a specific position-related factor. One interviewee confirmed the view expressed by a representative of top management in his explanation in relation to the structure of the executive office by asserting that successors fail to be identified due to the lack of deputy positions for the executive positions He stated:

“If there were organisational structure positions for the second in line, such as Deputy Director, along with the director, then the identity of the successor would be known. But this is not the case here. Nor do we have second in line positions for the Undersecretary assistants. ... Furthermore, this is also the case for Section Head positions; it is unknown who will follow them.”

Another interviewee highlighted the differences in the nature of executive jobs, in terms of the professional knowledge required to assume certain executive positions. The interviewee argued that

candidates are often recognised as their apparent successors for positions in professional departments because they possess the required “know-how” which others lack. She stated:

“For example, an individual is qualified in providing X function in a specialised section or a department where this function is the core function of the department. There is no other section in the organisation which provides such a function. Thus, when a succession process takes place in this department, the successor must come from within the department, and due to such a specific requirement, the successor, most often, is recognised by others as the next in line for the position.”

7.3.3 Variations in the Formality of the Succession Process

The representatives of the executive class employees affirmed the existence of variations in the formality of the succession process. Furthermore, in their explanations for such variations, the interviewees highlighted the same factors that were emphasised by the other internal stakeholders previously. However, the responses of the executive class employees varied and no specific factors were stressed. Moreover, most of the responses highlighted context-related factors. Only one interviewee highlighted a factor related to the head of the organisation. Further information about these factors is provided below.

7.3.3.1 Variations in the Formality of the Process: Stakeholder-Related Factors

7.3.3.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

The data analysis revealed only one response in which an interviewee related the variations in the formality of the process to the head of the organisation. In this response, the interviewee highlighted the impact of the management style of the head of the organisation on the formality of the process. She explicitly linked such variations in the formality to the organisations' heads by stating:

“However, the process is not always documented. In some ministries, it is; in others, it is not. This depends on the individual who is in charge, on his vision, ideas etc., and this makes the difference.”

7.3.3.2 Variations in the Formality of the Process: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several responses in which the interviewees highlighted context-related factors, which were at the macro and organisational levels.

7.3.3.2.1 Macro level factors:

Two of the interviewees stated that the gap in the Civil Service Law regarding specific succession mechanisms was a key factor explaining the variations in the formality of the process. According to the interviewees, there is no standard procedure for executing the succession process, and thus, such variations in the level of the formality are to be expected. For example, one interviewee stated:

“I think it all depends on the procedure. ... This is a process [the succession process] which does not require creativity; there should be a standard procedure for it. ... [In general] When one works in the government, there is no specific procedure to follow. Today he [the superior] says, “Do it this way”; and the next day he changes his decision, “No, do it this way”.”

7.3.3.2.2 Organisational level factors:

On the organisational level, the data analysis revealed two factors, highlighted by two interviewees. The first factor is the impact the organisational culture has on the formality of actual procedural practice. One interviewee related such variations in the formality of the process to the established culture in the organisation. He then argued that formality in the Bahraini public sector exists only in the paperwork, and may not reflect what is actually going on. He stated:

“I think this is related to the organisational culture. With regard to the formalities, we have the formalities on paper. For example, it is known that this position has these functional specifications, as paperwork - but in practice, the employee may perform other tasks, which are not specified in the job description, according to the command of his/her direct superior.”

The other organisational level factor highlighted by the executive class employees was the size of the organisation in terms of number of staff. For example, one interviewee argued that bureaucracy, and hence the formality of the adopted procedures, are high in large organisations. He stated:

“The size of the organisation affects various things, among which is the level of the bureaucracy in the organisation’s procedures.”

7.3.4 Variations in the Transparency of the Succession Process

The data analysis revealed a consensus in the executive class employees in terms of variations in the transparency of the succession process. In their explanations, the interviewees highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors. Further information about these factors is provided below.

7.3.4.1 Variations in the Transparency of the Process: Stakeholder-Related Factors

7.3.4.1.1 Head of organisation-related factors:

The data analysis highlighted only one stakeholder in relation to the interviewees’ explanations for the variations in the transparency of the process. Specifically, four out of the seven interviewed executive class employees highlighted two factors related to the head of the organisation. The first factor was the management style of the head of the organisations. According to these interviewees, the transparency of the process and information symmetry among the various involved stakeholders is influenced by the procedures adopted to execute the process. Further, the head of the organisation determines these procedures. The second factor was the power held by the heads of organisations in terms of their confidence in their decisions and their ability to resist external influences. For example, one interviewee highlighted both factors. He reflected on the management style of the organisation’s head by referring to the decision maker’s judgement. He also highlighted the head’s concerns about the influence of external authorities on the decision by stating:

“The decision maker’s judgement, based on what he sees and the circumstances of the situation, would influence the transparency of the process. ... So, it is the decision maker’s judgment about what he sees as proper according the situation circumstances. Some say, “if I announce that a succession process will be taking place and this individual will be the successor, others may approach higher authorities and therefore my decision would be of no value and I would lose face over that with the person to whom I promised the position.””

Another interviewee also highlighted the management style and the power held by the head of the organisation in his explanation for the variations in the transparency of the process. This

interviewee regarded the policy of the top management as an expression of the management style of the head of the organisation. The interviewee referred to the matter of the head's power by highlighting the possibility of interference by external authorities in candidate nominations, which is the exclusive preserve of the head of the organisation. He stated:

“But I am not sure why such variation exists, it could be the policy of the top management, it could be off track procedure, it could be because they are waiting for nominations from a higher authority.”

7.3.4.2 Variations in the Transparency of the Process: Context-Related Factors

The data analysis revealed several explanations which highlighted context-related factors. These factors were at the organisational and positional levels.

7.3.4.2.1 Organisational level factors:

On the organisational level, the data analysis revealed two factors, highlighted by a total of five interviewees, to explain the variations in the transparency of the succession process. First, the interviewees highlighted the culture of the organisation. For example, one interviewee stated the extent to which an employee knows the odds on his/her promotion is influenced by the organisational culture. He stated:

“For example, some candidates have an idea about their chances to be promoted to the next position. Others do not know, this is due to the work environment and the factors within it.”

The second factor on the organisational level was the reaction of organisational staff to the identification of the successor, prior to the announcement of the appointment decision. As put by one interviewee:

“I think there is a concern in government organisations, in general, regarding the transparency of this issue. If the name of the individual who is going to assume the position is announced prior to their appointment to the position, this may create problems. For example, someone who was expecting to be promoted to the position may raise questions, “why not me, why this particular individual?””

7.3.4.2.2 Positional level factors:

With regard to factors on the positional level, the data analysis revealed that three interviewees emphasised the sensitivity of the position. The interviewees stated that the more the sensitive the position is, the less transparent the succession process. For example, one interviewee stated:

“This also depends on the sensitivity of the position. The process would be less transparent for a sensitive position. For example, consider two section head positions, one in the HRM and another in the Strategies Department, they differ in their sensitivity.”

Another interviewee also commented on the sensitivity of the selection criteria for some positions over others. He stated:

“Transparency is not required in everything. ...But, sometimes, there is a requirement for a job, which only the decision maker knows about. You can see then, that it is not only academic qualifications that matter.”

7.3.5 The Impact of the State's Reform Project on the Succession Process

Like the other internal stakeholder representatives, the interviewed executive class employees affirmed the impact of the reform project on the succession process. Specifically, the interviewees highlighted the influence of some of the emerging new powers, and the focus on achieving greater accountability and transparency in executing the succession process in public organisations. Moreover, the interviewees highlighted the current trend to empower women to assume executive positions. Further information is presented in the following parts.

7.3.5.1 The emergence of new powers

The representatives of the executive class employees affirmed the influence of some of the emerging new powers on the succession process. Most often, the interviewees highlighted the increase in the role of the CSB in supervising the process. The interviewees also affirmed the influence of political and, to a lower extent, professional associations on the succession process.

7.3.5.1.1 Political Associations:

The data analysis revealed a consensus in the interviewees' responses regarding the influence of political associations on the succession process. For example, when one interviewee was asked about the extent to which political associations influence the succession process, he stated:

“Indeed, they have a great influence. ... Nowadays, the representatives of the council may question the government about such issues. Thus, their influence depends on their power in the council.”

Other interviewees affirmed this notion. For instance, one interviewee stated:

“Questioning authorities, such as the councils, have a big role. In the absence of such authorities, the decision maker may think if I appoint A instead of B who is more competent no one will question me. ... For example, today the newspapers say an inquiry committee has been formed in Al-Nuwab council regarding the appointments made in one of the public organisations, which they suspect were based on personal and other improper motives.”

7.3.5.1.2 Civil Society Organisations:

Two of the executive class employees highlighted the involvement of the professional associations in the succession process. The interviewees stressed the role played by some of these associations in monitoring the process from within the public sector organisations, via their members who are among the organisational staff. One interviewee stated:

“Now, there is some degree of transparency. There is more monitoring in some, or most, of the organisations by professional associations.”

Another interviewee affirmed this notion by referring to the impact of the state's reform project on professional associations in terms of enabling them to increase transparency and freedom of speech. She stated:

“If they [unions and professional societies] revealed something was wrong, it would be considered and not overlooked. I am not saying that everything they raise is right, but I mean that the situation today is not as yesterday. Now the transparency is high and there is freedom of speech.”

7.3.5.1.3 Media:

The data analysis indicated that the press is now more involved in the succession process than was the case prior to the reform project, due to the ceiling of freedom of speech being raised. The interviewees highlighted the role the press now play in monitoring, reporting and criticising government decisions. For example, one interviewee asserted the impact of the press by stating:

“Of course, the press is influential. Today, decision makers consider how the press is going to react to their decisions. Such reactions are taken into account in the decision making process”.

Another interviewee affirmed the involvement of the press in keeping the public informed about such issues and also raised the question of its credibility. As stated by the interviewee:

“From where does the public get the news? From the press and other media means. Thus, for sure, the press has a role in the issue. The credibility of the newspapers is important. Some newspapers make sure that the news or the article is based on facts. Others do not care; they may create a fuss out of nothing.”

7.3.5.1.4 Policy makers and regulatory bodies in the public sector:

The interviewees stressed the expansion of the government’s role in supervising and controlling the succession process in the public sector. For example, one interviewee referred to a new regulation issued by the Prime Minister’s Court. The new regulation compels the organisations’ competent authorities to obtain approval from the Minister of the Cabinet regarding deputation to executive positions. He stated:

“Now, according to the latest regulation issued by H.E Sheikh Khalid Bin Abdulla [the Minister of the Cabinet], the competent authority needs the Minister of the Cabinet approval for the deputation of any individual to a high level position when the position becomes vacant due to any reason. So, even the deputation needs to be approved nowadays.”

The interviewees also emphasised the increase in the role of the CSB. Furthermore, the interviewees pointed out the additional tasks assigned to the National Auditing Court regarding

monitoring the administration of the public sector organisations. For example, one interviewee emphasised the role that these two control bodies play by likening it to the action of investors in the private sector. He stated:

“In the private sector, there are investors who put in their money and they are looking for someone who can bring them profit. ... The criteria for selection are clear. The problem with the public sector is we do not have this ... If the decision maker places an improper person in the position, what does he care? The money is not from his pocket. There are no profit and loss evaluations. So it is of vital importance to have more transparency and the existence of monitoring authorities in the public sector. Therefore, I stress the importance of these bodies, such as the National Auditing and Administrative Control Authority, the CSB, and Al-Nuwab Council. Otherwise, the public sector has no investors who are monitoring their assets.”

7.3.5.2 Trend for Women's Empowerment

The data analysis revealed a consensus in the responses of the executive class employees regarding the existence of a trend to empower women in the public sector. The interviewees affirmed that more women have assumed executive positions in the last decade. For example, one interviewee stated that:

“The doubts over women's capability of taking on leading positions are vanquished. This is why you see more women as managers, ministers, and members in the legislation councils.”

Moreover, most of the interviewees related this trend to the involvement of the SCW. For example, one interviewee commented on the SCW's role by stating:

“They [the SCW] contribute to providing equal opportunities for women instead of keeping them on the margins and preferring them less in comparison to men. ... So, they [the SCW] play a role.”

Another interviewee affirmed this notion by stating:

“The SCW has an active role in bringing to light working women and helping to remove some of the obstacles which were hindering women's success in public organisations. They

help women to pursue their ambitions and encourage others to evaluate the individual based on his/her performance, rather than this is a man and this is a woman.”

7.3.6 Summary of the Perspectives of the Executive Class Employees regarding the Reported Variations in the Succession Process

The data analysis revealed a consensus among the representatives of the executive class employees regarding the reported variations in the succession process. In their explanations for such variations, the interviewees highlighted various stakeholder-related and context-related factors, which most often reemphasised those factors highlighted by other internal stakeholders.

With regard to variations among the decision makers, the interviewees' responses pointed to the management style of the head of the organisation as a stakeholder-related factor. The data analysis also highlighted three context-related factors. On the macro level, the interviewees emphasised the Civil Service Laws. The other two factors, on the positional level, highlighted the differences in the nature of the executive job and the sensitivity of the position.

The data analysis also highlighted several explanations for the variations in terms of heir apparent successors. The interviewees highlighted two stakeholder-related factors, the availability of an appropriate successor and the management style of the head of the organisation. Furthermore, the data analysis highlighted four context-related factors. On the macro level, the interviewees emphasised the Civil Service Law. On the organisational level, the data analysis highlighted the variations in the adopted procedures for preparing the second line for executive positions. Finally, on the positional level, the interviewees' responses highlighted the non-existence of deputy positions for executive positions and the professional knowledge required to assume certain executive positions.

Regarding variations in the formality of the process, only one interviewee stressed the management style of the head of the organisation as a stakeholder-related factor. In his response, the interviewee linked variations in the formality of the process to the organisations' heads. As well, the data analysis highlighted three context-related factors. On the macro level, the interviewees emphasised the legislation gap in the Civil Service Law regarding the existence of standard procedures for

executing the process. On the organisational level, the data analysis highlighted the organisation's culture and size. The interviewees highlighted the impact of the organisation's culture on the formality of the process, in terms of the accepted procedures for executing the process. In addition, they argued that the larger the organisation the more bureaucratic the adopted internal procedures, and thus, the greater the formality of the process.

With regard to the transparency of the process, the data analysis revealed several factors in the interviewees' explanations. In terms of stakeholder-related factors, the interviewees emphasised the management style and the power of the heads of the organisations. With regard to context-related factors, the data analysis highlighted three factors. On the organisational level, the interviewees highlighted organisational culture and the concerns about the reaction of the organisation's staff. The other factor was on the positional level, namely, the sensitivity of the positions.

Finally, the data analysis revealed a consensus in the interviewees' responses regarding the impact of the state's reform project on the succession process. The interviewees affirmed the impact of state's reform project by highlighting the influence of the new emerging powers (e.g. political associations), and the noticeable increases in the influence of other external stakeholders (e.g. professional associations and media). Furthermore, the interviewees asserted that in the post-reform period, the government has become more concerned about controlling the succession process, which is being achieved by empowering the CSB and involving the National Auditing Court in monitoring the administration of the public sector. In addition, the interviewees asserted the existence of a trend to empower women to assume leading positions in the public sector organisations. Most often, the interviewees linked this trend to the efforts of the Supreme Council for Women in empowering women.

7.4 THE INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES

This section summarises the perspectives of the internal stakeholder regarding the variations in the succession process and the impact of the reform project on the process. This is done by combining the perspectives of the three internal stakeholder subgroups: the organisation's top management, HRM, and executive class employees. The researcher analysed the responses of 28 public sector

officials from 15 organisations. Specifically, the researcher analysed the responses of 11 top management representatives (at Undersecretary Assistant level or above), 10 HRM directors and seven executive class employees (at Director level or below). In the following subsections, the perspectives of these internal stakeholders are presented.

7.4.1 Variations among the Decision Makers

The data analysis indicated a consensus in the internal stakeholders' responses on the existence of variations among the decision makers of the succession process. The interviewees highlighted several cases supporting this finding from their work experiences. Moreover, they presented several explanations for such variations, which highlighted stakeholder-related and context-related factors.

The data analysis revealed two stakeholder-related factors. The first and most emphasised was the management style of the head of the organisation. The interviewees argued that the management style of the head of the organisation, as reflected in the level of centralisation/delegation in the decision-making, would contribute to variations among the decision makers of the succession process. The second factor was the influence of powerful stakeholders, which was mainly highlighted by the representatives of the top management. According to these interviewees, the involvement of powerful stakeholders may cause variations among the decision makers, as those powerful stakeholders become the actual decision makers by influencing the decisions of the competent authority of the organisation. They also reflected this notion by explaining such variations among decision makers in light of the competent authorities' lack of will to carry out their responsibilities in nominating successors.

The data analysis also highlighted several context-related factors to explain variations among decision-makers. On the macro level, the interviewees emphasised the Civil Service Law. Most often, the interviewees related such variations to this law, which has made different appointing authorities (the Minister, H.H. the Prime Minister or H.M the King) responsible for the different executive levels (below director level, director level and above the director level). In addition, the top management and HRM representatives highlighted the imprecision in the civil service

regulations and the legislation gap regarding succession process procedures. The interviewees argued that this law had failed to establish a standard procedure for executing the process.

On the organisational level, the interviewees did not highlight any one specific factor. However, the data analysis indicated that varying procedures had been adopted in these organisations. Specifically, the HRM representatives illustrated different decision-making procedures, which varied in terms of the degree of centralisation and of participation in collective decision making, and the extent to which the stakeholders were involved. It is likely that such variations among these different organisations in the adopted procedures have led to variations among the decision makers.

On the positional level, the data analysis highlighted two factors, the first of which is the sensitivity of the position. The data analysis indicated that the more sensitive the position, the more likely that decisions will be made at a higher level. The second and most emphasised position-related factor relates to differences in the nature of the executive jobs. The data analysis suggested that the nature of the executive jobs differs according to three executive levels, namely, above director level, director level, and below director level. According to the interviewees, such differences in the nature of the executive job necessitate shifts in the level of the appointing authority. The interviewees reflected these differences in various ways, for instance, by describing differences in the selection criteria for positions at these three executive levels. The higher the level of the executive job the broader the scope of the selection criteria, and therefore, the higher the appointing authority. Alternatively, the lower the level of the executive job, the more specialised the selection criteria. Thus, in such cases, the succession decision would involve those who are most capable of evaluating the candidates' capabilities, namely, their direct superiors. Nevertheless, the representatives of top management reflected these differences in the nature of the job in terms of the status of the executive job and the consequences for organisational performance. The higher the status of the job the more significant are the role and the consequences; hence, appointment decisions have to be made at a higher level.

7.4.2 Variations in the Type of Successor

The internal stakeholders' responses also showed general agreement regarding variations among the successors in terms of being recognised as heir apparent successors by the organisations' staffs. The interviewees provided several cases highlighting such variations among the successors, and their explanations highlighted stakeholder-related and context-related factors.

The data analysis highlighted three stakeholder-related factors. The first factor is the power of the predecessor (or the office incumbent) to support/hinder the development, and therefore the recognition, of one of his/her subordinates as an heir apparent successor. The second factor is the availability of an appropriate successor, which would increase the likelihood of recognising him/her as an heir apparent successor before the announcement of his/her appointment. The third factor is the management style of the head of the organisation, in terms of how they plan the succession process, prepare and identify candidates to assume executive positions.

In addition, the data analysis highlighted several context-related factors. Specifically, on the macro level, the data analysis highlighted three factors. The first and most emphasised factor is the Civil Service Law. In their explanations, the interviewees, most often, pointed to gaps in the civil service legislation, regarding specific mechanisms for selecting successors. Some of the interviewees argued that a successor would be identified and recognised ahead of time, if the length of tenure for an executive position was determined by the civil service regulations. Moreover, some of the interviewees related the variation among the successors to the different appointing authorities for the different executive levels.

The second macro level factor, highlighted by the top management interviewees, was the government's concern with respecting religious sects and preserving gender balance. Such concerns are often discussed behind closed doors, thus, these concerns may delay the identification of the successors and increase the variation among the successors. The third macro level factor was the intervention and pressure from politicians (representatives of Al-Nuwab Council) to appoint their nominees, who could well be unknown to the organisational staff. Such political intervention and pressure could consequently make the appointment of an heir apparent successor less likely.

On the organisational level, the interviewees' responses highlighted three factors. The first and most emphasised factor was the different procedures adopted by various public sector organisations for executing the succession process. The representatives of the top management and the executive class employees both argued that differences in terms of planning the process, preparing the second line of executives, and the level of centralisation and transparency of the decisions could contribute to variations in recognising heir apparent successors. The second factor is organisational performance, highlighted by the top management representatives. In poorly performing organisations, outsider successors are more likely to replace office incumbents. In such cases, these outsider successors are not recognised as heir apparent successors, and thus, poor performance may increase variation among the successors. The third factor was the concern about the reaction of organisation's staff to the identification of the successor, prior to the announcement of the appointment decision. The data analysis indicated that such concerns meant that, in some cases, the identification of the successor would be delayed until the appointment decision was finalised and announced, to avoid negative reactions from the organisational staff and the intrusion of external influences. However, in other cases, such concerns may encourage the organisation's top management to leak news about the consideration of certain individuals for executive positions, to test the reactions of their staff.

On the positional level, the data analysis highlighted one factor. The interviewees emphasised the differences in the nature of the executive jobs, which may facilitate/hinder the recognition of heir apparent successors. According to the interviewees, due to the differences in job requirements heir apparent successors are more likely to be recognised for positions below director level and for positions that require specific professional knowledge.

7.4.3 Variations in the Formality of the Succession Process

The data analysis revealed a consensus in the internal stakeholders' responses regarding the variations in the formality of the process on the basis of stakeholder-related and context-related factors.

The internal stakeholder subgroups emphasised one factor in particular relating to formality: the management style of the head of the organisation. The interviewees claimed that the head of the organisation determines the internal procedures for executing the succession process, which in turn determines the level of formality in terms of documentation and following prescribed procedures.

In addition, the data analysis highlighted five factors on the contextual level. Specifically, on the macro level, the interviewees stressed the legislation gap in the Civil Service Law regarding standard procedures for executing the process. On the organisational level, the data analysis revealed three factors, the first being the various procedures adopted by public organisations to execute the succession process. In some organisations, prescribed procedures were followed that were communicated via formal means within those organisations. However, in other organisations this was not the case. The second factor is the culture of the organisation, in terms of the acceptability of the level of formality of the procedures that have been adopted for executing the process. The third factor is the organisation's size. The larger the organisation, the more bureaucratic the adopted internal procedures, and thus, the greater the formality of the succession process. The last context-related factor is at the positional level. The data analysis revealed that due to the sensitivity of certain information related to the succession process, informal means are sometimes utilised to communicate this information, which in turn, reduces the formality of the succession process.

7.4.4 Variations in the Transparency of the Succession Process

A consensus was found among the interviewees that supported the quantitative findings regarding the variations in the transparency of the process. The interviewees supplied supporting illustrations based on their work experiences. Furthermore, in their explanations for such variations, the interviewees highlighted several stakeholder-related and context-related factors.

With regard to the stakeholder-related factors, the data analysis highlighted two factors, which were both related to the head of the organisation. The first factor was the management style of the head of the organisation, as this determines the procedures used to execute the succession process as well as the level of transparency and information symmetry. The second factor was the power of

the head of the organisation to conceal the process to avoid being questioned by other stakeholders until the successor appointment was finalised.

In addition, the data analysis highlighted five context-related factors. On the macro level, the interviewees highlighted the Civil Service Law and the failure of this legislation to specify standard procedures for executing the succession process. The other three factors were on the organisational level. The first related to the various procedures adopted for executing the succession process, whilst the second involved the top management's concerns about the reactions of the organisational staff. In some cases, these concerns may result in the process being made less transparent to avoid arousing negative reactions to the disclosure of the candidates under consideration for the positions. In other cases, the organisation's top management may leak information to test the reactions among their staff. The third factor involves the culture of the organisation, which determines the organisational norm regarding information symmetry and openness in executing the process. The last context-related factor revealed by the data analysis was on the positional-level and indicated that the sensitivity of the position, as perceived by the decision makers, is a key issue. The more the sensitive the position is, in terms of importance and consequence of the appointment of incompetent individuals, the lower the odds are that the succession process will be executed overtly.

7.4.5 The impact of the State's Reform Project on the Succession Process

The data analysis revealed a consensus in the representatives of the internal stakeholder subgroups regarding the impact of the state's reform project on the succession process. In general, the data analysis stressed the impact of emerging powers (i.e. political associations) on the transparency and accountability of the process. As well, it highlighted the trend to empower women to assume leading positions in public sector organisations, which became more common after the launch of the reform project and the establishment of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW).

One of the new emerging powers, established under the state's reform project and which has had an impact on the succession process, is the representatives' council, Al-Nuwab Council. Under its auspices, the formation of political associations was approved and they became part of the

legislative authority, which monitors the performance of the executive authority (the government). The data analysis indicated that these political associations have influenced the succession process on two levels via their representatives on the Al-Nuwab Council. On the surface, these associations have enhanced the accountability and transparency in the process by becoming, in effect, external stakeholders who are concerned about the appropriateness of appointing the right individuals to the right positions. Yet, below the surface, these political associations also appeared to strive to take advantage of their political powers on the council to gain more power by appointing successors who are affiliated with their organisations.

In addition, due to the reform project efforts to increase civil society involvement in public sector decision making, civil society organisations, specifically professional associations, have become more involved in the succession process. The increase in transparency and freedom of speech has enabled these professional associations to monitor and speak out regarding their concerns and interests in the succession process. Some are trying to take on the role of trade unions by representing professional practitioners in the public sector. On the other hand, such associations have been accused of adopting political agendas and aligning themselves with certain political associations.

Moreover, due to the raising of the ceiling of freedom of speech, the press and social media are now playing an increasingly important role in the succession process. The press have more freedom to monitor, report and criticise government decisions regarding the appointments of executive employees. Furthermore, they can market certain individuals as appropriate candidates for executive positions, whilst the press and social media in general can also raise doubts about the appropriateness of other individuals assuming executive positions.

In light of the abovementioned increments in the accountability of the succession process, the government appears to have become more concerned about enhancing its role in monitoring and regulating the succession process. The data analysis revealed that such enhanced role enhancement had indeed materialised and the government had subsequently influenced/was influencing the succession process in three aspects. First is the new approach to public sector administration based on the “2030 Vision” for the government and its strategic initiatives and key performance

indicators. The second aspect is the government's efforts to enact a new system governing the succession process. The third aspect is the empowerment of certain governmental bodies (such as the National Auditing Court and the Civil Service Bureau) and the establishment of others (such as the Administrative Control Directorate in the Civil Service Bureau and the Bahrain Institute for Public Administration) to monitor and control succession processes in the public sector.

Lastly, the data analysis highlighted a trend for empowering women to assume leading positions in public sector organisations, which became more evident after the launch of the reform project and the establishment of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW). The interviewees affirmed this notion and highlighted the SCW's efforts to portray women as potential candidates for executive positions, as well as encouraging public organisations to promote women's representation in leading positions.

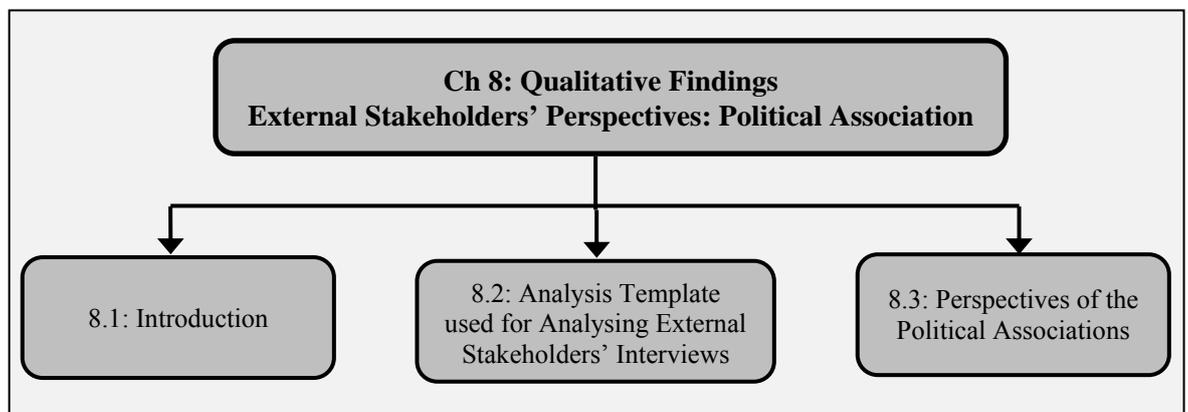
CHAPTER 8 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES: POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the qualitative data collected to reflect the perspectives of the political associations is analysed. The data analysis strived to identify the influential factors acting upon the succession process by exploring the external stakeholders' claims and interests in the succession process and the means by which these stakeholders realise such claims and interests.

The structure of the current chapter is illustrated in Figure 8-1. Following this introductory section, the second presents the final analysis template used to analyse the external stakeholders' responses. Then, the third section presents the perspectives of political associations that verify and explain the reported variations in the succession process.

FIGURE 8-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 8



8.2 ANALYSIS TEMPLATE USED FOR ANALYSING EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' INTERVIEWS

After several iterations, during which the nodes and sub-nodes that were used to code the external stakeholder representatives' responses were revised, the analysis template was finalised. The final analysis template, which was used to analyse the responses of the representatives of the external stakeholder organisations, consisted of three themes.

The first theme focused on coding interviewees' responses to highlight their claims and interests in the succession process for executive positions in the public sector. This theme comprised two nodes. The first node was for coding the interviewees' responses regarding the extent to which they perceived such succession processes in the public sector as important issue for their association. This node was labelled as Urgency of Claims and was designed to include three sub-nodes, namely, the perceived importance, the time sensitivity and the justification for such perceived importance. The second node focused on coding the specific stake of the stakeholder in the succession process, in terms of whether the stakeholder is concerned about who should be the successor, how the succession process should be executed or where the succession process should be executed.

The second theme of the analysis template focused on coding the responses of the interviewees to highlight the means they employ to realise their claims and interests in the succession process. By differentiating these means based on their aims, the researcher was able to code this theme under five nodes, where each node categorised a set of mechanisms that share similar aims. These nodes were for coding responses that highlighted mechanisms employed to influence the availability of the successor, overthrow the office incumbent, influence the succession decisions, override the decisions of the decision-makers and alter the succession process framework. In addition, another node was specified under this theme to code interviewees' remarks about the issues related to the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

The last theme focused on exploring the reciprocal interactions between the various stakeholders and the organisational context, in their effort to realise their claims and interests in the succession process. This theme included four nodes; the first two were for coding interviewees' responses to highlight who they interact with and how they describe these interactions (cooperation or competition). The other two nodes were for coding interviewees' responses regarding their interactions with context-related issues and the nature of these interactions (coping with/amending the context). For further details about the analysis template, refer to Appendix C-2.

8.3 THE PERSPECTIVES OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

To reflect the perspectives of the political associations regarding their claims and interests in the succession process as well as regarding the mechanisms employed to realise such claims and interests, the researcher interviewed three politicians. These politicians were from three different parliament blocs representing major political orientations in the Nuwab Council of 2002, 2006 and 2010. In the following subsections, the responses of the politicians interviewed are presented and analysed. The section is divided into three subsections according to the themes of the final analysis template used for analysing external stakeholders' responses. As illustrated earlier, these themes were stakeholders' claims and interests in the succession process, stakeholders' mechanisms to realise their claims in the succession process and the reciprocal interactions between the various stakeholders and the organisational context.

8.3.1 Politicians' Claims and Interests in the Succession Process

8.3.1.1 The Urgency of the Politicians' Claims

The analysis showed an agreement in the politicians' responses which highlighted the perceived importance of the succession processes. For example, one interviewee asserted this by describing the succession process as "A fundamental topic" on his political bloc's agenda. Another interviewee affirmed this notion by stating, "The issue is very important, not only to me, but also for the (name was omitted) Bloc."

As justifications for such perceived importance, the data analysis highlights three arguments used by the politicians interviewed. The first argument was based on the need for replacing poorly-performing executives in governmental organisations. One politician stressed this argument and stated:

"Eight years is enough time for any minister to plan and execute his programs. If the minister was not able to complete his programs in eight years, then he is not capable to produce. This is also the case for a director, or any position in the executive bodies."

The second argument for the perceived importance of the succession process is based on the need for the introduction of new blood in the executive body to cope with changes and emerging needs. Specifically, the interviewees highlighted the need for new executives who recognize the changing

role of the government in the current reform era. For instance, one politician justified having the succession processes as one of his bloc's priorities by stressing the emerging need for new blood in the executive body due to the political changes taking place in Bahrain. He noted, "Changing the blood in public organisations is a necessity. This is an extremely important action as we are undergoing a transitional period."

The third justification of the perceived importance of the succession process highlighted what these politicians considered as drawbacks in the existing succession process system. These politicians claimed that the existing regulating system for executing the succession process has many pitfalls that allow abuse in the authority, such as the involvement of personal interests. This in turn hinders the appointment of the right individuals to the right positions. As put by one politician:

"The importance of the succession emerges because we believe it should be based on institutional framework rather than on personal interests or Wasta. We believe that succession processes, and the identification of the successor, must be based on institutional basis, especially for high levels in the state ... In some cases these mechanisms [for executing the succession process and selecting the successor] are not accurate and subject to matters which lead to the appointment of the inappropriate successors."

8.3.1.2 Politicians' Stakes in the Succession Process

Despite the three arguments used by the politicians interviewed to justify the perceived importance of the succession process, the data analysis suggested that politicians were more concerned about "who should be the successor" than any other aspect of the succession process. As stated by one politician, "Above all, we are much concerned with the potential candidate for this position, qualifications and traits, and ability to handle this job." The politicians' concerns with "who should be the successor" are also clear in the output of the Matrix Coding Query illustrated in Table 8-1 in the following page.

TABLE 8-1: POLITICIANS' STAKES IN THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

	Node 1.2: Stakeholders' Stake in the Succession Process
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	Node 1.21: Who should be the Successor	Node 1.22: How the succession was executed	Node 1.23: Where is the succession process taking place
Political Association 1	20	1	4
Political Association 2	6	3	3
Political Association 3	11	1	2
Total	37	5	9

Specifically, the data analysis indicates that politicians are more concerned about the criteria for selecting successors. For example, one of the interviewed politicians stated:

“Our efforts in addressing this issue focused on the establishment of criteria and standards to identify the right person rather than the development of the mechanisms to search for the right person”.

Moreover, among the various criteria highlighted by the politicians interviewed is the successor’s understanding and ability to facilitate the politicians’ work in the parliament. As put by one politician:

“Yet, it is very important for us that these who hold such positions are competent employees who have a sound political background and an in-depth knowledge about the role and the jurisdictions of the parliament as well knowledge about the job of the parliament members.”

Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that whenever the interviewees referred to the way in which the succession process is executed, the focal point was the need for establishing clear and appropriate successor selection criteria. For example, one politician stated:

“Therefore, when I said institutional framework, we want the succession process to be based on a regulating framework, so the one who is placed in any position would satisfy the legal requirements specified by the regulating framework and he is, actually, the right person for this sensitive position.”

Another politician expressed minor concerns with the way in which the succession process is executed (in response to whether or not his bloc is concerned with who is appointed to executive positions) by stating:

“We are not paying much attention to the appointment process itself ... These matters fall within the competence of the CSB and the competent ministry, and there should be a careful selection for key posts as well as choosing the right person for the right place.”

In addition to their concerns with the successor selection criteria, the analysis also showed that the interviewees were concerned about succession processes in certain organisations more than in others. Specifically, the interviewees showed more concerns about those organisations that provide direct and essential services for the citizens, such as the Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. As a justification, the interviewees highlighted their need to have cooperative relationships with the executives in such organisations to facilitate their work in the parliament. One of interviewees explained this notion by stating:

“For example, health, housing, and education sectors are closely related to Al-Nuwab Council. And thus, the succession process in these institutions is a greater concern, especially in terms of the cooperation of officials, whether those who are assuming these positions or those who follow them in their positions, with the legislative authorities and Al-Nuwab Council.”

Another interviewed politician affirmed this idea and highlighted the perceived importance of such organisations for the political blocs by stating, “The outcome of our work and cooperation with such organisations not only benefits the public but is also obvious and visible”.

8.3.2 Politicians' Mechanisms to realise their Claims and Interests

8.3.2.1 Politicians' involvement in the succession process

The analysis of the interviewees' responses indicated that, despite the politicians' limited jurisdictions to be directly involved in succession process matters in the executive body, they were heavily involved. The underlying argument for justifying the politicians' involvement was based on their role as a monitoring authority over the executive body. The interviewees argued that their monitoring role is of a political nature, which is concerned with the performance of the political leadership of these governmental organisations (the ministers). Nonetheless, according to the interviewees, the succession process of executive employees is a matter that relates to their work in

the parliament since the performance of those executives is reflected in the performance of the organisations' political leadership. As put by one politician:

“In conclusion, the position of the minister is a political one, but what is the primary administrative position in a ministry, it is the Undersecretary ... So, we deal politically with the minister but technically, we indirectly deal with the Undersecretaries of the ministries.”

8.3.2.2 Mechanisms employed by politicians to realise their claims and interests

The data analysis revealed that the politicians interviewed have the power to influence the succession processes in governmental organisations. Furthermore, the analysis highlighted several mechanisms employed by the interviewees to realise their claims and preserve their interests. These mechanisms were divided into four categories based on the underlying aims of these mechanisms. Specifically, the data analysis highlighted four types of mechanisms employed by the politicians, as it is shown in Table 8-2. Namely, these categories are: (1) mechanisms aimed to overthrow the office incumbent, (2) mechanisms aimed to influence the decision-makers' decisions, (3) mechanisms aimed to override the decisions of the decision-makers, and (4) mechanisms aimed to alter the succession process framework.

TABLE 8-2: POLITICIANS' MECHANISMS TO REALISE THEIR CLAIMS AND INTERESTS

	Node 2: Stakeholders' mechanisms to realise their claims			
	Node 2.2: Mechanisms aimed to overthrow the office incumbent	Node 2.3: Mechanisms aimed to influence the decision-makers	Node 2.4: Mechanisms aimed to override the decision-makers' decisions	Node 2.5: Mechanisms aimed to alter the succession process framework
Political Association 1	14	6	0	5
Political Association 2	4	7	1	13
Political Association 3 ¹	1	10	0	1
Total	19	23	1	19

For each category, the analysis highlighted one or more mechanisms employed by the interviewees.

More light is shed in the parts that follow.

8.3.2.3 Mechanisms Aimed to Overthrow the Office Incumbent:

¹ The interviewee discussed sensitive information which he preferred not to be recorded nor used in the research; and this may explain the relative limited responses coded at these particular nodes.

With these mechanisms, politicians influence the succession process by overthrowing specific office incumbents, thereby creating a need for a successor. The data analysis showed that the politicians interviewed bring attention to poor-performing office incumbents in governmental organisations, which consequently may lead to their overthrow. In line with this finding, the data analysis highlighted the politicians' role as a monitoring authority over the executive body as a justification used by the politicians interviewed for the employment of such mechanisms. As put by one politician:

“My work is successful when I am able to judge whether this person is fit for this job or not. ... When I point to corruption in a specific ministry and accuse the minister himself proving that he is inefficient, thus, I may achieve my objective in a direct way. ... In this case, the minister faces political accusation; and may be when he reviews the issue, he finds out that there are imperfections in the job performance of the undersecretaries, undersecretary assistants, or heads of departments. This is also possible, and it is another way to bring in change and replace the undersecretary and the minister.”

Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the politicians may employ their parliament instruments to call attention to poor-performing executives with the intention to overthrow the office incumbents. For example, politicians may submit questions to, form inquiry committees or interrogate competent ministers about their performance or that of their subordinates. As put by one politician:

“The summary of mechanisms employed with regard to the succession process ... we use parliamentary tools that start with the submission of a question to the competent minister ... Moreover, we have used another tool which is forming an inquiry committee to some of the violations committed by some officials in the ministries and the institutions of the state. Sometimes we use the last tool which is the interrogation. These are the mechanisms which are implemented via Al-Nuwab Council.”

Moreover, the data analysis indicated that members of political blocs may use these parliamentary instruments purposefully to overthrow the office incumbent regardless of his/her performance. For

example, one of the politicians highlighted the effort of a political bloc to overthrow an office incumbent. He stated:

“For example, (name of the political bloc was omitted) points out, charges and accuses the person and insists on his dismissal ... For example, when they went after the minister of (name of the ministry was omitted) at the beginning of the 2002 term ... It seemed that it was intended act against the minister and purposefully prepared.”

Despite the limited jurisdictions of the legislative authority over the executive authority regarding the appointment or the dismissal of executive employees, the data analysis indicated that mechanisms aimed to overthrow the office incumbent were effective and succeeded in overthrowing executives. For example, one politician affirmed this notion in highlighting their contribution to the replacement of poor-performing office incumbents by stating:

“To achieve these objectives though we lack the changing instruments, as I said, it is in the hand of the leaders such as ministers, undersecretaries, undersecretary assistants. However, we had contributed to change and replaced certain employees in an indirect way. We did that via the King. The King replaced those individuals whom we pointed out to be not fit for this position, the ministry and the King acted accordingly. ... This is one of the instruments used to bring change and replace someone.”

The data analysis indicated that these parliamentary instruments employed to overthrow an office incumbent go through two stages. In the first stage, politicians mobilise their efforts to build the case against specific office incumbents. While in the second stage politicians strive to push the competent authority of the executive body to adopt their recommendations.

In order for these parliamentary instruments to be effective in overthrowing office incumbents, the data analysis indicated that politicians must meet three conditions. These conditions were: (1) they must present a strong case against the office incumbent; (2) they must gain the support of their peers in the council and (3) they must convince the executive authority officials who appointed the office incumbent that they should be dismissed.

8.3.2.4 Mechanisms Aimed to Influence the Decision-Makers' Decisions

The data analysis highlighted three mechanisms employed by the politicians interviewed aimed to influence the decision-makers' decisions – most often regarding the selection of the successors. As shown in the output of the Matrix Coding Query illustrated in Table 8-3, these three mechanisms are Consultation, Persuasion and Pressuring. Each of these mechanisms is presented in the following parts.

Table 8-3: Politicians' Mechanisms to Influence the Decisions of the Decision-Makers

	Node 2.3: Mechanisms aimed to influence the decisions of the decision-makers		
	Node 2.31: Consultation	Node 2.32: Persuasion	Node 2.34: Pressuring
Political Association 1	3	3	0
Political Association 2	3	3	1
Political Association 3	0	1	9
Total	6	7	10

8.3.2.4.1 Consultation:

In this mechanism, the politicians provide the decision-makers with their recommendations regarding the appointment of specific executive positions based on the request of the decision-makers themselves. For instance, one politician stated:

“Sometimes, the political leadership asks us to nominate names for certain positions and we provide the names; and then the political leadership will choose the person that is appropriate. Therefore, the consultation reached a level where the leadership itself asks for nominations.”

As a justification for the employment of the consultation mechanism, the politicians interviewed argued that this mechanism is employed based on invitation by the competent authority itself. As put by one of the politicians:

“Exactly, if his royal highness the king has not encouraged us to take this step nor did the prime minister, crown prince, and other executives such as the ministers, etc, we would not dare to proceed and take further steps.”

8.3.2.4.2 Persuasion:

The data analysis highlighted persuasion as another mechanism used by the interviewees to influence the decision-makers. In this mechanism, the politicians strive to convince the decision-makers to adopt their point of view regarding the improperness of an office incumbent (as it has been illustrated earlier) or, and most frequently, regarding the appointment of a successor. For example, one politician reported (in response to how they address the issue of succession process):

“Sometimes it is heard that succession processes were carried out in the state’s organisations and you find the individuals who have been appointed to leading positions are incompetent. This matter is addressed and discussed. Then, it will be conveyed via the formal channels which (name of the political bloc was omitted) has with state officials to explain our viewpoints. ... Sometimes we nominate names to the decision-makers in relation to positions, which are expected to go under changes or through succession processes. Then the political leadership makes the decision whether this person is appropriate or not; nonetheless, this is one of the mechanisms employed.”

To persuade the competent authority, the data analysis revealed that politicians utilise means other than those facilitated in the parliament. Specifically, politicians utilised their direct links with the competent authorities to convince them of their point of view. As reported by one politician:

“Sometimes we use a mechanism outside the parliament, which is based on the direct communication with the top official in the organisation or the ministry. For example, contacting the minister directly and sitting with them to discuss how to appoint the right person with regard to the succession processes and the vacant positions.”

In addition, another politician highlighted the utilisation of direct links with the various levels of the executive authorities by stating:

“Well, in such case the instruments will be our maintained strong and friendly relationship with leaders, the top leader. Besides, we also maintain strong friendly relationship with the prime minister, ministers, undersecretaries, and even heads of departments. We maintain our strong and friendly relationship with them.”

As a justification for the utilisation of the mechanism of persuasion, one politician highlighted the sensitivity of the issues, which makes it inappropriate to discuss matters publicly in the parliament.

He stated:

“As I said before we have other instruments, and I have to say that they are effective and consistently produce successful results as some issues cannot be tackled publicly nor can be tackled in the parliament.”

8.3.2.4.3 Pressuring:

In this mechanism, politicians influence the decision makers' decisions by negotiating political deals for the appointment of specific individuals or face hardship in the parliament. However, the data analysis showed that this mechanism was only explicitly stressed by one politician in his accusations against the improper use of power by other political bloc members to influence the succession process. According to this politician, this is the most aggressive mechanism employed by the politicians to influence the decision-makers. He stated:

“We are talking about the big blocs putting pressures on the ministers ... More than one person who has been nominated, well-known and qualified individual are overlooked for the position; and when you ask why, they say that the other was supported by this association or that association. ... So, when they go to a minister, as a group of seven or eight representatives, asking for specific person to be the ministry Undersecretary. What could he say to them? This is the pressuring mechanism. Some of the ministers talk about these pressures to us. (Name of a political bloc was omitted) is more aggressive; appoint this for us or else we will take this file to the council.”

According to the same interviewee, political blocs negotiate such political deals to preserve their interests in these organisations. He stated, “They do not put it as abuse of power; they say we protect our people. Nonetheless, this is an abuse of power.” Furthermore, the interviewee affirmed that the size of the political blocs in the parliament determines their negotiation powers. He stated, “The bigger the bloc the more influence they have.” Moreover, the interviewee explained that such a mechanism is limited to the ministry level, as politicians do not employ such mechanisms with the political leadership (i.e. H.H the Prime Minister and H.M. the King) by noting:

“These personal connections and political bargaining powers are happening on the ministerial level directly with the minister; the Prime Minister and Royal court are not involved and they may lack the knowledge about these issues which take place under the table; especially with those ministers who committed violations.”

As it is cited in the above-mentioned statement, according to the interviewee, political blocs take advantage of some of the ministers to influence their decisions concerning who to appoint to executive positions. In addition, the interviewee stressed the role of insider informers in providing information for these political blocs to strengthen their negotiation position. The interviewee explained how the politicians get the information needed to bargain with the decision-makers by stating, “Political associations have their own people in all places. They have their members, advocates and those whom they have mutual benefits with.”

8.3.2.5 Mechanisms Aimed to Override the Decision-Makers' Decisions

The data analysis indicated that politicians may seek the involvement of executive authorities at a higher level than the succession process decision-makers to override the latter's decisions. For example, one politician highlighted his bloc's efforts to seek the involvement of the CSB to override the decisions of the decision-makers by stating:

“The third way is via sitting with the minister concerned with the civil service, which oversees the operations of appointments and successions in all ministries of the state, in the case where we have essential comments about vacant positions or in the expectations of appointments of certain individuals.”

8.3.2.6 Mechanisms aimed to Alter the Succession Process Framework

With these mechanisms, politicians aim to change the way in which the succession process is carried out. Specifically, they employ what the parliament provides them with in the way of legislative instruments to establish new succession process frameworks and regulating systems. Politicians have two mechanisms to establish such new regulating systems. The first mechanism is submitting motions to the government concerning specific issues related to the succession process, such as setting selection criteria for executive positions. For example, one politician stated:

“We have submitted a motion to the government between the first legislative and second legislative term, for the establishment of clear standards with regard to the middle positions, including undersecretary, undersecretary assistant and director positions.”

The second mechanism employed by the politicians to amend the way in which the succession process is carried out is to pass regulating acts, which may consequently have effects on specific issues related to the succession process. For example, politicians strived to pass an Antidiscrimination Act, which might consequently influence recruitment in the public sector and employees' career advancement. As put by one politician:

“The direct way is focusing on how to regulate the succession process. ... And if you are asking how we want to go about to implement the succession, we submit the project for regulating the succession process and to place it in a legal framework. ... It was part of the Antidiscrimination Act, which stressed the qualifications, experiences and competencies as basis for succession processes and appointments.”

8.3.3 Politicians' Interactions with various Stakeholders and Organisational Context

8.3.3.1 Politicians' Interactions with Key Stakeholders

The data analysis highlighted various stakeholders with whom the interviewed politicians interacted in their involvement with the succession process. Furthermore, the data analysis showed that the politicians highlighted most of all their interactions with their peer politicians in the parliament, political leadership and government officials. This finding correlates with an earlier finding which emphasised the intensity with which politicians employ those mechanisms aimed to influence the decision-makers' decisions (concerning selecting a successor or dismissing an office incumbent) and to alter the succession process framework.

For example, politicians interacted with the country's top leadership, represented by H.M. the King, H.H. the Prime Minister and H.H. the Crown Prince, concerning succession process issues.

As put by one politician:

“I may say we were wiser and pursued other parties from outside the parliament such as various sectors of the executive authority. Those who are keen to bring change for the sake

and interest of the whole country whether it is about (name of the organisation was omitted) or any other entity.”

Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the nature of these interactions between politicians and top political leadership is a cooperative one. For instance, one politician stated:

“I personally believe that the legislative council is cooperating with H.M. the King, and this is well known. ... When the performance of any minister is brought to question and our credibility has been proven ... we provide a documented evidence for H.M. the king for the purpose of bringing changes. These changes were mainly caused by the efforts of the parliament.”

With regard to the competent authorities at the organisational level, the data analysis indicated that politicians interacted with officials within these organisations at various hierarchical levels. This notion was reflected in the citations presented earlier to illustrate the persuasion mechanisms. The nature of these interactions varies from cooperation to competition over succession process issues. For example, the data analysis showed earlier how politicians use information provided by affiliated insiders to build up their cases in the parliament to overthrow specific office incumbents in these organisations. Additionally, the data analysis illustrated the competitiveness involved in the negotiations taking place between politicians and competent authorities in these organisations regarding succession process issues, such as the appointment of politicians' nominees at specific executive positions.

The data analysis also indicated that politicians interacted with various external stakeholders such as governmental organisations other than those organisations where succession processes are taking place. Specifically, the interviewees highlighted the CSB and the National Authority for Auditing and Administrative Control. In such interaction, politicians cooperated with the officials in these organisations to satisfy mutual interests regarding succession process issues.

In addition to the politicians' interactions with the aforementioned key stakeholders, the data analysis showed earlier that politicians interact among themselves in the parliament, as blocs, in coordinating their efforts to overthrow specific office incumbents. Politicians may also compete

against each other when their interests in the succession process clash. For example, politicians compete to appoint their nominees in the consultation mechanism, as the political leadership is presented with several nominees for the same executive positions, where each nominee is nominated by a different political bloc. As put by one politician:

“I mentioned earlier that we may approach the leadership nominating the names; however, on many occasions, the leadership asks us to nominate names, in order to be discussed along with other nominations from other parties.”

Furthermore, the data analysis showed extensive interaction between the interviewed politicians and the members of organisations that are affiliated with their political associations (such as their associations' social and charitable wings) regarding succession process issues. As put by one politician:

“As a matter of fact, “X” (the name of the charitable association was omitted) association is the charitable and social wing of “Y” (the name of the political association was omitted) association; and “Y” association is the political wing of “X” association. ... For example, if the political leadership asked us to nominate the names for certain positions, we consult them ... saying that there is a vacant position, which requires these criteria, is there someone who satisfies these conditions? So, the nominations are put forward to “Y” which then, “Y” works on these names and present these names to the political leadership in the case when they ask us for the nominations.”

The data analysis also highlighted limited interaction between the politicians interviewed and media organisations, more precisely the press, regarding succession process issues. The nature of such interactions was also reported to be varying based on the orientations and stakes of these press organisations. As one politician explained:

“Well, regarding the press I would say that each newspaper has its own affiliation and political trend. Perhaps, I may find X newspaper supportive if I criticize a minister or the performance of a specific entity whereas Y and Z are against me.”

8.3.3.2 Politicians' Interactions with Key Context-Related Factors:

The data analysis indicated that the politicians interviewed, in their efforts to realise their claims and preserve their interests in the succession process, may interact with various factors existing in and emerging from the organisations' context. Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the interviewees interacted with these factors on three organisational context levels, namely: macro-level, organisational-level and positional-level. The following parts illustrate the analysis of these interactions with key factors according to their organisational context level.

8.3.3.2.1 Interactions with Key Factors on the Macro Level:

Noticeably, the interviewees' responses emphasised the politicians' interactions with the factors on the macro level. The data analysis highlighted several factors, which the interviewed politicians interacted with in their involvement in the succession process. In general, these factors emerge from: (1) the current political status in Bahrain, (2) the Bahraini social norms and (3) the existing system regulating the succession process in the public sector. The nature of the politicians' interactions with such factors varies from coping with the context to attempting to alter it. Yet, the data analysis revealed that most of these interactions on the macro level were of an adaptive nature.

With regard to politicians' interactions with factors emerging from the current political status, the data analysis revealed that politicians often cope with such factors. For example, politicians cope with their voters' pressures regarding certain voter-valued governmental services; and thus, the politicians focus more on succession processes taking place in the organisations that provide a service in order to facilitate meeting their voters' demands. As put by one politician:

“For example, if I work with any of the ministries offering services to citizens, I would add any additional service provided to the community to the list of my accomplishment. The people know that it was me who proposed this or passed this bill.”

A second example of coping with the voters' pressures is the politicians' responses to the voters' complaints against poor-performing executives, which may lead to the overthrow of specific office incumbents in these organisations. As stated by one politician:

“Some individuals arrived at sensitive positions while they are not appropriate and therefore, the [public’s] complaints on these institutions have increased.”

With regard to politicians’ interactions with factors emerging from the Bahraini social norms (i.e. Wasta), the data analysis indicated that, despite their political rhetoric, politicians most often cope with such factors. As illustrated earlier, the politicians interviewed deplored and condemned favouritism in general, which they identified as one of the setbacks in the current succession processes. However, the data analysis revealed that politicians cope with such social pressures and practice such favouritism. For example, politicians’ favouritism is reflected in their nominations for executive positions, which were based on the nominees’ political affiliations. Another example is illustrated in the following statement provided by one of the politicians:

“They [other political blocs] want their people even if they do not possess the needed qualifications, they convey them today for future benefits”.

With regard to politicians’ interaction with factors emerging from the existing system regulating the succession process, the data analysis revealed that the interviewed politicians interacted with the existing Civil Service Law. In such interactions, the politicians strived to amend law, as it was illustrated earlier, either by directly altering the existing regulations (such as establishing new successor selection criteria); or by legislating new acts which consequently may have an impact on the succession process (such as the Antidiscrimination Act).

8.3.3.2.2 Interactions with Key Factors on the Organisational Level:

Even though most of the interviewees’ responses highlight interactions with context-related factors on the macro level, the data analysis revealed that the politicians interviewed interact with two factors on the organisational level. The first factor is the organisation’s performance. As it has been illustrated earlier, politicians’ involvements in overthrowing certain office incumbents appeared to be influenced by the performance of the subject organisations. In other words, in their involvement in the succession process, the data analysis indicated that politicians appear to employ mechanisms to overthrow those executives in low performing organisations more often than other mechanisms. This notion is affirmed as the interviewees’ responses frequently link such mechanisms to overthrow office incumbent with low organisation performance.

The data analysis highlighted a second organisational level factor, which influences the politicians' involvement in the succession process. This factor was the nature of the relationship between the politicians and the officials representing top management of the governmental organisations. The interviewees affirmed there are variations in the extent to which these officials cooperate with the politicians. For example, one interviewee stated:

“So, if you ask me is there a variation in the level of officials’ cooperation, coordination and collaboration with the legislative authorities and Al-Nuwab Council? I will answer yes. For instance, there are officials who cooperate significantly and respond to every question or correspondence that they received from representative of Al-Nuwab Council, while other officials neglect the questions and they do not, even, respond with positive or negative response.”

8.3.4 Summary of the Political Associations’ Perspective

The data analysis indicates that the politicians interviewed perceived the succession process as an important issue. Their claims and interests appear to be driven by their desires to facilitate their political agendas where they are more often concerned with “who the successor should be” in service-provider governmental organisations. Politicians employ various mechanisms to bring about such claims. These mechanisms are as follows: (1) mechanisms aimed to overthrow specific office incumbents; (2) mechanisms aimed to influence the decision-makers’ decisions; (3) mechanisms aimed to override the decision-makers’ decisions and (4) mechanisms aimed to alter the succession process framework. In their involvement in the succession process, politicians interact with various stakeholders. The nature of such interactions varies pragmatically from cooperation to competition according to the stakeholders’ stance towards politicians’ claims and interests in the succession process. In addition, politicians interact with context-related key factors at the macro (i.e. voters’ pressures, Wasta and the Civil Service Law) and organisational level (i.e. organisational performance, the nature of the relationship between the politician and the organisations top management). The nature of the politicians’ interactions with context-related key factors appears to vary based on the politicians’ power to alter these factors in their interests.

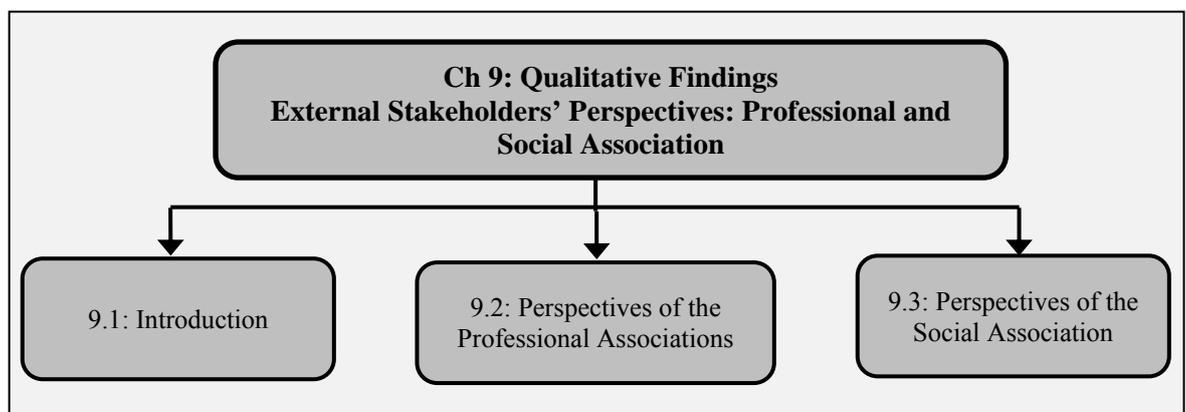
CHAPTER 9 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES: PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The presentation of the qualitative findings continues in this chapter. In this chapter, the analyses of the qualitative data collected to reflect the perspectives of the professional and social associations are presented. The current chapter is divided into two main sections, as shown in Figure 9-1. The first section is dedicated for the analysis of the responses of the interviewees representing professional associations, while the second section is dedicated for the analysis of the responses of the representatives of the social associations. Each section is divided into three subsections according to the themes of the final analysis template used for analysing external stakeholders' responses. As illustrated earlier, these themes were stakeholder's claims and interests in the succession process, stakeholders' mechanisms to realise their claims in the succession process and the reciprocal interactions among the various stakeholders and the organisational context.

FIGURE 9-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 9



9.2 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS' PERSPECTIVES

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the responses of the representatives of the professional associations. The researcher interviewed six officials representing Bahrain Medical Society, Bahrain Nursing Society, The Bahrain Society of Engineers and Bahrain Teacher Society. Out of these six interviewees, four were current presidents of their professional associations while the other two interviewees were former presidents. The need to interview those two former presidents emerged during the course of interviewing the current presidents as some relevant events took place during former terms of presidency. The researcher interviewed former presidents to shed more lights on these events in two specific cases.

The first case involved the current president of one of the professional associations highlighting events in which the association took a strong stand against the performance of a former minister who was in charge of the competent ministry of their profession; which according to the interviewee, contributed to the dismissal of the former minister. Thus, a need to interview the association's former president emerged, to capture the surrounding circumstances.

In the second case, the current president of another professional association mentioned a shift in the attitude of the competent ministry of their profession toward the association with regard to the participation in the executive employees' nominations. Here again it became necessary to interview the former president of the association to understand the reasons behind such shift. In the following subsections, the responses of the interviewed professionals are presented and analysed.

9.2.1 Professionals' Claims and Interests in the Succession Process

9.2.1.1 The Urgency of the Professionals' Claims

The analysis highlighted an agreement in the responses of the interviewed professionals stressing the perceived importance of the succession processes for their professional associations. The interviewees justified such perceived importance by highlighting three arguments. First, they emphasised the links between the associations' strategic goals and succession processes taking

place in the competent ministries related to the associations' professions. For example, one interviewee stated:

“If you would like to study this issue, you should consider the society’s objectives. One of these objectives is to qualify and develop the (profession practitioners) professionally and administratively to be a future leader in the community.”

Another argument used to justify such perceived importance of the succession process related to the professional associations' need to have cooperative relationships with the executives in the competent ministries related to their professions. The interviewed professionals recognised the succession process's potential to facilitate or hinder such desired relationships. As stated by one interviewee:

“Now, are we concerned about it [succession process]? Yes we are. Do we need these executives to be on our side? Yes, we need them because things will be easier in the association if there is coordination between the association and the executives in the ministry.”

The third argument raised to justify the perceived importance of the succession process was based on the need to replace poorly performing and unqualified executives in the ministry. For example, one interviewee stated:

“Of course it is important for us. Well, from our perspective, we think one of the major weak points in the Ministry of (name was omitted) is the executives who are the running the (name of the profession was omitted) process, in general. Unfortunately, we find these key operators are unqualified to manage the (profession) process successfully.”

9.2.1.2 Professionals' Stakes in the Succession Process

The data analysis indicated that the interviewed professionals were more concerned about “who should be the successor” than any other aspect of the succession process. This is clear in the output of the Matrix Coding Query illustrated in Table 9-1.

TABLE 9-1: PROFESSIONALS' STAKES IN THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

	Sub-Node 1.2: Professionals' Stakes in the Succession Process	
	Node 1.21: Who should be the Successor	Node 1.22: How the succession was executed
Professional 1	8	0
Professional 2	6	0
Professional 3	7	1
Professional 4	3	0
Professional 5	14	16
Professional 6	2	0
Total	40	17

Furthermore, the interviewees appeared to be more concerned about the “who should be the successor” in terms of the qualifications and merits of the individual nominated for the position. For example, one interviewee stated (in response to whether his association is more concerned about who assumes the position or the way in which the succession process is executed):

“Well, both points affect the issue; however, we provide our inputs with regard to the important positions whenever we believe it is necessary to convey our viewpoint, we may say that we believe that a specific individual best fits the position. ... However, whenever we hear that a specific individual will be appointed to a position, which we think he is not fit for, we do not hesitate to say that this individual is not appropriate for the position.”

9.2.2 Professionals' Mechanisms to Satisfy their Claims and Interests

9.2.2.1 Professionals' involvement in the succession process

The data analysis revealed that professional associations have limited direct involvement in succession processes issues in terms of the participation in the succession process decisions making. For example, one interviewee stated, “It is very rare that ministry consults us, saying that we want to appoint this individual in this position what do you think? It is very rare.” This notion echoed in the other interviewees' responses.

The data analysis indicated that interviewed professionals presented four justifications to explain such limited involvement in succession process issues. The first justification highlighted the limited

role assigned to civil society organisations and the low public awareness regarding the significance of the civil society organisations. As put by one interviewee:

“Up till now, civil society organisations, which have professional orientations, still have weak influence ... This may be due to certain reasons and conditions including the awareness of the public about the importance of the civil society organisations existence within the community and the awareness of the importance of participating in these organisations. We lack the awareness in both.”

The second justification for such limited involvement in succession process issues was based on the role of the professional associations set by the professionals themselves. For example, one interviewee highlighted the differences between his association's role as a professional association and the role of trade unions to explain their limited involvement in such issues. He stated:

“But we cannot do one thing, we cannot go and impose our will on others saying recruit this and promote that. This is not our duty, and this is not what we are over here for. We are over here to fill gaps and enhance the knowledge of the individuals in order that they became more fit in their own areas ... but we cannot go to the minister and say ‘Hi sir, can you promote this guy because we can see he is fit for the job?’ No, that is not our role neither we can do it.”

A third justification presented by one interviewee highlighted the politics involved in succession processes for executive positions by stating:

“Well, our role will be determined on how we can intervene ... But if we want to, we can present our viewpoints directly or indirectly; however, whatever our viewpoints are we must be very careful as you may stand against this or that.”

Furthermore, due to the degree of politics involved in succession processes, professional associations may lack the ability to unify their members in one standpoint in order to be involved in such issues. One interviewee explained:

“Of course some would be unhappy with the appointment of this or that while others are happy with it, but the association cannot take a stand in such matters; we are only concerned with the general matters of the whole (practitioners) body.”

The fourth and last justification highlighted the difficult relationship between the officials of three professional associations and the top management of the competent ministries¹. These interviewees affirmed there is lack of cooperation and trust in their relationship with the top management in their competent ministries. For example, one interviewee affirmed:

“The ministry always feel that the association, as an independent organisation, is not exactly in a parallel line with what the ministry wants as administrators. Sometimes, some officials in the ministry think that the association should be one of the administrative departments of the ministry. However, we think we are an independent agency rather than a tailing department.”

Nonetheless, the data analysis indicated that before 2002 two of the four professional associations were more involved in the succession processes decisions. In both cases, the data analysis revealed that the two associations and the competent ministries worked in harmony. This harmonious relationship was due to two reasons. First, those who were running the associations were the same individuals assuming top management positions in their ministries. For example, the current president of one of the two associations stated:

“In the past, the leadership of the association was the same executives running the work in the ministry. So, things were running very smoothly, whatever the ministry and association agreed upon or wanted was happening and they got what they wanted.”

The former president of the same association affirmed this notion by stating:

“We who established the association were in the leading (profession’s) positions in the Ministry of (name was omitted) and the leadership in the ministry listened to us. I would describe that period as a honeymoon period for the association and the ministry.”

¹ Further details about such difficult relationships between the professional associations and the top management of the competent ministries are provided in the following sections.

The second reason for such harmony between the professional associations and their competent ministries was the keenness of the associations' officials to adopt a non-clashing strategy. According to the former president of the other association, the association maintained good relationships with the ministry's officials even when conflicts arose. He stated:

“In the past, we were consulted on every matter and action to be taken by the ministry ... There was a strong relation based on cooperation with the state and all its organisations, creating a sort of positive interaction along with a friendly relationship. We do not want to oppose the state, as it is important to keep the state on our side really. In addition, it will be neither in our interest nor in the country's interest to oppose and disagree with them every now and then. Our main objective is positively supporting the country if it is doing the right thing, and we shall legally discuss anything wrong through the right communication channels for the purpose of correcting and reforming it rather than intending to cause propaganda.”

9.2.2.2 Mechanisms employed by Professionals' to satisfy their claims and interests

Despite the professionals' limited involvements, as shown in Table 9-2, the data analysis indicated that they employ various mechanisms in their efforts to satisfy their claims and interests in the succession process. These mechanisms were grouped into five categories as follows: (1) mechanisms aimed to influence the availability of the successors; (2) mechanisms aimed to overthrow the office incumbent; (3) mechanisms aimed to influence the decision makers' decisions; (4) mechanisms aimed to override the decisions of the decision makers; and (5) mechanisms aimed to alter the succession process framework. For each category, the analysis highlighted one or more mechanisms employed by the interviewed politicians. More light is shed in the following parts.

TABLE 9-2: PROFESSIONALS' MECHANISMS TO SATISFY THEIR CLAIMS AND INTERESTS

	Node 2: Mechanisms used by Stakeholders to satisfy their claims				
	Node 2.1: Mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors	Node 2.2: Mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent	Node 2.3: Mechanisms aimed at influencing the decision makers' decisions	Node 2.4: Mechanisms aimed at overriding the decisions of the decision makers	Node 2.5: Mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework
Professional 1	0	2	18	4	0
Professional 2	2	0	19	0	3
Professional 3	3	0	0	0	1
Professional 4	0	0	6	1	1
Professional 5	1	0	26	2	6
Professional 6	8	0	5	0	1
Total	14	2	74	7	12

9.2.2.3 Mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors

Via these mechanisms, professional associations strived to influence the availability of the successors by qualifying and bringing to the fore certain individuals for recognition by the decision makers as appropriate candidates for executive positions. As put by one professional:

“The association always aims to develop and qualify human resources, who are the (name of the professionals was omitted) to hold leading posts in the country.”

Thus, such mechanisms to influence the availability of successors included all the professional associations' activities directed at qualifying the professions' practitioners to assume executive positions, such as training programmes, seminars, conferences and publications. Through such activities, the professional associations equip the practitioners with knowledge and skills required to assume leading positions. For example, one interviewed professional explained the involvement of his association in qualifying certain individuals with specific qualifications needed for assuming a specific position within the competent ministry related to the association's profession.

Professional associations also strived to influence the availability of the successors by facilitating the recognition of certain individuals as potential candidates. One interviewed professional stated:

“Well, it’s obvious there are lots of (the name of the professionals was omitted) who worked for (the association), they are now ministers in the current cabinet, and they hold responsibilities, I am not saying that just because they were part of the (association), no! They were high calibre individuals who performed well before they came to the society, and after they came to the society they came in contact with the community, and the leadership, they know these guys. They came under the light, people can see them.”

9.2.2.4 Mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent

The data analysis revealed only one case where a professional association employed mechanisms that contributed to the overthrow of a specific office incumbent. However, this case was worth reporting, as it is the first case in Bahrain of a ministerial dismissal in relation to a publicly known dispute with the a ministerial staff member represented by a professional association. The tension between the association and the minister started as soon as the minister was appointed to the position. The current president of the association stated:

“He was the President of the association before becoming the Minister of (name of the ministry was omitted). So, initially, when he was promoted to the position, we told him you cannot hold the presidency of the association while being the Head of the ministry, and thus we made him resign his position in the association. Then, the problems started between the minister and the (profession practitioners).”

With regard to mechanisms employed to overthrow the office incumbent, the data analysis indicated that the professional association adopted a similar strategy to that of the political associations in terms of reflecting the unsuitability of the office incumbent for the position; yet, the mechanisms per se are different. According to the current president of the association, they employed three mechanisms to overthrow the minister: public campaigning, complaining to a higher authority and raising a lawsuit at the civil court challenging the legitimacy of the ministerial decisions. He noted (in relation to what they did when they stood against the minister’s decisions):

“We were not alone; all the (practitioners) were with us ... We published the issues in the press, we complained to the Prime Minister, we visited him and made the complaint. We spoke everywhere and we stood against him directly. ... We also went to the court of law, it

was the first time anyone had complained in the court of law against a minister, and we won the case. He then appealed and we won the case again; and when he wanted to follow the case at the Court of Cassation, he was removed from the position.”

9.2.2.5 Mechanisms to Influence the Decision Makers

The data analysis highlighted three mechanisms employed by the professional associations to influence the decision makers' decisions related to the succession process. These mechanisms were consultation, persuasion and pressuring. More light is shed in the following parts.

9.2.2.5.1 Consultation

Via this mechanism, professionals provided input regarding succession press issues when consulted by the decision makers. However, the decision makers were not obliged to accept the professionals' advice. For instance, one interviewee stated:

“We can help ... For example, lots of people come from ministries, they say “we have a gap for a senior position here”; we can nominate, we say “in our opinion we believe this man is good.” It is up to them to take him or not to take him ... It is all informal, always informal, because as I said ... it is not our duty to do it formally.”

The data analysis indicated that the profession associations were consulted by the decision makers via two means. The first was through the direct and informal connections between the decision makers and the officials of these professional associations. The second was through the representatives of the professional associations in the joint committees formed within the ministry. With regard to direct and informal connections, the abovementioned citation asserted such a notion. In another example, an interviewee highlighted these direct and informal connections and the social considerations in providing his input to the decision makers by stating:

“It is hard to present your viewpoint against a specific (practitioner) saying he/she is appropriate or inappropriate, unless it is presented via friendly means. In other words, it is hard to present such opinions in writing. So, if someone, informally, asked you, you could present your opinion.”

The data analysis also revealed that due to the lack of harmony between the board of directors of three professional associations and the officials in their competent ministries, these three associations were rarely consulted nowadays via direct and personal connections. For example, while the current president of one professional association stated “Furthermore, it is very rare that ministry consult us, saying that we want to appoint this individual in this position what do you think? It is very rare”; his predecessor affirmed:

“In the period during which I was the chairman of the society, we were consulted on everything ... We were consulted on appointing undersecretaries and other executive positions such as heads and so on.”

With regard to the consultation of the professional associations through their representatives in the joint committees formed to address succession process issues, one interviewee affirmed:

“There are committees set up for discussing certain issues, and members of these committees should include representatives of (name of the professional association was omitted).”

Nonetheless, the data analysis indicated that professional associations used to be more influential in their participation in such joint committees than nowadays. For example, two associations’ former presidents described their involvements in these joint committees as being influential. One of those two former presidents stated (in relation to whether the association was participating in appointment decisions for administrative positions):

“Yes, it was always based on our nominations because we were members of (professional) Association and more importantly we were members of every committee based on our positions in the ministry as employees.”

However, the current presidents of the same two professional associations asserted that they are not members of such committees addressing succession process issues; neither is anyone else representing their associations.

Another interviewee, who is also the president of his professional association, highlighted how his competent ministry reduced the professional association's influence on such committees by stating:

“It was a 24-member committee, and all of the members were from the Ministry of (name was omitted), however, I was only invited to attend the last committee meeting which was assigned to execute the cadre. ... Needless to say, at the beginning the committee was not made up of 24 members; but, later on the committee was made up of 24 members ... and I was the only member on such a committee representing the (name of was omitted) society.”

9.2.2.5.2 Persuasion:

Via this mechanism, the officials of the professional associations approached the decision makers in attempts to persuade them of the associations' viewpoints regarding succession process issues. Most often, these attempts were focused on influencing the successors' selection decisions. As put by one interviewee

“We provide our inputs with regard to the important positions whenever we believe it is necessary to convey our viewpoint, we may say that we believe that a specific individual best fits the position. But the ministry does not always consider our viewpoint or accept it ... However, whenever we hear that a specific individual will be appointed to a position which we think he is not fit for, we do not hesitate to say that this individual is not appropriate for the position.”

However, the data analysis indicated that due to the lack of harmony between the boards of directors of three professional associations and the top management of their competent ministries, the persuasion mechanism is not effective. As put by one interviewee:

“Therefore, we try to get in touch with all the ministry's officials as much as possible to explain that we are not against rather we are with the ministry ... But the ministry does not always consider our viewpoint or accept it ... Our role is limited, they do not ask us, and if we present our viewpoints, they get irritated.”

9.2.2.5.3 Pressuring

Via this mechanism, the professional associations applied pressure on the decision makers to influence succession process decisions. Mainly, the data analysis indicated that three professional associations have launched public campaigns and mobilised their members. With regard to the public campaigns, the data analysis indicated the professional associations' employment of the press to build up public campaigns to influence the decision makers in the competent ministries. In addition, professional associations utilised their links with other civil society organisations and political associations. For example, one interviewee affirmed the employment by his association of public campaigning tactics to pressure the decision makers regarding the implementation of fairer appointments for executive positions. He stated:

“Moreover, we opened communication channels with civil society organisations of various types, including professional, social and political ones ... Because if you wish to gain support from the council, you should open communication channels with political societies which make up the council. ... Everyone felt that our demands were reasonable and rational, and thus, we gained wide support.”

With regard to the professional associations' mobilisation of their members to pressure the decision makers, the data analysis highlighted the employment of other hard-line pressuring tactics such as petitions, sit-ins, protests and strikes. It is noteworthy that the employment of such tactics was very limited. Moreover, these mechanisms were employed only after exhausting the previously mentioned mechanisms. As put by one interviewee:

“Well, after much correspondence with the officials at the Ministry of (name was omitted) and after many meetings with them, and several lengthy interviews with the media, we, finally, were obliged to make petitions. Even though you do not need to collect 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, or 5000 signature to declare your rights ...”

The interviewee affirmed the escalation in the employment of such mechanisms to force the decision makers to accept professional association's demands that include career development. He stated:

“Along with these mechanisms, we had the petitions and we wore bands as a way to protest ... this was a stronger and wider action ... A large number of (practitioners) participated, as we have about 14000 (practitioners) ... In this protest, 9000 (practitioners) have worn and attached these bands.”

Yet, on gaining no positive response from the competent ministry officials, the interviewee affirmed that his association continued their efforts and escalated the fierceness of the pressuring tactics to influence those decision makers. The interviewee highlighted the employment of strikes as a more aggressive mechanism to influence the ministry's officials to consent to their demands. He specifically mentioned three strikes that took place at different times and locations. He stated:

“The first strike was at the ministry, and so was the second, whereas the third strike was at the new headquarters of the Ministerial Cabinet. We stood at Al-Fateh mosque and opposite to the new headquarters.”

However, according to the interviewee, despite wide support and the intensity of the tactics employed, these efforts were not successful in changing the minds of those officials running the competent ministry.

9.2.2.6 Mechanisms aimed at overriding the decisions of the decision makers

The data analysis indicated that professional associations have complained about issues related to the succession process, such as the appointments for executive positions, to higher executive authorities than the competent ministries. Specifically, professional associations approached H.H the Prime Minister, H.H the Crown Prince and H.M. the King. For example, one interviewee mentioned complaining to H.H the Prime Minister in describing what the association did to satisfy their claims, stating: “We complained to the Prime Minister, we visited him and made the complaint.” Another interviewee affirmed the employment of complaints to override ministry decisions on appointments to executive positions. He highlighted that his association strives to meet with H.H. the Crown Prince to discuss with him in person the association's demands, which include appointments to executive positions.

However, the data analysis revealed that such mechanisms to influence the succession process by overriding decision makers' decisions were not effective. For example, the earlier interviewee reported the failure of his association to meet H.H the Crown Prince despite several attempts and a long waiting time.

Moreover, the data analysis indicated that the reason for such ineffectiveness in overriding the decision makers' decisions may be the lack of connections between the professional associations and the political leadership from whom they are seeking help. As put by one interviewee:

“Of course, such high positions are appointed by H.M. the King or by H.H. the Prime Minister, we do not have links and thus we cannot provide our viewpoints.”

This notion was also highlighted by another interviewee. According to a former president of one of the associations, the political leadership is keen to listen to the professionals when they are approached rationally. Furthermore, the interviewee supported his argument with specific cases that illustrate the political leadership's cooperation and keenness to listen. He stated:

“For example ... I was in one of the gatherings with H.H. the Prime Minister where the discussion led to some issues concerning the (practitioners) ... So I highlighted the key role of the (practitioners) in the society ... while pointing out his role in protecting them. So, he asked me to specify and list all problems facing (them), and I did. Amazingly, all the (practitioners') needs were addressed within 48 hours, which is a great accomplishment.”

9.2.2.7 Mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework:

Via this mechanism, professional associations attempted to alter the way of carrying out the succession process. Specifically, professional associations tried to change the selection criteria for executive positions and alter the practitioners' career development schemes by proposing new professional cadres. According to the interviewees, practitioners' career development is one of the overall strategic goals that professional associations could achieve via improving the professional cadres. Moreover, the interviewees linked the practitioners' career development schemes and the selection criteria for executive positions with the professional cadres. For example, one interviewee

stated (in response to whether or not career development issues are included in their proposed cadre):

“Yes, sure. We had concluded them after carefully assessing the cadre, and included them in our requests to develop the cadre which we have been calling for ... However, what is happening now, there is no clear or definite roadmap plan for (the practitioners) specifying what should be achieved, no specific objectives to develop to this position, then this, what should be achieved for the next position ... So, there is no career development roadmap plan for the employee in the (profession) sector. We should have a clear roadmap along which employees progress, showing them the roadmap plan to be followed to achieve their targets.”

The data analysis revealed that professional associations participated more in developing their professions' cadres than in succession process decision making. However, despite professional associations' participation in developing their professions' cadres, the interviewees claimed that the competent ministries are not implementing these cadres properly, which has led to clashes between the professional associations and their competent ministries. For instance, one interviewee stated:

“After long years of demands and following up by the association, the cadre was approved by the Prime Minister in 2004. However, those who got these leading positions in the ministry ... implemented only the first phase of the cadre and only a few (practitioners) were able to benefit from it. This created a big problem among the (practitioners) staff ... We, as an association, met leaders in the ministry and discussed the cadre with them because when you compare it to the original cadre which we developed and which has been approved by the Prime Minister it was very different. When we started to speak out, here the clash started ... until today, the issue of the cadre is still unsolved.”

9.2.3 Professional Associations' Interactions with various Stakeholders and Organisational Contexts

9.2.3.1 Professional Associations' Interactions with Key Stakeholders

The data analysis indicated that professional associations interacted with various stakeholders in their involvement in the succession process. For example, the professional associations complained

about issues related to the succession process to the political leadership (Such as H.H the Prime Minister, H.H the Crown Prince and H.M the King), with one interviewee affirming, “We complained to the Prime Minister”. Another interviewee highlighted his association’s attempt to meet H.H the Crown to discuss the association’s concerns related to practitioners’ career development, while a third interviewee mentioned his discussions with H.M. the King about his association’s demands.

However, the representatives of these professional associations most often highlighted their interactions with government officials in the competent ministries at various hierarchal levels. For example, professional associations mobilised their members in their public campaigns, pressuring the top management in their competent ministries to accept their demands on succession process issues. Professional associations also interacted with various officials representing the top management in their competent ministries, such as ministers, undersecretaries, undersecretary assistants and directors. On certain occasions, professional associations have cooperated with their ministries’ top management in resolving issues related to the succession process. For example, one interviewee asserted that the minister used to consult him, as the president of the profession association, regarding executive employees’ appointment decisions. Another interviewee highlighted his association’s positive interactions with the ministry undersecretary by stating:

“Yes, but in fact we found (the name was omitted), the undersecretary at the ministry, a very friendly and understanding person. Honestly, we trust him and even when we disagree with him we trust him. We dealt with him transparently, even when we disagreed with him on certain issues.”

However, at other times, the profession associations’ interactions with the top management of their competent ministries did not go smoothly. As it was illustrated in previous citation, one interviewee highlighted her association’s struggle with the ministry’s officials regarding the implementation of the profession cadre.

In addition, the data analysis revealed that the professional associations interacted with various organisations. For example, professional association interacted with the Ministry of Social Affairs,

which oversees and organises civil society organisations including professional associations. Another example is the professional associations' interactions with the CSB in developing their professions' cadres. In addition, the data analysis highlighted one professional association's interaction with the Civil Courts through a lawsuit against the minister, which contributed to the dismissal of the minister. Another association interacted with the EDB in order to resolve issues related to practitioners' career development schemes.

The data analysis also highlighted the professional associations' interactions with political associations in their attempts to alter the succession process framework. For example, one interviewee stated:

“We had met the Chairmen of Al-Nuwab and Al-Shura Councils, and other political blocs of the previous council ... All political blocs have cooperated with us ... all voted for us to approve our project to reform the (practitioners') cadre.”

However, the data analysis revealed that professional associations do not approve of political associations' involvement in succession process decisions. For example, one interviewee stated:

“It is widely known that the appointments of the majority of people holding leading posts at the Ministry of (name was omitted) were due to the pressure of these political organisations and as a result of their infiltration into the ministry. We feel sorry for that.”

With regard to interactions with other professional and social associations, the data analysis revealed that profession associations sometimes cooperate with each other to realise their claims and interests in the succession process. This was clear in an earlier citation of one of the interviewees regarding his association's utilisation of its links with civil society organisations in the public campaign to influence the decision makers of a public organisation. Another example, one interviewee highlighted his contributions to the approval of another association's cadre. He stated:

“I called for promotion of the educational sector, in addition, I called for establishment of a teachers' cadre before I called for establishment of this (his association's) cadre.”

The data analysis also revealed the professional associations' interactions with the press in their attempts to convey their viewpoints and build public campaigns concerned with issues related to the succession process. For example, one interviewee stated "We published the issues in the press." However, the data analysis revealed that such professional associations' interactions with the press were not always positive as three of the six interviewees claimed that press had their own agenda and they did more harm than good to their associations. For example, one interviewee stated:

"What happened is that the media got involved in the issue. The media distorted the relationship, they used to say the association is saying this and the top management in the ministry is saying that; and many of this was not true. This created chaos ... and personalised the issues ... The media needed news ... we said we did not say this and that ... you are harming our relations with the ministry ... and they had their own agendas and they wanted to have news."

9.2.3.2 Professional associations' Interactions with Key Context-related Factors:

The data analysis indicated that professional associations, in their efforts to satisfy their claims and preserve their interests in the succession process, interacted with various context-related factors on the macro and organisational levels. The following parts illustrate the analysis of these interactions with key factors.

9.2.3.2.1 Interactions with Key Factors on the Macro Level:

The data analysis highlighted four macro level factors with which professional associations have interacted through involvement in the succession process. These factors were: (1) the existing legal system regulating professional associations; (2) the existing framework regulating the succession process in the public sector; (3) the social pressures on individuals to be biased in favour of the social affiliations and (4) pressure for politicisation in the Bahraini society. The following parts illustrate these four factors.

The existing legal system regulating professional associations: The existing legal system regulating the professional associations is the law for societies, social and cultural clubs, issued by Decree Law No. (21) for 1989 and the following amendments issued by Decree Law No. (44) for

2002. According to these legislations, professional associations are societies confined to the role of promoting and developing their professions. Thus, these professional associations do not represent the professions' practitioners in the competent governmental organisations; in other words, these professional associations are not trade unions. As put by one interviewee:

Furthermore, according to the representatives of three professional associations, the existing legal system regulating the professional associations is hindering their involvement in succession process issues. Thus, the interviewees argued that the transformation of the professional associations to trade unions would enhance their role in succession process issues and they emphasised the need to amend the existing trade unions law to allow the formation of trade unions to represent public sector employees. As one interviewee stated:

“We agreed with Al-Nuwab Council, last year, about the trade union law, unfortunately, every legislative term comes and goes and the issue is still not approved as no agreement was reached between the council and the government. We want this law to be approved in order to have a stronger position for the (name was omitted) Association with regard to these issues.”

The existing framework regulating the succession process: Professional associations strive to improve the existing framework regulating the succession process in the public sector. According to the interviewees, the existing framework is not adequate in specifying the selection criteria for executive positions' appointments. As one interviewee affirmed:

“As a matter of fact, there are no such criteria; all the appointments are made based on decisions coming from above.”

Furthermore, the interviewees criticised the existing succession process framework, highlighting the vague vivid mechanisms. One interviewee criticised such mechanisms, highlighting the lack of transparency in the appointment decisions by stating:

“The roadmap plan is unclear having indefinite standards and the mechanisms used for implementing such standards are the worst thing. The mechanisms are worse than the standards themselves”

It is noteworthy that, as has been illustrated earlier in the section dedicated to mechanisms used by the professional associations to alter the succession process framework, professional associations strived to alter the existing succession process framework by linking the practitioners' career development schemes to improvements of the professional cadres, which specify selection criteria for leading positions.

The social pressures on individuals to be biased in favour of social affiliations: The data analysis highlighted the social pressures on individuals to be biased in favour of their own social affiliations as a macro level influence on the professional associations' involvement in the succession process. For example, professional associations condemned favouritism in the appointments to executive positions. As put by one interviewee:

“But, there should be certain standards for the employee's competency, and nobody should hold this position for being a very important person. Moreover, nobody should hold a position for being the son of an important person or for being from a prominent family, or for being from this background or because he is affiliated to or a member of any political organisation.”

Specifically, interviewees most often highlighted “Wasta” and sectarian considerations as social pressures influencing the appointment decisions for executive positions. For instance, one interviewee stated:

“I can describe them as powerful individuals within the ministry. Some individuals, who are not necessarily working in the ministry nor are they affiliated to a political society, are powerful and very influential with regard to this issue. There are numerous parties; I cannot specify one particular party. But in general, we call them “Wasta”, individuals who possess a “Wasta”.”

Furthermore, one interviewee condemned politicians' involvement in the appointments of people affiliated with their associations. He stated:

“Members and those people affiliated to these political organisations are promoted quickly from ordinary posts to leading posts, and even they are recruited easily too ... As I said

before, some parties along with political societies have a strong influence on the promotion process.”

With regard to sect considerations, another interviewee affirmed:

“The people in these leading positions want only those who are from their side ... Yes, serious tensions, a lot of professional issues are influenced by sectarian affiliations in the (name was omitted) Ministry.”

Nevertheless, some professional associations appeared to be practising the opposite of what they preach. For example, professional associations appeared to practise a sort of “Wasta” and favouritism when consulted by decision makers via informal channels, regarding succession process issues. Professional associations nominated names, and regardless of the appropriateness of the candidates nominated, one can argue that such nominations were subject to social pressures to be biased in favour of social affiliations.

Pressure for politicisation in the Bahraini society: The data analysis revealed that professional associations, in general, are under pressure to adopt a political orientation. Although this sensitive notion was not explicitly stated in the interviewees’ responses, the data analysis, at this point, revealed a critical indicator, namely, that members of three professional associations are also members of various political organisations. For example, the presidents of these three professional associations are active members of political associations. Moreover, one of those presidents ran for the 2006 parliament elections as a political association candidate. However, when asked whether the agenda of his professional association matched that of his affiliated political association, he affirmed:

“No, never and we do not allow this to happen ... We are only working in our capacity as (professionals) in this organisation, and our main role is serving the (practitioners), the (profession) process, and our country.”

However, this response may not be a true reflection of the degree of cooperation with political associations. Moreover, when the interviewee was asked about how he differentiates between his role as the president of the association and his role as a member of a political association, he stated:

“This is my own political affiliation, but my main concern here is the interest of (the practitioners) and (the profession’s) process, ignoring any other political goals or actions ... I am member of the (name of professional association was omitted) in my capacity as a (professional). Yet, my name is (omitted), and I have my own family, as well as my racial, sectarian and political affiliations. However, my professional performance, goals, and adopted mechanisms should not be influenced by all these affiliations and ideologies.”

Furthermore, the interviewee claimed that his professional association received more support from political associations other than that to which he was affiliated. The interviewee also provided an example illustrating his politically neutral conduct by highlighting his approach to gaining support for the association’s demands. He stated:

“Usually, we invite the 40 representatives of the parliament and the Chairmen, and we invite the members of the council as well, including members of the Shura council. So, from a personal perspective, I exercise my own self-restraint in setting the representation of the national council and the Al-Shura council. ... However, as a chairman of the association I invite the chairman of the parliament and the Shura council as well.”

However, the data analysis later provided additional evidence supporting the notion of professional associations coming under pressure to become politicised.

9.2.3.2.2 Interactions with Key Factors on the Organisational Level:

The data analysis highlighted the management style as a factor on the organisational level that influences the professional associations’ involvement in the succession process. Interviewees highlighted two aspects, which reflect the adopted management styles of top management of their competent governmental organisations. The first aspect was the level of transparency in the management style concerning succession process issues. For example, one interviewee highlighted the degree of information symmetry available in the ministry. He stated:

“The association’s capabilities are limited due to the amount of information provided to the association by the ministry’s staff.”

Another interviewee highlighted the same notion in criticising the appointment mechanisms of the competent ministry by stating “Many promotions within the Ministry of (name was omitted) are not publicly advertised.”

The second aspect that reflected the adopted management style was the officials themselves. The data analysis revealed that whenever there were changes in the officials representing the governmental organisations’ top management or representing the professional associations’ boards of directors there were shifts in the professional associations’ involvement in the succession process. For example, one interviewee highlighted such a shift in her professional association’s involvement in her comparison between the current era and the era of a previous minister. She stated:

“Yet, the association is not represented in any committees concerned with career development or any issue related to the appointment decisions ... There is nothing called (the name of the association was omitted) when it comes to choosing who to appoint. But, I believe (the name of the former minister was omitted) was starting to do this as she put us in various committees such as those concerned with profession licensing and practitioners’ training programmes.”

In addition, the data analysis revealed variations in the level of involvement, not only among the different associations but also between the different boards of directors of the same associations. For example, the former presidents of two associations confirmed that their associations were consulted more frequently regarding the succession process issue.

Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that even when the competent governmental organisations have promoted members of the professional associations to their top management positions, problems over the level of the associations’ involvement in the succession process have occurred. For example, a former president of one of the professional associations affirmed:

“After he was appointed the minister of (name was omitted), he would aggressively criticise the whole (practitioners) body while trying to weaken it and the society had to take reciprocal action.”

The same notion resonated in the responses of another interviewee, who is the current president of another professional association. She stated:

“Things changed in 2002, because the leaders of the association, who were also the leaders of the profession, were promoted to leading positions in the ministry ... These executive (practitioners) fought a war against the association ... As a result, the association was dead from 2002 to 2005.”

When the interviewees were asked to justify such diminution in the professional associations' roles after the promotion of their members to executive positions in their competent ministries, they highlighted the domination of personal interests and the exploitation of the professional associations. As put by one interviewee:

“I think employing the society to achieve personal goals weakens the society's role, and that is exactly what has happened ... Unfortunately, the society has become a means for achieving one's personal goals and not for pursuing the best interests of all (practitioners).”

9.2.4 Summary of the Professional Associations' Perspective

The data analysis indicated that the interviewed professionals perceived the succession process as an important issue. Their claims and interests appeared to be driven by their desires to facilitate their professional associations' strategic goals to improve career development schemes for the professions' practitioners. The data analysis revealed that the interviewees are more often concerned with “who should be the successor” in terms of the selection criteria. The data analysis revealed that, despite their limited direct involvement in decisions making, professional associations employed five mechanisms to influence the succession process to satisfy their claims and to preserve their interests in the succession process. These mechanisms were as follows: (1) mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors; (2) mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent; (3) mechanisms aimed at influencing the decision makers' decisions; (4) mechanisms aimed at overriding the decision makers' decisions and (5) mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework.

In their involvement in the succession process, professional associations interacted with various stakeholders. The nature of such interactions varies pragmatically from cooperation to competition according to the stakeholder's stand on the professional associations' claims and interests in the succession process. As well, professional associations interacted with context-related key factors on the macro and the organisational levels. The nature of the politicians' interactions with context-related key factors appeared to vary based on the politicians' power to alter these factors in their interest.

9.3 SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

The social associations' involvement in the succession process was found to be limited to those organisations concerned with the women's empowerment movement in Bahrain. This conclusion was made not only after reviewing the social associations' published mission statements but also based on the responses of various officials in these organisations who confirmed the disengagement of their associations with regard to such matters; as their associations are more concerned with the general society. Yet, in general, social associations focusing on women's status in the society were considered as potential succession process external stakeholders based on the roles they play in the women's empowerment movement in Bahrain. For this reason, the two most prominent women's associations in Bahrain were approached to reflect their involvement in the succession process for executive positions in the public sector organisations. However, only officials from Bahrain Young Ladies Association participated in the interviews. This association has a long history serving the Bahraini women, as it was not only the first women's association in Bahrain, but also the first women's association in the Gulf Arabian Countries. The association was established in 1955. Currently, the association is the largest women association's in Bahrain as it has the largest general assembly. In addition, the contributions of the association's members to women's empowerment are well recognised as some of them participated in the development of the National Strategy for the Supreme Council for Women and were members of its first board of directors.

Two officials from Bahrain Young Ladies Association were interviewed together, at their request. One interviewee is the current president of the association and the other was previously a president

of the association for five terms. However, all the relevant responses were contributed by the former president as all the relevant information relates to her terms of presidency, while the current president either affirmed these responses or furnished unrelated information. Thus, to simplify the data reporting, the study considers the former president of the association as the only interviewee as she was the sole contributor. In the following subsections, the views of the former president of the association are illustrated according to the various themes of the interview agenda.

9.3.1 Women's Associations' Claims and Interests in the Succession Process

9.3.1.1 The Urgency of the Claims and the Stakes in the Succession Process

The data analysis of the interviewee's responses indicated that Bahrain Young Ladies Association, in particular and women's associations, in general, perceive the succession process as important issue. As put by the interviewee *"This association, like any other women's association, is interested in accessing leadership positions for women whether these women are members or not"*. The interviewee justified such perceived importance by linking the succession process to one of her association's strategic goals, women's empowerment. The interviewee stated:

"Women's empowerment has been on our agenda only for the last 10 years. In the 1980s, we moved beyond the charity and welfare activities for women, which were the women's association's main concern in the 1950s, to take a role in improving women's social, economic and cultural status. This could be seen clearly in the association's visions, mission statements, strategies and objectives."

The interviewee linked the succession process to a specific strategic goal in the association's strategy. "This issue was addressed under the title "Women in Decision-Making Positions". The interviewee also highlighted the importance of empowering women to assume leading positions via administrative measures by stating:

"Women's empowerment is part of a continuous process to improve conditions for Bahraini women ... If it is not desirable to have political measures with regard to women's empowerment, such as quotas, this does not mean not taking administrative measures ... We

need to prove the ability of women, not only as doctors, engineers and teachers, but also as leaders in the public organisations.”

Needless to say, women's associations were concerned about “who should be the successor” in terms of the successor's sex. Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that, even though women's associations are concerned about the empowerment of women in the public sector in general, their efforts seem often to target public organisations with close links to women's issues (such as the Ministry of Social Affairs) or a high degree of female participation in their workforce (such as the Ministry of Education).

9.3.2 Mechanisms used by Women's Associations to Satisfy their Claims and Interests

According to the interviewee, the women's associations' role in the women empowerment is not direct nor is it confined to one mechanism. She stated:

“The struggle for women's legal rights, which include the right to assume leadership positions, started 35 years ago ... this is a cumulative process; we employed our personal connections, participated in conferences and workshops. It is cumulative progress over a long period of time and you cannot relate it to one mechanism or to a specific time.”

However, despite playing such an indirect role, the interviewee affirmed that her association employed various means to empower women to assume leading positions in public sector organisations. She stated, “The association seeks this objective via various ways and mechanisms”. Specifically, these mechanisms either aim to influence the decisions makers' decisions or aim to alter the existing succession process framework.

9.3.2.1 Mechanisms aimed to influence the decision makers' decisions

The data analysis revealed that the women employ three mechanisms to influence the decision makers' decisions to empower women to assume leading positions in the public sector. These mechanisms were: (1) consultation, (2) persuasion and (3) pressuring. With regard to consultation, members of the women's associations provided their input to the decision makers, when consulted, via the direct and informal relationships. As was implicitly mentioned by the interviewee in the

earlier citation, “We employed our personal connections.” As well, women associations were consulted via their members. For example, women’s associations participated, indirectly, in developing the National Strategy for Women and the associated work plan. The interviewee affirmed that the first board of the Supreme Council for Women, which developed the National Strategy for Women and the associated work plan, included two individuals who are members of the board of directors of women’s associations. She stated:

“Of course, being a member in this women’s association, I was selected to be one of the members of the first board establishing the council ... There were two members from the women’s associations, (the name of the individual was omitted) from Awal Women’s Association and myself from Bahrain Young Ladies Association.”

The second mechanism employed to influence the decision makers’ decisions was persuasion. Via this mechanism, the women’s associations approached the decision makers in attempts to promote the appointment of women to executive positions. As put by the interviewee:

“We may approach the relevant official to take certain measures in relation to this issue [women empowerment]. For example, one of the recommendations of the conference paper which I presented today in the conference held by the Supreme Council is to take exceptional measures to support and encourage women to assume leadership positions in accordance to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), such as the establishment of the Equal-Opportunity Units ... The paper demanded the establishment of these units in every governmental organisation.”

However, according to the interviewee, although women’s associations strived to convince the decision makers to take administrative measures to enhance the women participation in the top management, they did not nominate individuals. The interviewee affirmed in response to whether or not the association nominate names for executive positions “No we do not, this is beyond our entitlements.”

Women’s associations also applied pressure on the decision makers to influence their decisions with regard to women’s empowerment via direct correspondence and indirect messages. As an

example of indirect messages, women's associations monitor and publish surveys about women's occupation of the organisations' top management positions. Such surveys not only raise red flags to the public when women's participation is low but may also pressure the decision makers to do something to empower women. The interviewee affirmed:

“We monitor the number of women in these positions; we monitor the gap between the status quo and what we aim for. How many women in the ministries are Directors, Section Heads and so on? So, women's associations are playing a role in empowering women to assume leading positions when they have the right qualifications, experiences and competencies. Yet, our role is not direct. However, we play our role through pressuring the officials via various forms of correspondence, the conferences and publications ... Moreover, through the surveys monitoring women's occupation of such positions we highlight the need to empower women in our society.”

9.3.2.2 Mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework

Via these mechanisms, women's associations strived to introduce administrative measures to enhance women's prospects of assuming leading positions in the public sector. For example, the interviewee highlighted the relevant administrative measures, which are stated, according to the interviewee, in the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The interviewee emphasised the women's associations' role in pushing the government to sign this international convention by stating:

“The convention was signed by the Bahraini Government 9 years ago. This was due to the pressures exerted by the NOGs on the government to sign the convention. It is a cumulative process, 9 years ago it was signed, and today we are applying administrative measures in the implementation of the convention's terms”

In addition, the interviewee highlighted the participation of two members of the women's associations in developing the national strategy and the associated work plan to attain such administrative measures facilitating the appointment of women to leading positions. She stated:

“For three years, I participated in writing the strategy ... We participated not only in developing the strategy, but also in developing the national work plan and in converting the strategy to programmes.”

9.3.3 Women’s Associations’ Interactions with Various Stakeholders and Organisational Contexts

9.3.3.1 Women’s Associations’ Interactions with Key Stakeholders

The data analysis indicated that women’s associations interacted with various stakeholders in their involvement in the succession process. However, the representative of the women’s association most often highlighted her association’s interactions with other social associations and government officials. For example, as was indicated in the previous section, women’s associations interact with the competent authorities in the governmental organisations to satisfy their claims and interests in the succession process. However, the interviewee emphasised the associations’ interactions with the Supreme Council for Women and with other civil society organisations. The interviewee, for instance, highlighted the cooperation among the various entities to attain women empowerment. She stated:

“This was the result of previous efforts of all the civil associations, the Federation of Women’s Associations, women’s associations and all those who support the appointment of women to leading positions in the public sector.”

Furthermore, the interviewee elaborated on such cooperation among the women’s associations and the SCW by stating:

“Today we have the Federation of Women to represent most of the associations; however, this federation is made up from these women’s associations and the struggle for women’s legal rights, which include the right to assume leadership positions ... Nonetheless, recently, a protocol for collaboration between the SCW and the Federation of Women’s Associations was signed.”

9.3.3.2 Women's associations' Interactions with Key Context-related Factors:

The data analysis indicated that women associations interacted with two context-related factors on the macro level. The first factor was the trend to empower women to assume leading positions. For example, the interviewee highlighted the international movement to empower women and related it to her associations efforts to empower Bahraini women. She stated:

“We have been tracking the international community’s movement toward improving women’s status for a long time. ... From 1995 up to 2010, the Bahrain Young Ladies Association has been always aware of the international movement toward empowering women. Thus, since 1995, we have been following the latest updates on the international level regarding this issue. These international conferences educated us on how to go about women’s empowerment, the mechanisms needed for women’s empowerment; they provided us with a complete approach, including strategies, work plans and mechanisms.”

In addition to the international movement, the interviewee highlighted governmental awareness about the impact of women’s empowerment on the state’s image in the international community by stating:

“In addition to the changes in the legislative framework, the international movement toward enhancing the status of women all around the world ... and how the state’s image in the international community is affected by this issue call for internal changes in favour of women’s empowerment and an enhanced role for women’s associations’ on such issues.”

The second context-related factor was the existing law regulating the women’s associations. Women’s associations are subject to the same law that regulates professional associations, which is the law for societies, social and cultural clubs which was issued by Decree Law No. (21) for 1989 and the following amendments issued by Decree Law No. (44) for 2002. According to the interviewee, such laws hinder their involvement in women’s empowerment. She stated:

“In the conference paper, today, this issue was raised as a big obstacle which hinders our participation in various issues, including empowering women in general and empowering them to assume leading positions specifically. This law is a contradiction of the spirit of the current era, the open political climate.”

9.3.4 Summary of the Women's Associations' Perspective

Women's Associations in general, and Bahrain Young Ladies Association in particular, were interested in the succession process as a means to empower women to assume leading positions in the public sector organisations and to improve women's status in general. The data analysis indicated that women's associations employed mechanisms aimed to influence the decision makers' decisions to enhance the prospects for the appointment of women to leading positions, such as consultation, persuasion and pressuring. They also employed mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework by participating and encouraging the decision makers to apply administrative measures to enhance the women's appointment prospects.

The data analysis indicated that women's associations, in their involvement in women's empowerment activities, interacted with various stakeholders. Other than the competent authorities in the governmental organisations, women's associations interacted among themselves and with the Supreme Council for Women. Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that women's associations interacted with two context-related factors in their involvement in women's empowerment: the current trend to empower women to assume leading positions and the existing law regulating the women's associations.

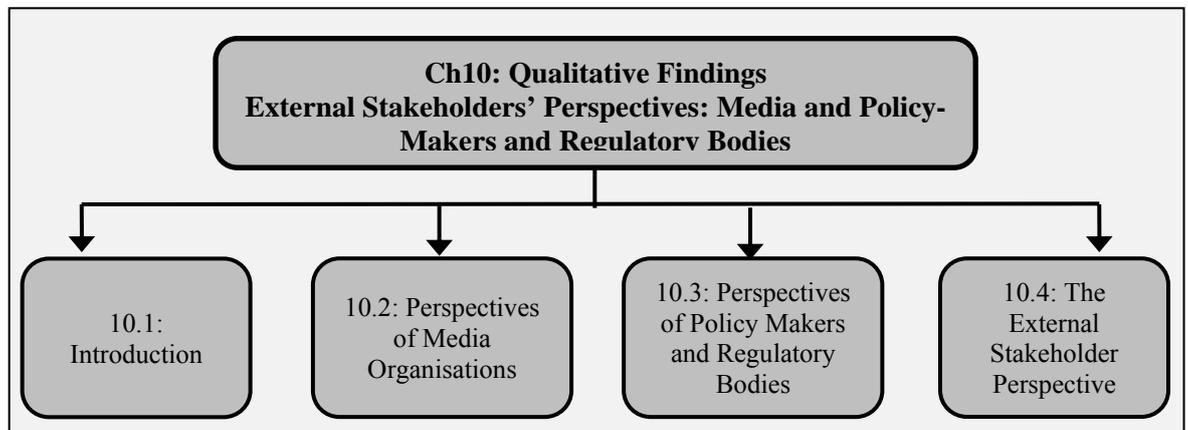
CHAPTER 10 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES: MEDIA AND POLICY-MAKERS AND REGULATORY BODIES

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the perspectives of media organisations and policy-makers and regulatory bodies are presented. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the analysis of the interviewees' responses representing three media organisations. The second section presents the analysis of the responses of the representatives of four governmental organisations that have the potential to influence the succession process via establishing policies, regulating the civil service or monitoring the implementation of its laws. The third provides a summary for the perspectives of the external stakeholders. Each section is divided into three subsections according to the themes of the final analysis template used for analysing external stakeholders' responses. As illustrated earlier, these themes were stakeholder's claims and interests in the succession process, stakeholders' mechanisms to realise their claims in the succession process and the reciprocal interactions among the various stakeholders and the organisational context.

FIGURE 10-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 10



10.2 MEDIA ORGANISATIONS' PERSPECTIVES

For representing the media organisations' perspectives, three journalists were interviewed from three different daily newspapers. These newspapers reflect diverse press orientations regarding the government's policies, ranging from advocates for the government's rhetoric to promoters of political opposition viewpoints. The interviewees were selected to represent their newspapers based on their positions. Two of the interviewees were Editors-in-Chief, while the third interviewee was a newspaper Editor. Such positions are considered to represent the newspapers' perspectives. In the following sections, the interviewees' responses are analysed.

10.2.1 Newspapers' Claims and Interests in the Succession Process

10.2.1.1 The Urgency of the Newspapers' Claims and Stakes in the Succession Process

The data analysis indicated that the press perceived the succession process for executive positions in the public sector as an important issue. For example, one interviewee affirmed this notion and highlighted the attractiveness of succession process news. He stated:

“The press, usually, is interested in such news, as such news is attractive and the readers are interested in this news and in such predictions, especially when it comes to high positions.”

In addition, another interviewee highlighted the press role in raising public awareness and in drawing attention to existing problems as a justification for such interests in the succession process issues. He stated:

“The main role of the press, in any society, is to shed light on the dark corners. The press monitors what goes around. Thus, whenever we spot a dark corner, wrongdoing or an injustice we perform our duties and fulfil our roles.”

With regard to the newspapers' stakes in the succession process, the data analysis revealed that they are more interested in knowing who will be the successor than any other aspect of the succession process. For example, one interviewee clearly stated:

“If the appointment decision is not finalised, the press is more interested in who the candidates are than how these candidates were selected.”

10.2.2 Newspapers' Mechanisms to Satisfy their Claims and Interests

The data analysis revealed that newspapers have indirect involvement in succession processes as external monitors. In such indirect involvements, newspapers employed their publications to influence the succession process. Via this mechanism, the newspapers informed the decision makers and the public about any violations in the process. Specifically, the data analysis indicated that newspapers employed their press investigations, news circulation and public campaigning to pressure the decision makers. For example, one interviewee stated:

“I remember that the press have carried out several public campaigns. I would not say that these campaigns have achieved much success, not 100%, but the press is capable of changing some aspects of the disorder by 50% or 60%. Yes, to this extent, we can make a difference and especially now ... so pressure is created from various directions and consequently the change happens.”

Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the newspapers employed their publications to attain a variety of objectives. For example, with regard to their interest in the successor, the press indirectly participated in overthrowing certain office incumbents by emphasising their poor performance. One interviewee stated:

“If the press puts a particular individual under the spotlight, it could burn him/her by focusing on the empty part of the glass. The press is able to see his/her negative side and disadvantages. ... So through the continuous writing and highlighting of these negative issues, the person may find him/herself out of office. The decision maker may force him/her out only to stop the criticisms.”

Another strategy the newspapers used in relation to their interest in the successor was to influence the successors' availability. For example, newspapers strived to influence the succession process by promoting certain individuals as potential candidates for executive positions. In such strategy, the newspapers highlighted the success stories of these individuals, support their decisions or circulate

news speculating on their appointment. As well, the press questioned the appropriateness of other individuals as candidates for executive positions. For example, one interviewee stated:

“If the matter is only expectation and speculation, the press may discuss the effectiveness of the person and may publish his/her biography before assuming the position. Some writers may indirectly attack the individual, highlighting for example that he is not fit for the position.”

10.2.3 Newspapers' Interactions with other Stakeholders and Organisational Contexts

10.2.3.1 Newspapers' Interactions with Key Stakeholders

As stated earlier, newspapers' involvement in the succession process was indirect. Thus, very few interviewees' responses were coded at nodes that reflect direct interactions with specific stakeholders. Specifically, only two responses highlighted such direct interactions. The first response highlighted press keenness to maintain good links with insider informers in the public sector who could provide them with news of new appointments for executive positions. As put by the interviewee:

“Typically, each newspaper consolidates its relationship with the sources within the institutions, especially in decision-making bodies such as the Council of Ministers or of the Royal Court when it comes to the high position appointments.”

In the second response, one interviewee affirmed that his newspaper faced several lawsuits, some of which related to their involvement in succession process matters. He stated:

“No newspaper has been dragged to the court of law because of such things [quality of the successor and equal opportunity principles] like we have. We have case after case.”

However, with regard to indirect interactions, as has been illustrated in an earlier citation, the press indirectly interacted with politicians, professional associations, civil society organisations and the general public in their attempts to initiate and launch public campaigns related to succession process matters. Specifically, one interviewee stated:

“The press publishes, the parliament directs questions, the political associations act, and civil society organisations follow on and move along.”

Furthermore, in their indirect involvement, the newspapers may show their support for the political leadership's appointments, particularly when these appointments have been finalised. Some newspapers not only circulate the news on their front pages but they may also applaud such appointments. As put by one interviewee:

“Honestly, with some minor exceptions in the local press, the Bahraini press is usually totally behind government decisions, supporting their decisions ... The press criticises or educates the citizens on the non-direct decisions ... But when the government's decision has been taken, usually the local press follows and supports it, with some exceptions. And this is the case for executive employees' appointments.”

The data analysis also revealed that the newspapers most often tread cautiously in their involvement in the succession process, avoiding clashes with government officials. For example, one interviewee asserted such and highlighted the lack of information and the newspapers' legal accountability. He stated:

“But we cannot poke our noses into everything because we lack information ... Press cannot do anything, because if we write something they can sue us in the court of law. And because we have no information we will become victims even if we were right ... And if one man stands up and says by the way I have been victimised, maybe we can carry his story. But the management will come and explain to us because he is such and such. All the fabricated stories against the guy will become the only solid evidence they can show us.”

10.2.3.2 Newspapers' Interactions with Key Context-related Factors:

The data analysis indicated that newspapers interact with various context-related factors in their indirect involvements in the succession process. The interviewees also highlighted several context-related factors that they claimed influencing the succession process in general. Most of these factors were on the macro level. Further information is presented in the following parts.

10.2.3.2.1 Interactions with Key Factors on the Macro Level:

The data analysis highlighted various interconnected macro level factors that either influence newspapers' involvements in the succession process or have been emphasised, in general, by the interviewees as influential factors acting upon the succession process. Specifically, these macro level factors emerge from: (1) the aftermath of the reform project; (2) the social and cultural norms and (3) the existing system regulating the succession process in the public sector.

Factors emerging from the aftermath of the Reform Project: The data analysis highlighted four factors. These factors were: (1) the raising of the ceiling of freedom of expression; (2) the initiation of women's empowerment projects; (3) the legitimisation of political associations and (4) the increase in politicisation pressure in the society.

The interviewees affirmed that the reform project has raised the ceiling of freedom of expression. This in turn enabled the press to be more involved in critiquing the government's policies, including those related to the succession process. As put by one interviewee:

"Now, the reform project of H.M. the King has provided freedom in the country in various aspects, such as political and economical aspects. This also applies to issues related to progression in careers in both the public and private sectors."

Another interviewee affirmed this notion by highlighting the public's new willingness to speak out, to express their opinions openly and complain regarding issues related their employment in the public sector. He stated, "I think, today, more people in the civil services are trying to talk to us." However, the data analysis revealed that the effects of the increase in freedom of expression on the succession process have not always been positive. For example, one interviewee claimed that when the reform project raised the ceiling of freedom of expression it opened what he described as "Pandora's Box". He stated:

"When the reform project came, it opened "Pandora's Box", the box in which all the evilness was locked up, according to Greek Mythology. When the project came it revealed all the things, which were concealed in the society, the good and the stinky ... Thus, a lot of the issues which were locked up in our chests, the issues which were in the dark corners, are now out in the open."

With regard to the initiation of projects to empower women, the interviewees emphasised the role of the reform project in enabling more women to assume leading positions. For example, one interviewee stated:

“The society has changed, but the involvement of women in the decision making is one of the fruits of the reform project of His Majesty the King ... And when the reform project of H.M the King was launched, it enabled the women to participate in the decision-making process and in the political life.”

With regard to the legitimisation of political associations, the interviewees considered it as an outcome of the reform project. This, in turn, created new powerful stakeholders influencing the succession process in the public sector. As put by one interviewee:

“The political associations and the trade unions have a big role because sometimes some of the decision-makers when they want to appoint an executive they negotiate ... So, [for example] if a minister asks for their support for a particular matter, they may provide the needed support; in return they are expecting him not to forget this favour. ... If you give me that organisation or you give one of my people a director position in X organisation [for example], I will support you regarding that particular decision”

Finally, the fourth factor emerging from the reform project was the increase of pressure for politicisation in the society. Such pressures, according to the interviewees, had affected the neutrality of the civil society organisations in general and the professional associations in particular. For example, one interviewee argued that these civil society organisations, and particularly professional associations, influence the succession process via their cooperation with the political associations. He stated:

“Yes, they do have an effect. However, all the unions in Bahrain are politically linked and have ideologies. They are not true professional unions. In the last crisis, we all saw how politically saturated these unions are. So, trade unions and other civil society organisations, such as the associations, parties and political blocs, are all considered the same.”

Factors emerging from the social and cultural norms: The data analysis highlighted two factors that have emerged from the social and cultural norms to influence the succession process in

general and the newspapers' involvement in such processes in particular. These factors were the social pressures on individuals to be biased toward their social affiliations and the social tendency to accept women in leading positions.

With regard to the social pressures on individuals to be biased in favour of their social affiliations, the data analysis highlighted the influence of favouritism and "Wasta" on the succession process. For example, one interviewee stated, "In addition ... favouritism towards relatives and friends plays a huge role." Another interviewee provided a broader overview of such social pressures on individuals to be biased in favour of their own social affiliations by highlighting the divisions within the society. He affirmed:

"The major dilemma that I think is facing the state and affecting the governmental organisations is the sectarianism and division in the society. ... Some of the ministries are now monochromatic in terms of the sects. ... Unfortunately, some of the officials, and based on their own interpretations and understandings, assess and recruit employees based on sectarian issues. As well, we see a lot of calls and demands based on sectarian allocations."

With regard to the second factor, the social trend to accept women in leading positions, the interviewees highlighted the tendency in the Bahraini society toward women's empowerment. For example, one interviewee affirmed this social trend by highlighting the Bahraini society's attitude toward this issue in comparison to those of neighbouring Arabian societies. He argued that even though women's empowerment was an outcome of the reform project, the society accepted such initiatives, by stating:

"The Bahraini society accepted this issue easily and we did not hear any criticism with regard to the presence of women in leadership positions, as director or as minister or even as an individual in charge. This means that the Bahraini society was ready for it ... and in general they are open-minded people."

Factors emerging from the existing succession system: The data analysis indicated that the drawbacks in the existing succession system pave the way for the newspapers to become involved in the succession process. The interviewees emphasised some drawbacks in the system that need

addressing, such as the vagueness of selection criteria and procedures. For example, one interviewee stated, “There are many gaps in the law that allow favouritism in selecting who assumes the position and overlooking other qualified and experienced people.”

10.2.3.2.2 Interactions with Key Factors on the Organisational Level:

The data analysis revealed that two factors on the organisational level influence the newspapers' involvement in the succession process. The first was the competent authority's perception of the importance of the organisations. For example, one interviewee argued that the variations in recognising heir-apparent successors and the transparency of the succession process are due to the type of the organisation in terms of its importance and sensitivity as perceived by the leadership. He stated:

“In some organisations, the leadership needs to land by parachute for various reasons ... I think this depends on the type of the organisation and its sensitivity and importance in the country and to the decision-maker. So, the more sensitive the organisation is the less transparency there will be in the decision-making process.”

However, the data analysis highlighted another factor at the organisational level that affects the transparency of the process, which was the management style in the organisation. For example, one interviewee affirmed:

“It [the transparency of the succession process] is like balance sheets of companies. Some balance sheets are very transparent and in some balance sheets there are a lot of corners and so on. It depends on the management. It defers from one ministry to another ministry and one company to another company.”

10.2.4 Summary of Media Organisations' (Newspapers) Perspectives

The data analysis indicated that media organisations perceived the succession process as an important issue, with their concerns, most often, focused on the successor. The interviewees justified this view by highlighting the appeal of news about executive appointment for the readers; also, they underlined the newspapers' role in raising public awareness and drawing attention to the existing problems in the succession process. The newspapers mainly employ their publications and

expertise to initiate public campaigns and indirectly influence the succession process. They may pressure the decision makers by drawing the public's attention to the existing defects in the succession process; or they may influence successor availability by promoting or questioning the appropriateness of certain individuals as candidates.

In such indirect involvements, the newspapers interact with various stakeholders, such as the political leadership, the public sector officials, political and civil society organisations. Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that newspapers' involvements in the succession process are influenced by various context-related factors on the macro and organisational levels. On the macro level, the interviewees highlighted factors emerging from: (1) the aftermath of the reform project; (2) the social and cultural norms and (3) the existing system regulating the succession process in the public sector. On the organisational level, the interviewees highlighted two factors; namely, the competent authority's perception of the importance of the organisation and the organisational leadership's management style.

10.3 POLICY MAKERS AND REGULATORY BODIES

This section presents the perspectives of the policy makers and regulatory bodies of the civil service. As illustrated earlier in Chapter 2: Research Context; four governmental organisations have been recognised as potential external stakeholders of the succession processes in the Bahraini public sector. Two of these four organisations could be considered as policy makers. The first is the EDB, which is responsible for formulating and overseeing the economic development strategy, including certain initiatives concerned with transforming the public sector's human resource management. The second organisation is the SCW. The SCW strives to implement the National Strategy for the Advancement of Bahraini Women, which includes a pilot concerned with Women in Decision Making Positions. The other two organisations are regulatory bodies that execute and oversee the implementation of the rules and regulations of the civil service. The first of these regulatory organisations is the CSB, which is responsible for regulating and monitoring the civil service in general. The second regulatory organisation is the BIPA, which, according to its mission,

acts as a change agent for sustained transformation through training, learning and development in the public sector.

Six interviews were conducted with top management officials to reflect the perspectives of these four organisations. The interviewees were selected based on their positions in their organisations' top management. Specifically, to represent the EDB, the researcher interviewed the Deputy Chief Executive for Special Programmes. In addition, to collect detailed information about the EDB involvement in the succession process, the researcher interviewed the General Director for the Project Directorate, a directorate that oversees and coordinates the executions of the EDB's initiatives. To represent the SCW, the researcher interviewed the Deputy General Secretary. As well, the researcher interviewed the head of the General Administration for Women's Empowerment Programmes to obtain further information about the organisation's involvements in the succession process. With regard to the CSB, the researcher interviewed the Director of the Administration Control Directorate, as it is the directorate responsible for ensuring the proper implementation of the civil service laws, rules and regulations. Finally, to represent the BIPA, the head of the organisation was interviewed¹. In the following sections, the responses of these six interviewees are presented according to the themes of the external stakeholder analysis template.

10.3.1 Policy Makers' and Regulatory Bodies' Claims and Interests in the Succession Process

10.3.1.1 The Urgency of the Claims of the Policy Makers and Regulatory Bodies' and their Stakes in the Succession Process

As was expected based on the organisations' strategies and missions, the data analysis indicated that these policy makers and regulatory bodies perceived the succession process as an important issue. The interviewees highlighted the links between their organisations' missions and strategies and the succession process. For example, one representative of the SCW stated:

¹ It is noteworthy that since the CSB and the BIPA are not only external stakeholders but also public organisations subject to the Civil Service Law, the researcher modified the interview agenda for CSB and BIPA officials to tackle, simultaneously, the themes of the external stakeholder interview and the internal stakeholder interview. Thus, some of their responses, analysed in this chapter, reflect their organisations' perspectives as external stakeholders. Other responses, analysed in the previous chapter, reflect their perspectives as internal stakeholders.

“Now, we have here a project concerned with empowering Bahraini women. According to the SCW’s strategy ... one of the strategy’s objectives is increasing the number of women in leading posts in the civil service and private sector as well.”

As well, one of the EDB representatives affirmed this notion and linked succession processes to the success of the EDB’s overall strategy by stating:

“It is extremely important as our role in the Economic Development Board is to follow up the execution of the economic strategy and vision ... Our role is to follow up the execution [of the strategy] to ensure the initiatives’ success. However, these initiatives will succeed only if they are executed by competent employees ... From this perspective, it is important that employees working in the executive body are fully prepared, competent and capable of executing these initiatives.”

With regard to the stakes in the succession process, the data analysis indicated that the main concern of these four governmental organisations revolves around the establishment of proper succession systems to ensure certain successors’ quality. For example, one interviewee affirmed this notion and stressed the importance of selecting appropriate successors by stating: “The main point is finding the appropriate people whom we can deal with.” Furthermore, the interviewees’ responses emphasised the link between proper succession systems and the desired quality of the successors. For instance, one interviewee stated:

“For example, the Civil Service Bureau is reviewing now its framework ... to set the regulations, the system or the framework which determine who deserves to be promoted and how to execute the promotion. It should be a fair process ... in order to provide competent employees for the public sector.”

However, a difference was noted in the highlighted criteria for successors. While, on one hand, the EDB, the CSB and the BIPA were concerned, in general, about how to appoint the right individuals in the right positions via fair and transparent processes, on the other hand, the SCW was concerned specifically with the appointment of women. For the three abovementioned organisations, establishing a proper succession process system is more important than appointing the right individuals in the right positions. As put by one interviewee:

“If you found and hired the right person in the right place, this would be a partial solution to the whole problem. But, to provide a root-cause solution and achieve our target, we should establish a system that can select and hire the right person in the right place.”

However, the data analysis indicated that SCW was only concerned about “how the succession should be executed” to enhance women’s prospects of assuming leading positions in the public sector. For example, one interviewee stated:

“One of the strategy's objectives is increasing the number of women in leading posts in the civil service and private sector as well.”

10.3.2 Policy Makers’ and Regulatory Bodies’ Mechanisms to Satisfy their Claims and Interests

10.3.2.1 Policy Makers’ and Regulatory Bodies’ Involvement in the Succession Process:

The data analysis indicated that these four governmental organisations differ in their levels of involvement in the succession process. While the representatives of both the EDB and the SCW claimed that their organisations have limited direct involvement, the representatives of the CSB and the BIPA highlighted their organisations’ direct roles in executing the succession process. For example, one representative of the EDB stated:

“Currently, there is an initiative of the strategy concerned with selecting and hiring the right persons in the right places in the public sector, especially the leaders, including Section Head positions and upward. This is carried out in cooperation with the CSB and BIPA, which have lately been responsible for its execution ... We are not directly involved in the process and we do not carry out the selection process, however, we set the framework that stressed the involvement of the BIPA. ... The EDB is not in the front line; it sets the strategies and coordinates between ministries.”

As well, according to the SCW representatives, the SCW’s involvement in the succession process is indirect, focusing on the implementation of National Strategy for the Advancement of the Bahraini Women. However, the data analysis highlighted the direct involvement of both the CSB and BIPA in the succession process as regulatory bodies. For example, the representative of the CSB stated:

“We in the CSB, as regulators, when the relevant authority chooses A or B we examine the selection criteria. If the candidate satisfies the required criteria, we approve the nomination. If the candidate does not satisfy the criteria, we ask them to nominate another candidate.”

With regard to the BIPA involvements, the representative of the organisation highlighted its role in qualifying the candidates for executive positions. He stated:

“We have already started some projects for preparing the second line of leaders such as our big project with the University of Oxford.”

10.3.2.2 Mechanisms employed by policy makers and regulatory bodies' to satisfy their claims and interests

The data analysis revealed that these policy makers and regulatory bodies employ various mechanisms to influence the succession. However, the interviewees' responses stressed particularly the mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework and the mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors. This emphasis is noticeable in the output of the Matrix Coding Query illustrated in Table 10-1.

TABLE 10-1: POLICY-MAKERS AND REGULATORY BODIES' MECHANISMS TO SATISFY THEIR CLAIMS AND INTERESTS

	Node 2: Stakeholder mechanisms to satisfy their claims				
	Node 2.1: Mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors	Node 2.2: Mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent	Node 2.3: Mechanisms aimed at influencing the decision makers' decisions	Node 2.4: Mechanisms aimed at overriding the decisions of the decision makers	Node 2.5: Mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework
EDB 1	6	3	10	0	14
EDB 2	5	0	0	0	29
SCW 1	9	0	4	0	2
SCW 2	12	0	9	0	12
CSB	0	0	0	5	3
BIPA	2	0	0	0	1
Total	34	3	23	5	61

10.3.2.3 Mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors

Via these mechanisms, the EDB, the SCW and the BIPA influence the availability of the successors by qualifying and bringing to the fore certain individuals for recognition by the decision makers as appropriate candidates for executive positions. For the BIPA this is to be expected based on its mission, strategies and programmes directed to qualify the public sector employees. However to illustrate the employment of these mechanisms by the EDB and the SCW, some of the responses of their representatives are cited. For example, one representative of the EDB highlighted his organisation's efforts to qualify a pool of candidates for executive positions in the public sector by stating:

“Nonetheless, a project for qualifying employees was proposed, which encompasses identifying these potential employees and equipping them with the right skills to enable them to go upward, which may not be necessary to be appointed in the same organisation. We provide a pool of potential candidates for anything. This is an ongoing process. We exerted strenuous effort at the level of undersecretaries and undersecretary assistants to get to know the people and so on.”

Furthermore, to ensure the readiness of the employees for executing the EDB's initiatives in the public sector, the EDB may carry out the training themselves. The SCW also influences the succession process in the public sector by qualifying female candidates for recognition as potential successors for executive positions. One representative of the SCW stated:

“Besides, there were various workshops conducted to prepare female managers and qualify them to hold higher positions. So, women can acquire leadership and supervisory skills. This is one of the mechanisms. Consequently, when the women acquire the required skills and qualification for holding higher posts they will impose themselves as potential candidates for these executive positions.”

In addition to qualifying female candidates, the SCW works on bringing to the fore and marketing certain female individuals for recognition as potential candidates. As put by one representative of the SCW:

“Of course we played a major role in the search for those women who were already available and who strived to qualify themselves as we do not give ourselves the exclusivity for preparing and development of these women. In fact, the women were already prepared. But there was no one who tried to shed the light on them and raise them as role models in order to assume these positions ... You can say that the council, indirectly, through its activities and proceedings has drawn attention to some faces. ... Some female faces came under the light. So, this will, indirectly, get into the subconscious of the people.”

10.3.2.4 Mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent

The data analysis highlighted one mechanism for overthrowing the office incumbent, in the responses of the EDB's representatives. Via such a mechanism, the EDB points out to the competent authority the poorly performing executives whom they are dealing with to carry on their strategy's initiatives. Accordingly, the EDB may contribute to the dismissal of unfit executives responsible for executing their initiatives in the governmental organisations. As put by one of the two EDB's representatives:

“But if the diagnostics highlight anybody as an obstacle, we make it clear that this individual is slowing down the project's progress, he is the weakest link and he should be replaced.”

10.3.2.5 Mechanisms to Influence the Decision Makers

The data analysis highlighted three mechanisms employed by the policy-makers and regulatory bodies to influence the succession process decisions. More light is shed on these mechanisms in the following parts.

10.3.2.5.1 Consultation

Via this mechanism, the EDB and the SCW provide input regarding succession press issues when consulted by the decision makers. For instance, the representative of the EDB stated, “We may offer help, if he [the minister] needs it, to select the right people.” Furthermore, the interviewee highlighted a specific case of an undersecretary appointment based on cooperation between the EDB and the competent organisation.

The SCW are also consulted on succession process matters, via two means. The first is via their joint committees with the various governmental organisations. According to the representatives of the SCW, these committees are established to follow up and address the obstacles facing the implementation of women's empowerment projects. As put by one of the SCW representatives:

“Besides, there were common committees set up between the council and, for example, the Ministry of Education. Several similar committees involve the council and other ministries such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour. These committees review issues that have to do with the national plan, objectives achieved, our future plans, and problems which may arise.”

The second way by which the SCW is consulted is via the direct links between the SCW's officials and the competent authorities in the public sector. As put by one representative of the SCW:

“And other mechanisms, not at the level of the joint common committees but at higher level, such as the many correspondences between the General Secretary and the competent ministers”

10.3.2.5.2 Persuasion:

Via this mechanism, the officials of the EDB and SCW may strive to convince the decision makers to accept their points of view regarding succession process matters, most often regarding successor selection. For example, the EDB representative stated that they might draw the attention of the competent authorities to the potential of their organisations' employees. He stated:

“Very rarely we get involved in this process, yet, we help the minister by providing a kind of feedback about the people whom he appointed to work with us. This individual is an asset to the project, that individual is an obstacle for the project, and that individual has potential but needs the following skills.”

With regard to the persuasion mechanism, the SCW implemented a unique tactic to influence, or motivate (according to the interviewee's terminology), the competent authorities to empower women by organising an annual competition among the public sector organisations. Through this competition, Her Royal Highness Princess Sabika (the first lady) presents an award to the

organisation that achieves the most in empowering women. One of the two representatives of the SCW stated, “Notably, we also have the award of H.H Princess Sabika as another mechanism”. She also affirmed the effectiveness of this mechanism by stating:

“The participation in this contest by itself, regardless of winning the award is [a gain]. [It is a gain] when the ministries sit down to analyse their data and statistics and find out the number of women who had participated in training programmes, who had participated in internal and external activities, how many females do we have in leading posts, what is the female percentage in the workforce in comparison to men, and what is the ratio of women to men. When they sit down to analyse and write the report, they realise the gaps in their organisations in terms of the number of women in leading posts, in terms of this and that.”

10.3.2.5.3 Pressuring

In this mechanism, the EDB and the SCW apply pressures on the decision makers to influence succession process decisions. The EDB adopts a unique approach to pressure the decision makers, which differs from that of all other external stakeholders. The data analysis reveals, based on the EDB’s power to set the initiatives for reforming the various aspects of the public sector along with the initiative’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the EDB officials pressure the competent authorities to appoint those who possess the qualities to meet such KPIs. As put by one representative of the EDB:

“Moreover, on many occasion, we set the standards or the criteria for the minister. If the project is implemented from scratch, we may set the KPIs and indicate requirements for the employees, and then we let the minister select the right people.”

To compel the decision makers to use the established KPIs, the EDB linked the organisations’ budgets to the attainment of the KIP specified in the organisations’ strategies. One of the EDB representatives stated:

“Finally, there is another step taken to link the budget with the government’s proposed strategy. This is similar to the Stick and the Carrot. So you offer the ministry the incentive to deliver by saying that your ministry’s budget is linked with the strategy which you set and

the challenges which you are facing. So, they automatically put the right person in the right place and the right person must be a highly trained one.”

However, the SCW applies another tactic to pressure the decision makers, similar to that used by the women's association and based on raising public awareness and highlighting any obstacle facing women's empowerment. One representative of the SCW stated:

“However, the council has a role in highlighting where the gaps are and what needs to be done ... [For example, those gaps which may exist] in leading posts, participation in training programmes or lack of opportunities given to women in a specific aspect. The council shed light on these problems. So it becomes clear to the media, to the decision makers.”

Furthermore, the interviewees emphasised the SCW's role in reminding the government of the state's international obligations regarding women's empowerment by stating:

“To elaborate more, [this is in relation to] our obligations regarding international conventions, such as CEDAW, Human Rights, the Millennium Development Goals, and others. All these reports, when developed, show the gaps. And since these reports are internationally recognised ... the Bahraini government is committed to filling in these gaps and addressing any deficiencies, to show that it has made progress in the following report presented.”

10.3.2.6 Mechanisms aimed at overriding the decisions of the decision makers

The data analysis indicated that only the CSB has influenced the succession process by overriding the decisions of the competent authorities. As a regulatory body for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the civil service laws, the CSB checks the appropriateness of the candidates nominated by competent authorities for executive positions. The CSB may also reject candidates. As put by the CSB representative:

“Sometimes, the competent authority insists on appointing a specific individual. We want him; provide us with a way to appoint him. [But, if the candidate were unfit for the position] There is no way.”

10.3.2.7 Mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework:

Via these mechanisms, the policy makers and the regulatory bodies attempt to alter the way in which the succession process is carried out. The data analysis revealed agreement among the interviewees on the need to develop a new system to regulate the succession process in the public sector. For example, one interviewee stated, “No change will be brought except after changing the whole system.” Another interviewee affirmed this notion by stating:

“To have more competent and highly qualified employees working in the public sector, we need proper succession management.”

The data analysis highlighted four mechanisms that were employed by these governmental organisations to alter the existing succession process framework. These mechanisms were: (1) developing a new system for the succession process in the civil service in general (which is in progress and it has not been finalised yet); (2) establishing new entities assigned to tasks related to the succession process in the public sector; (3) ensuring the development of a proper succession process system in new governmental organisations that are being developed; and (4) developing a performance management system.

With regard to developing a new succession process system, the data analysis revealed that a new system is under development as one of the EDB’s initiatives, involving the CSB, the BIPA and other consultancy agencies. The reference to this new system has echoed in the responses of the representatives of these three organisations. For example, one interviewee stated:

“There is a new project starting by 2012, well in fact there are two projects: succession planning and succession management. Based on a directive from the Civil Service Council, a budget has been allocated for the projects for the entire government to create a methodology, which all the government should be bound by.”

With regard to establishing new entities to be involved in the succession process, the data analysis revealed that both the EDB and the SCW employed such mechanisms to alter the framework of the process. In the case of the EDB, the interviewees’ responses stressed the EDB’s role in establishing BIPA. According to the representatives of the EDB, BIPA was established as one of their strategy

initiatives to improve public administration, including the existing succession process framework.

As put by one of the EDB representatives:

“The problem was dealing with the difficulty in selecting and hiring the right person in the right place. As a result, BIPA was created and its programme was presented to help solve this problem.”

Similarly, yet at a lower organisational level, SCW also played an important role in establishing “Equal Opportunity” units within governmental organisations. These units are not only responsible for ensuring the identification of any discrimination against women, but also for monitoring women’s interests in these organisations. Both the SCW representatives highlighted these units; for instance, one stated:

“These units are handling the two paths. [One] The government organisation [in which these units are established] will be concerned with the women who work with them in terms of their recruitment, training, participation in official delegations and conferences beside their career development and promotion from one position to another”

With regard to ensuring the development of a proper succession process system in newly established organisations, only the EDB appeared able to employ such mechanisms to influence the existing framework. Based on the powers of its initiatives to establish new organisations, the EDB considers the succession process issue in the human resource management of those organisations. For example, one of the EDB representatives demonstrated this notion in the Bahrain Polytechnic case, where succession issues were considered in the Human Resources Manual of the newly established organisation. He stated:

“For example, we were responsible for establishing the polytechnic from A to Z ... We took into our considerations when setting a strategy for the polytechnic to include a programme which would ensure that the recruited people are highly qualified to meet the challenges facing the polytechnic. Consequently, when they were developing the organisation's HR manual, at that time it was still being incubated at the EDB; we made sure that the HR manual satisfied this objective”

Furthermore, the representative of the BIPA, which was established and incubated by the EDB, confirmed the existence of such a succession process system in his organisation. He stated:

“Most probably you would find the organisations which have identified policies and procedures [for the succession process] are those newly-established organisations ... The establishing laws for such organisations stipulated that there should be clearly-set policies and procedures for each organisation ... For example, there are clear policies and procedures for the succession planning at our institution. How is it going to be moving, who, how promotion is done and etc. are set issues for us. It is even linked to and associated with the career plan for each employee.”

Finally, in terms of these mechanisms, the data analysis indicated that the EDB, via one of its initiatives, has established and is enforcing a performance management system to evaluate the effectiveness of the civil service employees. This would facilitate the identification of the potential candidates. As put by one representative of the EDB:

“Moreover, a Performance Management system has been stressed to ensure that the best qualified person is promoted. So, you set the goals and the objectives which should be met by the person, the KPIs. So, by determining these goals, it is clear who should be penalised and who should be promoted. There will be evidence and a fair process for both penalties and promotion.”

10.3.3 Policy Makers’ and Regulatory Bodies’ Interactions with various Stakeholders and the Organisational Context

10.3.3.1 Policy Makers’ and Regulatory Bodies’ Interactions with Key Stakeholders

The data analysis indicated that while the EDB and the SCW interact with various stakeholders in their involvement in the succession process, the CSB and the BIPA were involved only with the political leadership and the government officials. However, the EDB and the SCW’s involvement in the succession process underline various stakeholders. Most often, these interactions were with officials in the public sector. In addition, both organisations have direct interaction with the political leadership. The EDB and the SCW are headed by two political figures. The EDB is headed by H.R.H. the Crown Prince and the SCW is headed by H.R.H. Princess Sabika, the first lady.

In addition, the EDB and the SCW interacted with different civil society organisations and political parties in setting their strategies. For example, one of the EDB's representatives highlighted the EDB interactions with various parties to establish the EDB's initiatives. He stated:

“We worked with all the ministries, we were in the middle coordinating between them, to set the initiatives which will fulfil this vision and to determine what will be carried out during the next four years. Our role was to establish links between different ministries that have new ideas to offer and discuss them, while consulting with others, including traders, citizens working in the same fields and politicians. We gathered all the ideas in one place.”

As well, the SCW's representatives confirmed such interaction with various parties to establish their strategy. As put by one interviewee:

“The council conducted some kind of exercise, gathering all stakeholders, whether from the civil society organisations such as women's associations, professional association which are interested and concerned with women's issues as well as some officials from the governmental organisations and the private sector and international organisations. Groups were formed and with some brainstorming, after more than one year, a strategy was developed.”

On top of the interactions with abovementioned stakeholders, the EDB and the SCW interact with the public sector employees directly via the in-house training programmes that they provide. In addition, as highlighted earlier, the SCW interacted with the media in their attempts to shed light on certain female figures for recognition as potential candidates.

10.3.3.2 Policy Makers' and Regulatory Bodies' Interactions with Key Context-Related Factors:

The data analysis indicated that the involvement of these four governmental organisations was influenced by various context-related factors at the macro, organisational and positional levels.

10.3.3.2.1 Interactions with Key Factors on the Macro Level:

The data analysis indicated that the interviewees have emphasised two macro level factors. The first was the existing system regulating the succession process. All the interviewees highlighted the inadequacy of the execution of the succession process in the public sector. One interviewee

affirmed, “There is no standard process for appointing employees in the public sector.” Another interviewee criticised the vague mechanisms of the existing succession process system by stating “But to be frank with you, the way or the system which identifies the successor is not clear”.

The second most stressed factor on the macro level is women’s empowerment projects. Three interviewees highlighted the clear increase in the number of women in leading positions during the last decade. In contrast to the statement by the women’s association, two interviewees argued that this increment is not related to a social trend. Rather, according to one interviewee, it is based on the political leadership’s will and the government’s efforts to reflect a new image of the state. He stated:

“Nowadays, even men are striving to find the opportunity to be promoted and progress in their careers and the case is even worse for women. However, what may help us is that Bahrain, in the course of the past 10 years, has been striving to project the image of a country that supports women and empowers them, so women now are getting opportunities, but only via political decree and at the peak of the pyramid.”

The other interviewee argued that women’s empowerment projects were established to satisfy the international community. He stated, “I am sorry to say that it is an external agenda.”

10.3.3.2.2 Interactions with Key Factors on the Organisational Level:

The data analysis highlighted only one factor on the organisational level, which related to the management style of the organisation. According to one interviewee, improved succession systems may exist in the recently established organisations. However, the point here appears to be not the organisational age, rather it is the management style of these newly established organisations. The interviewee stated:

“Most probably you would find the organisations which have identified policies and procedures are those newly-established organisations ... whereas the old and big organisations, such as the ministries or even the municipalities ... you would not find such policies and procedures there.”

10.3.3.2.3 Interactions with Key Factors on the Positional Level:

The data analysis highlighted two positional level factors in the interviewees' responses. The first was the hierarchal level of the position. For example, one interviewee highlighted the appointing authorities for the various position levels. He stated:

“The appointments for the positions of Undersecretaries, Undersecretary Assistants and those equivalent positions are via a Royal Decree based on the nomination of the Relevant Authority and the Approval of the Ministers' Cabinet. The appointments for Directors positions, Acting Director positions and those equivalent positions are via a Ministers' Cabinet decree and based on the nomination of the Relevant Authority. The appointments for other positions are via a decree by the Relevant Authority.”

Another interviewee also mentioned the difference in the position hierarchy to demonstrate the extent to which politics are involved in appointing and dismissing office incumbents. He affirmed:

“For director positions and above, the job is not guaranteed. For director and above, you could be a director today and tomorrow you could lose your job as another individual is appointed via a decree. Thus, these positions are politically oriented.”

The second factor on the positional level was the perceived sensitivity of the position. This factor was the least stressed of the two factors. Nevertheless, one interviewee asserted the impact of such perceived sensitivity on the way in which the succession process is carried out. He stated:

“There are some positions that are sensitive positions. The sensitivity of the position requires matters to be less overt.”

Another interviewee reflected this perceived sensitivity by stating:

“In certain positions, some types of people are not appropriate ... Some of the criteria are sensitive and must not be disclosed.”

10.3.4 Summary of the Policy Makers' and Regulatory Bodies' Perspectives

The data analysis indicated that the policy makers (EDB and SCW) and regulatory bodies (CSB and BIPA) perceived the succession process as an important issue. The interviewees justified this

view by highlighting the close links between their organisations' missions and strategies for the succession process. The data analysis indicated that the main concern of these organisations was to establish proper succession systems to ensure the attainment of certain qualities in the successors. The data analysis revealed that these policy makers and regulatory bodies influence the succession process via various mechanisms. These mechanisms were grouped into five categories, namely: (1) mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors; (2) mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent; (3) mechanisms aimed at influencing the decision makers' decisions; (4) mechanisms aimed at overriding the decision makers' decisions and (5) mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework.

In their involvements in the succession process, the EDB and SCW interact with various stakeholders, such as the political leadership, the public sector officials and staff, political parties and civil society organisations. However, the CSB and BIPA tend to interact only with the political leadership and the public sector officials and staff. In general, these interactions take the form of cooperation among these different stakeholders. These governmental organisations also interact with context-related key factors. Specifically, the data analysis highlights two factors on the macro level (the existing system for regulating the succession process and women's empowerment projects); one factor on the organisational level (organisational age); and two factors on the positional level (position's hierarchal level and sensitivity).

10.4 THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES

This section summarises the external stakeholders' perspectives presented in the current and previous two chapters: Chapters 8 and 9. Based on the Stakeholder Theory, the stakeholders of the succession process were identified; and the review of the Bahraini public sector led to the identification of the external stakeholders. The external stakeholders were divided into five subcategory groups as follows: (1) political associations; (2) professional associations; (3) social associations; (4) media organisations and (5) policy makers and regulatory bodies. To reflect the perspectives of these subcategory groups, the researchers interviewed 19 key officials, representing

14 organisations. The following subsections present the perspectives of these investigated external stakeholders according to the themes of the external stakeholder analysis template.

10.4.1 External Stakeholders' Claims and Interests in the Succession Process

10.4.1.1 The Urgency of the External Stakeholders' Claims and Interests

The data analysis indicated that the abovementioned external stakeholders have urgent claims and interests in succession processes for executive positions in public sector. Such urgency was most often expressed in terms of the criticality of these claims and interests for the stakeholders. This was evident through the emphasis all interviewees placed on the importance of the executive succession process from the perspectives of their organisations. In addition, urgency was expressed, although less frequently, as the time sensitivity of the stakeholders' claims and interests, demanding for urgent action. For instance, some representatives of the political and professional associations expressed the importance of the issue by highlighting the need to replace incompetent executives and calling for the introduction of new blood to the executive body.

In general, the interviewees presented various arguments to justify their claims and interests in the executive succession process. However, the data analysis indicated that all the presented justifications revolve around two pivotal points. The first is the consequences of the executive succession process (in terms of who is selected to be the successor) on the attainment of the organisational goals of these external stakeholders. This was clear in the interviewees' constant emphasis of the links between the succession process and their organisations' strategies, missions and roles. The second focal point of the interviewees' justifications is the deficiencies in the current method of execution of the succession process in the public sector. Evidence supporting this notion was manifested in the frequent criticisms of the existing system, echoed in the interviewees' claims that the system falls short of ensuring the desired quality in the successors.

Regarding the stakes of the external stakeholders in the succession process, the interviewees showed greater interest in "*who should be the successor*" than any other aspect of the process. Sometimes, these interests were expressed in terms of concerns about the selection criteria for the successors. In certain cases, the desired qualities in the successor do not relate to the position under

consideration, such as in the case of the women's associations and the SCW empowering women to assume leading positions in the public sector. In other cases, the interviewees were interested in appointing specific individuals, for example, when nominating candidates for executive positions. In addition, some of the interviewees accused other stakeholders of favouring those individuals with whom they are affiliated. For example, politicians were accused of favouring individuals who share their political orientation.

Furthermore, whenever an interest in "*how the succession process should be executed*" emerged in the course of the interviews, the interviewees frequently associated such interest with a statement highlighting the quality of the successor. In addition, interest in "who should be the successor" is evident in the mechanisms employed by external stakeholders, which most often focus on the individuals (as candidates, office incumbents and successors) rather than the succession process per se¹.

In addition to the clear interest in "who should be the successor", some external stakeholders showed more interest in succession processes taking place in the public sector organisations closely linked to their organisations' objectives. For example, political associations showed more interest in those processes taking place at service-provider organisations, which are valued by their voters. Women's associations and the SCW, on the other hand, to a certain degree, focus on organisations closely linked to women's issues (such as the Ministry of Social Affairs) and those organisations with a high number of women in their workforce (such as the Ministry of Education).

10.4.2 External Stakeholders' Mechanisms to Realise their Claims and Interests

10.4.2.1 External Stakeholders' involvement in the succession process

The data analysis revealed that the intensity of the different external stakeholders' involvement in the succession process varies. For example, while political associations tend to be deeply involved in the process, the professional associations' involvement is limited. This variation does not reflect a lack of legitimacy on the part of the politicians to intervene in the succession processes in the executive body, or the professionals' close proximity to the subject organisations.

¹ Further information demonstrating this notion is provided in the following subsection focusing on the mechanisms employed by the external stakeholders to influence the succession process.

The external stakeholders were also found to vary in terms of direct and indirect involvement in the succession process. For example, some external stakeholders became directly involved in the succession process by: (1) participating in the dismissal of the office incumbent, (2) influencing the decision makers in their successor selection process; (3) overriding the decision makers' decisions concerning succession process matters; and (4) altering the succession process framework. With regard to indirect involvement, some external stakeholders participate in qualifying and bringing to the fore certain individuals for recognition by the decision makers as potential candidates for executive positions. The ability of the external stakeholders to influence the succession process did not relate either to direct or indirect involvement. For instance, some external stakeholders (such as political associations) are able directly to influence the decision makers to appoint a specific individual by means such as consultation and persuasion. Other external stakeholders (such as the EDB and SCW) are able to attain the same objective via indirect involvement by qualifying certain individual and highlighting them as appropriate candidates for executive positions. Further information illustrating such involvement is provided in the following subsections.

10.4.2.2 Overview of the external stakeholders' mechanisms to satisfy their claims and interests

The data analysis indicated that external stakeholders employ various mechanisms to realise their claims and interests in the executive succession process. These mechanisms were grouped into five categories based on the aims of these mechanisms. The categories are: (1) mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors; (2) mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent; (3) mechanisms aimed at influencing the decision makers' decisions; (4) mechanisms aimed at overriding the decision makers' decisions and (5) mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework. In the following subsections, further details about these mechanisms are presented.

10.4.2.3 Mechanisms aimed at influencing the availability of the successors

In these mechanisms, the external stakeholders strive to influence the availability of the successors by qualifying and/or bringing to the fore certain individuals for recognition by the decision makers as appropriate candidates for executive positions. The data analysis highlighted the employment of

such mechanisms by professional associations, newspapers and three governmental organisations (EDB, SCW and BIPA). However, these mechanisms were never mentioned by any interviewees representing political or women's associations.

10.4.2.4 Mechanisms aimed at overthrowing the office incumbent

Via these mechanisms, the external stakeholders influence the succession process by overthrowing a specific office incumbent and creating a need for a successor. The data analysis showed that, via these mechanisms, the external stakeholders' officials bring attention to poorly performing office incumbents in governmental organisations, which consequently may lead to their overthrow. Moreover, it was reported that political associations may purposefully seek to overthrow the office incumbent, regardless of his/her performance. However, in general, the data analysis revealed that all the external stakeholder subcategory groups employed such mechanisms, except for the women's associations.

10.4.2.5 Mechanisms aimed at influencing the decision makers' decisions

Via these mechanisms, external stakeholders strive to influence the decision makers' decision, most often those related to successor selection. The data analysis highlighted three mechanisms employed by the external stakeholders. These mechanisms were: (1) consultation; (2) persuasion; and (3) pressuring. The data analysis showed that these mechanisms were mostly highlighted by representatives of the professional associations (74 responses). Notably, regarding influencing the decision makers' decisions, the data analysis indicated that newspapers employ their publications and ability to launch public campaigns as a means to pressure those decision makers. Further details about these mechanisms are presented in the following subsections.

10.4.2.5.1 Consultation:

Via this mechanism, the external stakeholders' officials provide their input regarding succession press issues when consulted by the decision makers. However, the decision makers are not obliged to accept their advice. Sometimes the consultations are formal, as in the cases of joint committees made up of the external stakeholders and the governmental organisations (for example, professional associations and the competent ministries). The external stakeholders' inputs in these formal consultations may address various issues related to executive succession, such as

recommendations about how to improve the executives' career development or nominating successors. At other times, these consultations are informal, based on the links between the external stakeholders' officials and those of the governmental organisations. In these informal consultations, external stakeholders, most often, nominate certain individuals for appointment to executive positions. Nonetheless, the representative of the women's association highlighted that they use such informal consultations to present the decision makers with their recommendations regarding how to empower women in general.

10.4.2.5.2 Persuasion:

Via this mechanism, the external stakeholders' officials strive to convince the decision makers to adopt their points of view regarding succession process matters. Most of the time, such attempts focus on persuading the decision makers to appoint specific individuals or to adopt certain criteria for selecting the successors (such as the case of the SCW and their award to empower women). The data analysis indicated that these attempts to influence the decision makers are based on the connections between the officials of the external stakeholders and their counterparts in the governmental organisations.

10.4.2.5.3 Pressuring:

Via this mechanism, external stakeholders apply pressures on the decision makers to influence succession process decisions. The data analysis revealed that these external stakeholders adopt varying approaches to pressure the decision makers. For example, political associations may negotiate political deals, forcing the decision makers to appoint specific individuals or face political accusations and hardship in the parliament. Professional associations may mobilise their affiliated professionals and launch public campaigns to force the decision makers to accept their associations' viewpoints. Women's associations and the SCW apply pressure on the decision makers by take advantage of the political leadership's keenness to reflect an image of Bahrain as a state that empowers women. They monitor and publish surveys about women's occupation of the organisations' top management positions, which may pressure the decision makers in these organisations to take measures to empower women. Newspapers use their publications and their ability to launch public campaigns to overthrow office incumbents, illuminate certain individuals as

potential candidates or to highlight any violations in the succession process. The EDB, as a policy maker responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy, pressures the decision makers to appoint those who can meet the key performance indicators for the EDB's initiatives.

10.4.2.6 Mechanisms aimed at overriding the decision makers' decisions

Via these mechanisms, the external stakeholders influence the succession process by overriding the decision makers' decisions in relation to succession process matters. The data analysis revealed that external stakeholders may employ these mechanisms either by seeking the involvement of a higher authority (such as the case for political and professional associations) or by their entitlement to oversee the succession process in the public sector (i.e., the CSB).

10.4.2.7 Mechanisms aimed at altering the succession process framework

Via these mechanisms, external stakeholders strive to change the way in which the succession process is carried out. The data analysis indicated that external stakeholders may achieve this aim through their entitlement as legislators (political associations), by their participation in amending professionals' cadres (professional associations) and setting national strategies (women associations and SCW) or through their entitlement as policy makers and regulatory bodies (EDB, CSB and BIPA). The need to ensure the desired qualities in the successors was emphasised in the interviewees' responses. Selection criteria were stressed in the stakeholders' attempts to alter the succession process more than any other aspect of the process, such as fairness or transparency.

10.4.3 External Stakeholders' Interactions with various Stakeholders and the Organisational Context

10.4.3.1 External Stakeholders' Interactions with Key Stakeholders

The data analysis indicated that, in their involvement in the succession process, the external stakeholders have interacted with various stakeholders. The external stakeholders' representatives highlighted their interactions among their organisations. The interviewees also highlighted their organisations' interactions with the political leadership and the public sector officials. The magnitude of the interaction with a particular stakeholder related to the most emphasised mechanism in terms of influencing the succession process. For example, the representatives of the

professional associations most often highlighted their interactions with the government officials in their competent ministries. This finding fits with their most often employed mechanisms of attempting to influence the decision makers' decisions.

10.4.3.2 External Stakeholders' Interactions with Key Contextual Factors

The data analysis revealed that external stakeholders, in their involvement in the succession process, interact with various factors emerging from the organisations' context. Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the external stakeholders interact with these context-related factors on three context levels, namely, macro, organisational and positional. According to the interviewees, such factors facilitated or hindered their organisations' efforts to satisfy their claims and interests in the executive succession process. The interviewees also highlighted some contextual factors which they claimed influence the succession process in general. Most of the highlighted factors were on the macro-level. Further details are presented in the following subsections.

10.4.3.2.1 Interactions with Key Factors on the Macro level:

The various macro-level factors highlighted by the external stakeholders' representatives were arranged into three groups titled as follows: (1) factors related to the aftermath of the state reform project; (2) factors related to the existing laws and regulations and (3) factors related to the social and cultural norms in Bahrain.

Factors related to the aftermath of the state reform project: The interviewees highlighted various factors that emerged in the aftermath of the state reform project. After the induction of the state reform project, many measures were taken to transform the state to a constitutional monarchy. This transformation induced various changes in the way in which the state is governed. Consequently, these changes effected the external stakeholders' involvement in the succession process in the executive body. For example, political associations emphasised that the state's reformation enabled them, as legislators in the parliament, to play a key role in monitoring the executive body. This has facilitated their involvement in public sector decision making, including those decisions related to succession process matters. Civil society organisations are now participating more in setting up national strategies and plans (such as women's associations and the National Strategy to Advance Bahraini Women), as well as in setting up professional cadres (such

as professional associations' involvement in their professional cadres). Furthermore, professional associations, due to the changes in the state's system, are striving nowadays to change the laws on civil organisations to enable them to become trade unions in the public sector. Such transformation would enable these associations to play a bigger role in the succession process as they would have a better negotiating position in representing the professional employees in the public sector. Women's association and the SCW are seizing the opportunity to empower women by taking advantage of the political leadership's keenness to reflect a new image of Bahrain. Newspapers are now enjoying a higher ceiling of freedom to criticise the government's performance. Policy makers and regulatory bodies are restructuring the public sector to meet the goals of the strategic vision of the state. This restructuring process has an impact not only on the organisational structure but also on the executive bodies within these organisations and the civil service regulating systems, including those related to the succession process.

Factors related to the existing laws and regulations: The interviewees highlighted two factors related to the laws and regulations that facilitated or hindered their involvement in the succession process. The first and most emphasised was the existing civil service law. According to the interviewees, this law falls short of ensuring the needed qualities in the successors; and thus, the need for amending the law is a necessity for these external stakeholders in preserving their claims and interests in the succession process. It appeared that this deficiency in the system for regulating the succession process opened the door for these external stakeholders to intervene in the process. These interventions may take the form of attempts to amend the law. This was evident in the employed external stakeholders' mechanisms to alter the process framework. Nonetheless, the data analysis showed that these stakeholders take advantage of such deficiency to pursue their primary concerns and interests in the process; "who should be the successor". For example, if there were clear procedures for planning the succession process and for selecting the successors, politicians would have little room to influence the decision makers to appoint those affiliated with their political orientations.

The second factor highlighted by the interviewees in relation to the existing laws and regulations was the law regulating the civil society organisations. The civil society organisations, such as

professional and women associations, are regulated by the law for societies, social and cultural clubs issued by Decree Law No. (21) for 1989 and the following amendments issued by Decree Law No. (44) for 2002. According to interviewees representing professional associations, the law confines their organisations' role to that of professional societies. Thus, these organisations are constrained from representing their affiliated professionals in the public sector organisations as trade unions. If these associations were recognised as trade unions by the legislators, they would be in a better position to influence professionals' career developments schemes and cadres.

Factors related to the social and cultural norms in Bahrain: Among the various factors the interviewees highlighted in relation to Bahraini social and cultural norms, one factor stands out. This is the pressures on the individuals to be biased in favour of those whom they are affiliated with. According to the interviewees, succession decisions are influenced by such favouritism and the regulating framework is not able to eliminate its negative effects. Sometimes, the interviewees explicitly expressed this favouritism as "Wasta". At other times, they expressed it in their condemnations of other stakeholders' favouritism based on religious sects. In both cases, the interviewees highlighted favouritism in their criticisms of the existing succession process practices and as a justification for their attempts to alter the system.

Nevertheless, the data analysis revealed that external stakeholders practise such favouritism. As was demonstrated earlier, external stakeholders may nominate candidates for executive positions. Regardless of the appropriateness of the candidates nominated, one can argue that such nominations are based on interpersonal connections and friendship. Thus, they are most likely subject to the same social pressures for bias in favour of social affiliations, which they criticised in other stakeholders' practices.

10.4.3.2.2 Interactions with Key Factors on the Organisational level:

The external stakeholder interviewees highlighted several factors on the organisational level, such as organisational performance, culture and age. However, the factor that frequently echoed in the interviewees' responses is the management style of the organisations' top management. The interviewees highlighted this factor to illustrate how their involvement in the succession process is influenced by the management style of the organisations' top management. For example,

politicians, professional associations' officials and journalists affirmed that top management cooperation and transparency have affected their involvement in the succession process.

10.4.3.2.3 Interactions with Key Factors on the Positional level:

The least highlighted factors by the external stakeholders' interviewees were those on the positional level. Nevertheless, the data analysis detected a few influential factors on the positional level in some of the interviewees' responses, such as the position's core function, sensitivity (in terms of importance to the decision makers) and its requirements (in terms of selection criteria). However, the most emphasised positional factor was the position's hierarchal level (Section Head, Director, Undersecretary Assistant, and Undersecretary). Several interviewees, representing different external stakeholders' organisations, highlighted this factor. According to these interviewees, the succession processes for executive positions may differ based on the level of the position under consideration. These variations in the process are manifested through the different levels of appointing authorities for the different positional levels. This implies that the external stakeholders' involvements in the process and the mechanisms employed to influence it may change based on the level of authority they are dealing with.

CHAPTER 11 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The current research strived to enhance our knowledge about the succession phenomenon by investigating the impact of various internal and external factors on the succession process. As illustrated previously in the literature review, most of the succession literature, so far, reflects the phenomenon either as an instantaneous and discrete event or as a simple linear process confined within the organisational boundaries. Such perceptions of the phenomenon fall short of grasping the complexity involved in the succession phenomenon. As well, there is a need to adopt a more holistic approach for studying the phenomenon, which takes into consideration the various influential factors within and beyond the organisational boundaries. Furthermore, there is a significant gap in knowledge about the phenomenon in the public sector; as most of the succession studies focused on the private sector.

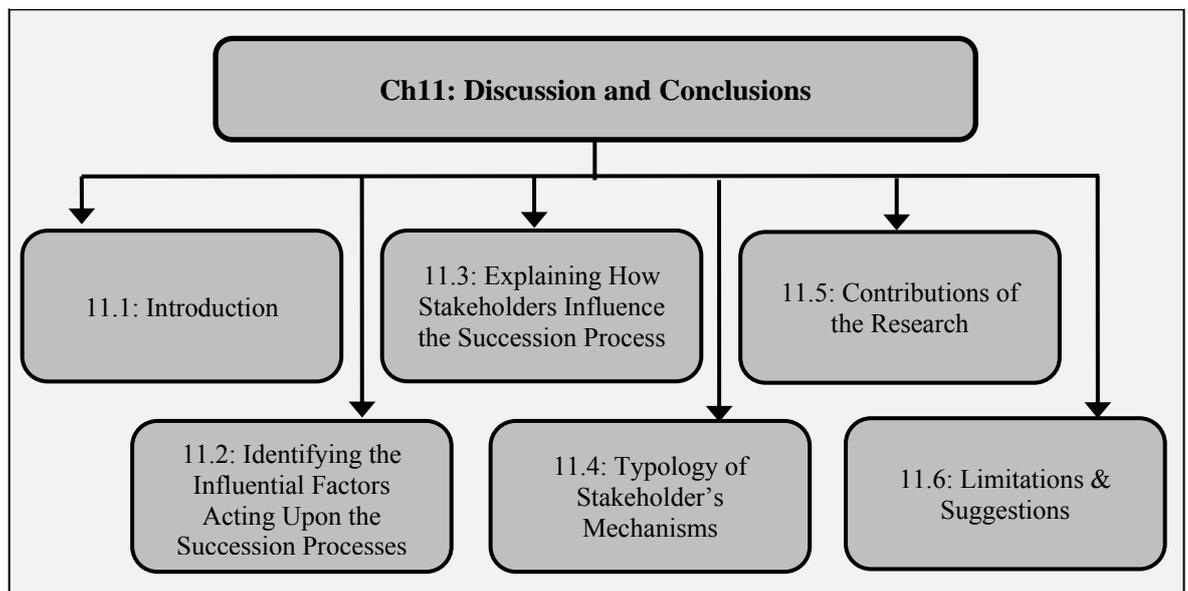
Thus, the current research was conducted to contribute to bridging these gaps in understanding the succession phenomenon by identifying the way in which internal and external factors influence the succession process in the public sector. Specifically, the overall aim of the research was to explain the variations in succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector, in light of the impact of the influential stakeholders and context-related factors.

In order to accomplish this aim, three research objectives were set at the outset of the research. The first was designed to lay the ground for the main inquiry of the research by detecting the variations in the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector in terms of six key aspects of the process. By detecting these variations, the stage is set for addressing the main research inquiry. Accordingly, the second research objective was designed to identify the influential factors responsible for the detected variations in these succession processes. In addition, the third objective was designed to explain how the identified factors shaped the process leading to such variations. However, as the current thesis is focused on explaining the variations in the

succession processes, only the attainment of the second and third research objectives are reported and discussed in this chapter¹.

It is noteworthy that the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach to satisfy the main inquiry of the research. Specifically, qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews to explain the variations in the succession processes in light of the impact of the influential stakeholders and context-related factors.

FIGURE 11-1: THE STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 11



Thus, in this concluding chapter, a summary of the research's key findings is presented along with an overarching discussion. The chapter is divided into six sections, as shown in Figure 11-1. The first two sections present the research's key finding summary and discussion to reflect the accomplishment of the main research objectives. Following this introductory section, the second section identifies the influential stakeholders and context-related factors acting upon the succession process. As well, this section demonstrates how the identified context-related factors influenced the succession process resulting in the detected variations. The stakeholders' impact on the succession process is demonstrated in the third section. The fourth section proposes a typology for the mechanisms employed by stakeholders, in general, to satisfy their claims and interests in an organisational issue. The fifth section provides the main theoretical and practical implications of

¹ For information about the attainment of the first research objective, kindly, contact the researcher via email: phd10ha@mail.wbs.ac.uk.

the research. Finally, the research limitations are reviewed in the sixth section along with suggestions for further research.

11.2 IDENTIFYING THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ACTING UPON THE SUCCESSION PROCESSES

As discussed in the literature review chapters, the current research posits that succession processes are subject to various influential factors that emerge from within and outside the organisations. Based on the literature review, the researcher identified potentially influential factors acting upon the succession process, and categorised them as stakeholder-related and context-related. To facilitate the investigation of the impact of these factors, the researcher developed a preliminary model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process. After detecting the variations in the succession process discussed earlier, qualitative data were collected to explain these variations. Based on the qualitative data analysis, the preliminary model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process was refined.

The needed qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews. The collected qualitative data were analysed via the NVivo software package based on interview analysis template. The data analysis confirmed that succession processes in the public sector were subject to the impact of various stakeholders and context-related factors. This was confirmed by relating the detected variations in the process to these influential stakeholders and context-related factors. In brief, with regard to the stakeholders' impact on the succession process, the data analysis highlighted four stakeholder-factors that determine such an impact. These stakeholder-related factors were the stakeholder's *awareness*, the stakeholder *perceived importance* of his/her stakes in the succession process, the stakeholder's *power* and the nature of the *stakeholder-decision makers relationship*. With regard to context-related factors, the data analysis stressed several factors emerging from the macro, organisational and positional contexts. Specifically, the analysis emphasised the civil service legislations and the changes in the government's general policy as macro level factors. On the organisational level, the organisational culture was highlighted; while on the positional level, the position's perceived importance and job requirements were emphasised. Based on these

findings, the preliminary model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process was refined. The final model is presented and discussed in the following subsection.

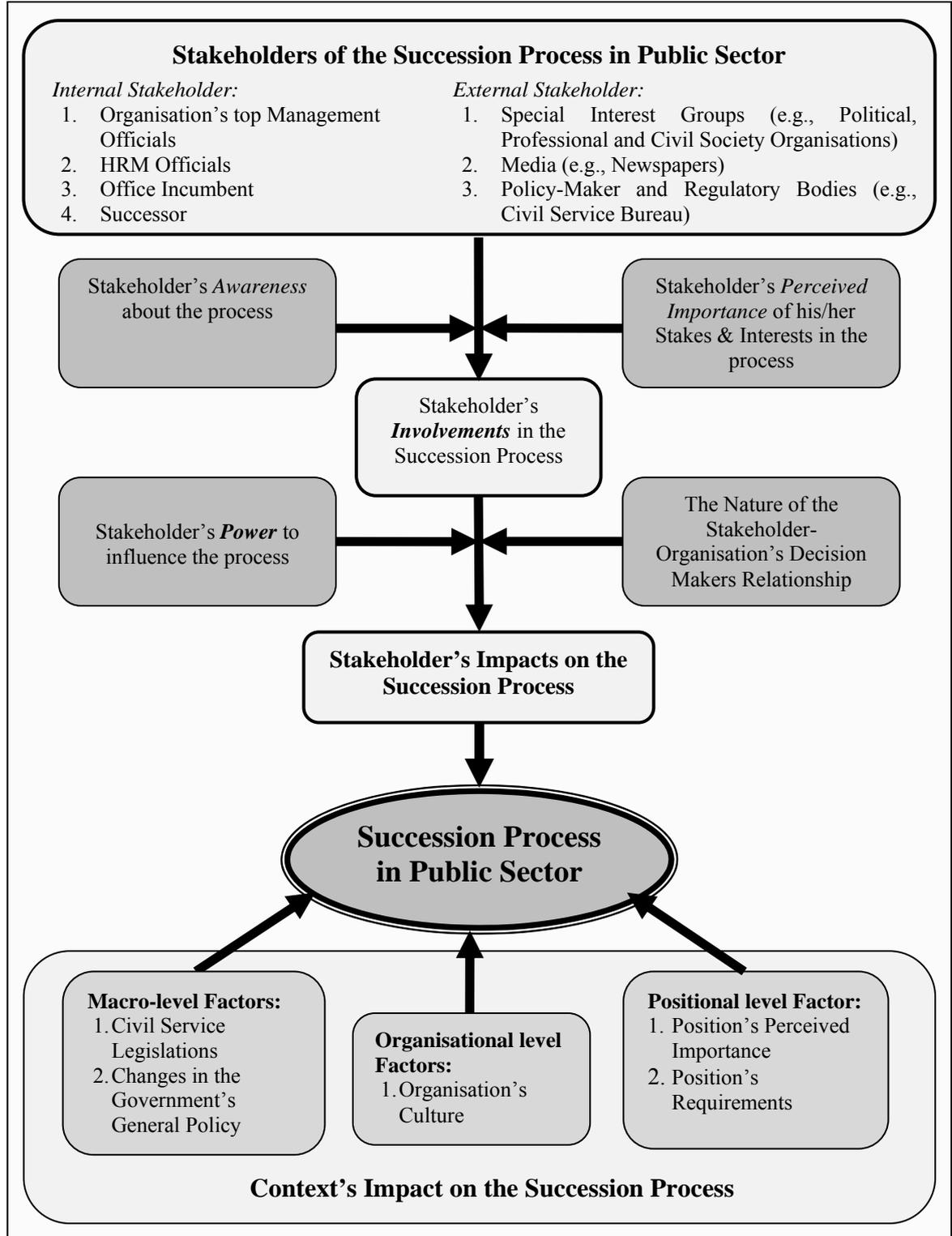
11.2.1 Model for the Influential Factors Acting Upon the Succession Process in the Public Sector

The model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process in the public sector is presented in Figure 11-2 on the following page. As illustrated in the model, the succession process is subject to influences from various stakeholders and context-related factors. As discussed in the literature review, the preliminary model suggested several stakeholder-related and context-related factors. Furthermore, the earlier model assumed that the succession process is directly influenced by these factors. However, the data analysis indicated that the way in which the stakeholders influence the succession process differs from the way in which the context-related factors influence the process.

On one hand, the stakeholders' impact on the process is a function of their involvement in the process per se. This is understandable because no stakeholder impact would be expected if the stakeholder were not involved in the process. The stakeholder's involvement is in turn a function of two stakeholder-related factors, the stakeholder's *awareness* about the process and the stakeholder's *perceived importance* of his/her stake in the process. As well, the stakeholder's impact on the succession process is a function of the stakeholder's *power* and the nature of the *stakeholder-decision makers relationship*. Furthermore, the stakeholder's impact occurs via various mechanisms directed toward altering the succession's decisions and the context.

Yet, on the other hand, the succession process is directly influenced by its context. Thus, the identification of the influential context-related factors directly reflects how these factors influence the process. However, the way in which stakeholders influence the process requires further discussion beyond the recognition of the stakeholders' impact and the identification of these stakeholder-related factors that influence such an impact. Specifically, in order to explain how the stakeholders influence the process, the mechanisms employed by these stakeholders to influence the succession process need to be addressed.

FIGURE 11-2: THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ACTING UPON THE SUCCESSION PROCESS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR



Therefore, focusing on the aim in this section (which is to identify the factors acting upon the succession process), the following subsections highlight the impact of the identified influential stakeholders and discuss the stakeholder-related factors influencing such impact. As well, a subsection is dedicated to identifying and discussing the context-related factors and demonstrates

how these factors were responsible for the variations in the process. However, the way in which the stakeholders' impact is linked to the detected variations in the process is postponed to the following section, where the mechanisms employed by stakeholders to influence the process are discussed.

The following subsections are organised as follows. Initially, the influential stakeholders of the succession processes in the public sector are identified. Then, the reasons behind the stakeholders' involvements in the process are discussed along with the stakeholder-related factors that determine such involvement. Next, the stakeholder-factors that determine their impact on the succession process are highlighted. Finally, the context-related factors acting upon the process are discussed.

11.2.2 Stakeholder Involvement in the Public Sector's Succession Processes

11.2.2.1 Who is involved in the succession process?

According to the adopted succession process definition, the process is subject to various stakeholders¹. As demonstrated in the qualitative data analysis, the research's findings supported this assertion by explaining the detected variations in the succession process in light of the involvement of various stakeholders. The findings were also in line with the Stakeholder Theory regarding the involvement of various stakeholders in the achievement of an organisational purpose. Specifically, the findings highlighted the involvement of various internal and external stakeholders in the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector, some of which were overlooked in previous succession studies.

For example, with regard to *internal stakeholders*, as demonstrated in the literature review, most of the previous succession studies focused on the involvement of the office incumbent, the successor and the board of directors in the private sector. Parallel with these findings, the current research confirmed the involvement of the corresponding stakeholders in the public sector, the organisation's head, top management, the office incumbent and the successors². Moreover, the research findings emphasised the role played by the organisation's top management officials in

¹ The succession process is the dynamic and complex course of individual and collective events, actions and activities directed to replace the incumbent of a position in an organisation; where the accumulated effects of all the interactions between those who are involved in the process and the organisational contexts determine the outcomes of the process.

² The majority of the public organisations in Bahrain, such as ministries and agencies, do not report to the board of directors. Nevertheless, the organisation's head and top management correspond to the organisation's board of directors as they represent the top directing body in the organisation.

executing the succession process. Specifically, the findings emphasised the role played by the organisation's head as he/she, most often, was considered the competent authority in such matters within his/her organisation. Nevertheless, the current research findings highlighted the involvement of other internal stakeholders whose impact on the process, to some extent, was overlooked in previous studies; such as the HRM officials and the organisation's staff in general. The research's findings indicated that the HRM officials and the organisation's staff, to a varying extent, are involved in the succession process. For example, the research's findings highlighted the variations in the involvement of the HRM directors in the succession process decision making. As well, the findings indicated that, in some organisations, the top management leak information about the intentions to nominate certain individuals for executive positions to test their staff's reaction. This, in turn, opens the door for various organisational staff to provide their inputs to the process.

Furthermore, the current research highlighted the involvement of several external stakeholders in the succession process, such as special interest groups, media organisations and policy makers and regulatory governmental bodies. Little attention has been paid to the involvement of these external stakeholders in the succession literature. However, the current research's findings emphasised the involvement of some of these external stakeholders. Take for example political associations. Various interviewees representing internal and external stakeholder groups emphasised the role played by these political associations in overthrowing office incumbents and nominating others for executive positions in public sector organisations. In addition, but to a lesser extent, the involvement of professional and social associations was highlighted.

As well as implicating these external stakeholders, the findings highlighted the involvement of specific governmental bodies in the succession processes in the public sector in general. In addition to civil service regulatory agencies such as the Civil Service Bureau (CSB), the findings highlighted the involvement of some of the policy-making bodies. For example, the findings highlighted the involvement of the Economic Development Board (EDB) via its various initiatives to improve the government's body and performance. Other governmental agencies highlighted by the findings are the Bahrain Institute for Public Administration (BIPA) and the Supreme Council for Women (SCW).

11.2.2.2 Why were the stakeholders involved in the succession process?

With regard to reasons behind a stakeholder's involvement, the findings supported the Stakeholder Theory's argument. The stakeholder theory posits that a stakeholder would get involved in the achievement of an organisational purpose in order to preserve his/her stakes in such issue, or as a reaction to consequent threats/opportunities related to these stakes. The results show that all the stakeholders who became involved or strived to be involved in the succession process did so to preserve their stakes and interests in the process.

This was true for both internal and external stakeholders. For example, the data analysis suggested that the organisation's head and top management officials were involved in the process not only because it was one of their responsibilities; but also because of the anticipated consequences of the process on the organisation's performance, which in turn reflects on their performance. Thus, their involvement in the process is motivated both by their concerns to perform their duties and by their concerns about the process outcomes, which could have direct consequences on their interests (the assessment of their performance). The involvement of HRM officials was found to be part of the performance of their duties, and thus their involvement is motivated by their concerns to perform their duties. The office incumbent (predecessor) was found to be more involved in the process when the process outcome had an effect on his/her interests, such as his/her performance in the new position. This is likely to be the reason why predecessors who were departing their organisations were less involved in the process in comparison to those who were promoted to higher positions within the chain of command.

With regard to external stakeholders, special interest groups, by default, were involved in the succession process to preserve their stakes and interests. The data analysis indicated that political, professional and social associations were involved to facilitate the achievement of their organisational objectives. The representatives of these associations highlighted the links between some of their organisations' strategic goals and the outcomes of the succession process, in terms of who assumes the executive positions in the public sector. In the case of political associations, politicians were involved in the process to ensure the appointment of those who would be more cooperative with their political agendas, whilst the involvement of professional associations was

driven by the desire to avoid the appointment of executives who were unsympathetic to their organisational objectives aimed at improving their professions and career development schemes. Regarding social associations, women associations' involvement was directed toward achieving the empowerment of women to assume leading executive positions in the public sector.

In the case of media organisations, the newspapers were involved in the process as part of their role of monitoring the government's performance and raising public awareness and due to the attractiveness of the succession news to their readers. As well, representatives of the CSB, EDB, BIPA, and SCW justified their organisations' involvement by highlighting the links between their organisations' objectives and the succession process outcomes. For example, the CSB's representatives highlighted their role in supervising and administrating the civil servants personnel affairs, including appointments and career development. The EDB's representatives highlighted the importance of appointing the right executives to improve the government's performance, which is one of their strategic initiatives. The SCW's representatives linked the succession process with their National Strategy for Women and their women's empowerment programmes; while the BIPA's representative highlighted their organisation's responsibility in preparing public sector executives for office.

It is noteworthy, as illustrated above, that the data analysis indicated that these stakeholders' stakes and interests, most of the time, were focused on the successor rather than on the succession process per se. In other words, the stakeholders' involvement was driven by their concerns about *who should assume the position* rather than *how to execute the succession process*. Thus, most of the stakeholders' mechanisms to influence the succession process were directed toward ensuring the appointment of those who would preserve their stakes and interests. Further discussion on this finding is postponed until the discussion of the model for these influential mechanisms. However, the data analysis indicated that stakeholders' involvements in the succession process vary depending on two factors. The first is the stakeholder's awareness about the process, while the second is the stakeholder's perception of the importance of his/her stakes and interests in the process.

11.2.3 Factors influencing Stakeholder Involvement in the Succession Process

11.2.3.1 Stakeholder Awareness

This is the first factor emphasised by the data analysis as influencing stakeholder involvement, and consequently having an impact on the succession process. The initial model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process highlighted this factor. As demonstrated in the literature review, Mitchell et al. (1997) and Rowley and Berman (2000), argued that stakeholders' influence is a function of their awareness about their stakes in the specific organisational issue and the corresponding threats/opportunities relating to such stakes. The authors argued that the stakeholder's awareness determines, at the outset, whether or not the stakeholder will get involved and exercise any influence to protect his/her stake. In the absence of such awareness, stakeholders are not expected to act to pursue their interest. Thus, the stakeholder's awareness was considered as a precondition for the stakeholder's involvement in any action.

The research's findings confirmed this notion about the stakeholder's awareness and reflected such awareness in two ways. The first was whether the stakeholder is cognisant about the succession process per se or not. A stakeholder is not expected to be involved in a succession process if he/she is unaware about its occurrence or the possibility of occurrence. This notion was highlighted by external as well internal stakeholders. For example, with regard to external stakeholders, representatives of political associations stressed this factor as a precondition for their involvements in the succession process. As well, representatives of professional associations and newspapers explained their limited involvement in the process by highlighting their lack of knowledge about the processes taking place in the public organisations. With regard to internal stakeholders, this notion was also highlighted by various interviewees in their explanations for the variations in the transparency of the process. According to these interviewees, the decision makers in some cases may try to limit the organisational staff's awareness about the process, to avoid negative reactions to their decisions, by executing it in secrecy.

The data analysis also reflected the stakeholders' awareness about the threats/opportunities introduced to their stakes and interests by the succession process, such as losing an ally or wasting a chance to empower one. The findings indicated that the higher the stakeholder's awareness about

such threats/opportunities, the more likely he/she would be to strive to be involved in the process. Nevertheless, high awareness does not mean that the stakeholder would *succeed in being more involved* or would *have greater influence* on the process. Merely, a high level of awareness about these threats/opportunities would drive the stakeholder to be *more anxious to be involved*, as well *influential*, in the process. Take for example the professional associations' involvement in succession processes that take place in governmental organisations related to the associations' professions. The representatives of these associations showed high awareness about the threats/opportunities that succession processes present to their organisational objectives. The data analysis indicated that these associations are very anxious to be involved in the process in order to preserve their stakes and interests. This was reflected in their serious attempts to participate in the process as well as by the various means utilised to influence the process. Nevertheless, the data analysis showed that, most of the time, these associations had limited involvement.

11.2.3.2 Stakeholders' Perceived Importance of their Stakes and Interests in the Succession Process

This is the second factor highlighted by the data analysis to influence the stakeholder's involvement, and consequently have an impact on the succession process. The preliminary model for the influential factors acting upon the process highlighted the stakeholder's urgency as one of the factors that influences the stakeholder's actions to preserve their stakes and interests in the succession process. The concept of the stakeholder's urgency was adopted from Mitchell et al.'s (1997) theory of stakeholder identification and salience. According to their theory, stakeholder urgency is defined as the extent to which the stakeholder's claims call for an immediate response from the organisation based on the time sensitivity and criticality of these claims (Mitchell et al., 1997). The greater the urgency of the stakeholder, the more important the stakeholder would be in the eye of the organisation's management. Accordingly, the current research assumed that the greater the urgency the more likely the organisation would be to encounter serious interventions by stakeholders to preserve their stakes in the succession process.

The research findings supported this assumption. The data analysis showed that the urgency of the stakeholder's claims in the succession process was most often expressed in terms of the importance

(or criticality) of these claims. Various stakeholders' representatives justified their involvements, or attempts to be involved, in the process based on the importance of their stakes and interests in it. Very rarely did the interviewees reflect the time sensitivity of the issue in their justification for being involved in the process. The research findings suggested that the perceived importance of the stakeholder's claims in the succession process is more decisive for the stakeholder's involvement than the time sensitivity of these claims. As demonstrated earlier, the interviewees' justifications for their involvement in the process were also frequently based on the stakeholders' perceived importance of their stakes in the process.

This finding could be explained in light of the length of the time required to finalise the succession process. A long time elapses between acceptance of the need to replace an executive office incumbent and the actual appointment of his/her successor. According to previous studies, the process may take several months and even years. One may argue that such a long window for the stakeholders to be involved in the process reduces the time sensitivity of their claims in the process.

Furthermore, the data analysis showed that the higher the perception of the importance of these stakes, the more likely the stakeholder would be to strive to be involved in the process to preserve such stakes. For example, political associations were found to be more anxious to be involved in succession processes in those public organisations which provide direct and essential services for the citizens, such as the Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. In addition, SCW and women associations were more focused on involvement in those public organisations that have high levels of female representation among their organisational staff.

Consequently, the stakeholder's involvement in the process may have an impact. However, any such impact on the process was found to be a function of the two other stakeholder-related factors, which are discussed next.

11.2.4 Factors influencing Stakeholder Impact on the Succession Process

11.2.4.1 Stakeholder Power

This is the first factor emphasised by the data analysis to influence the stakeholder's impact on the succession process. As discussed in the literature review, by definition, stakeholders are those who

affect (or are affected by) the accomplishment of the organisation's purpose. Moreover, scholars of the stakeholder theory, such as Mitchell et al. (1997), Agle et al. (1999) and Eesley and Lenox (2006), stressed the stakeholder's capability to influence the achievement of such purposes as a key factor for determining the stakeholder's salience from the organisation's perspective. Succession scholars such as Zald (1965, 1969), Lamb (1987), Zajac and Westphal (1996), Cannella and Shen (2001) also highlighted the stakeholder's power in terms of internal stakeholders' impact on the succession process. In particular, these scholars highlighted the power of the board of directors and the CEO (the office incumbent).

Accordingly, stakeholder capability was incorporated in the preliminary model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process. This factor was defined in terms of the extent to which a stakeholder possesses the power and the legitimacy to influence the succession process. Thereby, it was assumed that the greater the power and the legitimacy of a stakeholder, the greater impact of this stakeholder on the succession process.

Generally, the research's findings lend credence to the extant literature. Nevertheless, the data analysis emphasised the stakeholder's power more than the stakeholder's legitimacy in reflecting the stakeholder's capability to influence the process. The data analysis indicated that the stakeholder's impact on the process is a function of the power he/she possesses. Despite the stakeholder's legitimacy, it was found that the greater the stakeholder's power the greater the impact on the succession process. This was very evident in the findings on external stakeholders' impact on the process. For example, on one hand, the representatives of the professional associations and newspapers asserted their legitimate right to be involved in the process. Professional associations saw their right to be involved in the process as not only based on their status as part of the organisational staff, but also based on their associations' recognised goals to improve their professions and improve conditions for the professions' practitioners. The representatives of the newspapers claimed the public's right to know how the succession processes were executed and on what the criteria the successors were selected. On the other hand, based on Bahrain's fundamental constitutional rule regarding the separation of powers, the legislative body, represented by the parliament, has limited jurisdiction over appointments to the executive body.

Thus, the representatives of the political associations in the parliament lack the legitimacy to be involved in the succession process from the outset. However, the data analysis showed that, despite the politicians' lack of legitimacy, their impact on the succession process exceeded that of the professional associations and newspapers due to the superior power of these political associations.

Moreover, the data analysis suggested that if two stakeholders took the same action in an attempt to influence the process, the one who possessed most power was most likely to have the greatest impact. Take for example external stakeholders' efforts to influence the succession process's decision makers. Political and professional associations strived to convince the decision makers of their associations' view via persuasion mechanisms. Nevertheless, the analysis demonstrated that the efforts of the political associations were more successful than those of the professional associations. Of course, there could be various explanations for this finding. Nevertheless, a plausible explanation is that politicians were more successful in convincing the decision makers than the representatives of the professional associations due to the keenness of the decision makers to avoid clashes with powerful stakeholders such as the politicians in the parliament. Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the influence of the political associations on the succession process corresponds to the power wielded by these associations in the parliament. The greater the power (represented in the number of seats held in the parliament) is, the greater the impact of their involvement in the process.

11.2.4.2 The Nature of the Stakeholder-Decision Maker Relationship

This is the second factor highlighted by the data analysis as influencing the stakeholder's impact on the succession process. Several Stakeholder Theory scholars, such as Frooman (1999), Sharma and Henriques (2005) and O'Connell et al. (2005), have emphasised the stakeholder-organisation relationship in their studies of the stakeholders' influence strategies. They argued that the type of the relationship determines the choice of influence strategy. The research's findings are in line with this proposition. However, the research's findings emphasised the nature of the relationship between the stakeholder and the decision makers of the succession process, who were the heads of the public organisations and the political leadership.

This emphasis on the stakeholder-decision maker relationship is explainable in light of the following point. The aforementioned scholars viewed the stakeholder influences from the organisation perspective, whereby an organisation is considered as a unified entity. Thus, from that angle and at that level of analysis, the stakeholder-organisation relationship was highlighted as significant in determining the adoption of influential strategies by the stakeholders. However, the current research has focused on the impact of various stakeholders, within and outside the organisational boundaries, on a specific organisational aspect, namely, the succession process. Thus, rather than highlighting the stakeholder-organisation relationship in general, the current research's findings emphasised the nature of the stakeholder-decision maker relationship.

The data analysis indicated that the stakeholder-decision maker relationship determined the impact of the stakeholders on the succession process. This notion was reflected in interviewees' responses in two ways. First, the representatives of the external stakeholder organisations reflected the nature of the stakeholder-decision maker relationship by highlighting the degree of cooperation/conflict between the top management of both entities (the external stakeholder organisation and the public sector organisation). There was a consensus among the various external stakeholders that their involvement in the succession process was subject to the nature of their relationship with those officials at the helm of the public organisations. In addition to expressing this notion explicitly, the representatives of two professional associations highlighted two cases that demonstrated the impact of the nature of the stakeholder-decision maker relationship on the stakeholders' level of involvement in the succession process. In both cases, variations in the level of involvement of these two associations in the succession process were associated with changes either on the professional associations' board of directors or in the head position of public organisations.

The second way in which stakeholders expressed the impact of their relationships with the decision makers on their involvement in the succession process was in terms of the management style of the organisation's head. The management style of the organisation's head was highlighted to reflect the rules of engagement that had been established by the decision maker of the succession process in his/her relationship with the stakeholders of the process. For example, the data analysis showed that the level of centralisation in the management style of the organisation's head affected the

involvement, and thus the impact, of various internal stakeholders, such as the organisation's top management officials (the ministry's undersecretaries, undersecretary assistants and directors), the incumbent of the position under consideration and the successor. The higher the level of centralisation of the decision making by the organisation's head, the lower the involvement of these internal stakeholders, and vice versa.

The data analysis showed as well that the involvement of the various external stakeholders was facilitated/hindered by the openness of the head's management style to the inputs from these stakeholders. For example, some of the organisational heads were found to be more open to such inputs as they consulted representatives of political and professional associations, or even cut deals with the former, regarding the succession process in their organisations. Furthermore, the data analysis showed that the openness of the head's management style in terms of the transparency in executing the succession process influenced the stakeholders' involvement in the process. The more the overt the process and the higher the information symmetry between the head and the other stakeholders, the more likely it would be that these stakeholders would be aware of the process, and thus, the more likely that they would be involved in it.

11.2.5 The Impact of the Context on the Succession Process

The research's findings show that the succession process is influenced by the context in which it occurs. As stated previously, the data analysis identified several factors that existed on the macro, organisational and positional levels. Therefore, these context-related factors were incorporated in the refined model for the influential factors acting upon the succession process. The discussion of these factors is presented in the following parts.

11.2.5.1 Macro Level Factors

The data analysis emphasised two context-related factors at the macro level. The first is the civil service legislation. The execution of the succession process is constrained by the legal framework regulating the process in the public sector. As demonstrated in the context review of the Bahraini public sector, this framework is composed from the Civil Service Law, the Executive Regulations for the Civil Service Law and the Civil Service Instructions, Directives and Circulars. According to

the research's findings, various interviewees highlighted the civil service legislation in their explanations for the detected variations in the succession process. For example, with regard to the variation among decision makers, all the internal stakeholders emphasised how the Civil Service Law specifies different appointing authorities. Furthermore, the internal stakeholders highlighted the gap in the legislation in terms of specifying the criteria for selecting the successors, which was reflected in the variation in the recognition of their apparent successors. The legislative gap was also highlighted in the explanations for the variations in the formality and transparency of the process.

Furthermore, the external stakeholders highlighted the drawbacks of the civil service legislation in their justification for being involved in the succession process. Representatives of political and professional associations, newspapers and governmental bodies (i.e., CSB, EDB, SCW and BIPA) stressed the need to improve the existing legislation. Thus, this legislative gap not only influenced the succession process, but also opened the door for various external stakeholders to become involved. In some cases, this stakeholder involvement consisted of attempts to amend the legislation, such as that of professional and social associations. Nonetheless, in other cases, external stakeholders such as the political associations were taking advantage of the legislative gap to further their own interests.

The second macro level factor is the changes that occurred in the government's general policy. Ali (2010) highlighted the recognisable changes in the public administration that were initiated by the State's Reform project. The current research's findings highlighted these changes to government policy as a macro-level factor influencing the succession process. Representatives both of internal and external stakeholders highlighted how these changes in the government's general policy had influenced the succession process in various ways, resulting in greater accountability and transparency of the process.

For example, the separation of the legislative and executive powers introduced the political associations as new stakeholders of the succession process. Now, these associations, via their representatives in the parliament, monitor the government's performance, question its executives and, whenever possible, participate in the appointment of these executives. Thus, the government

nowadays is more cautious than ever in executing the succession process due to involvement of these political associations.

In addition to being more accountable, the government is now obliged to be more transparent in its operations, including the procedures for appointing executives. Various internal stakeholders affirmed that the accountability and transparency of the process have increased with the implementation of the reform project. At the same time, due to the reform project's efforts to increase civil society involvement in public sector decision-making, civil society is now more involved in the succession process. Due to these efforts and the increase in transparency and freedom of speech, professional associations, newspapers and the public in general became able to monitor and speak out regarding their concerns and interests in the succession process.

As part of these new policy developments, the government also strived to enhance its role in monitoring and regulating the succession process. The data analysis revealed that the government indeed now has an enhanced role, which has subsequently influenced the succession process in three aspects. First, there is a new approach to public sector administration based on the "2030 Vision" for the government, its strategic initiatives and key performance indicators. The EDB's initiatives for improving the government performance influenced the performance assessment of public organisations and those who are managing these organisations. The second aspect is the government's efforts to enact a new system governing the succession process. The third aspect is the empowerment of certain governmental bodies and the establishment of others to monitor and control the succession process, such as the empowerment of the National Auditing Court and the CSB and the establishment of both the Administrative Control Directorate in the CSB and BIPA.

Another noteworthy change in the government's general policy due to the reform project that has influenced the succession process is the women's empowerment project. The data analysis highlighted the emergence of a trend in the public sector for empowering women to assume leading positions since the induction of the reform project.

11.2.5.2 Organisational Level Factors

On the organisational level, the data analysis emphasised the organisational culture more than any other issue. Specifically, internal stakeholders asserted that organisational culture determines the norms for the level of formality and transparency adopted in executing the succession process. Most of the time, this factor was expressed explicitly by explaining the detected variations in the succession process in relation to the differences in the organisational culture among the public organisations. In other cases, interviewees reflected the organisational culture in terms of the organisational maturity, professionalism or simply the accepted procedures for executing the process.

It is noteworthy that organisational culture was mainly emphasised by internal stakeholders, and specifically by the representatives of the HRM and the executive class employees. The failure by the external stakeholders to highlight such internal issues is understandable. However, the lack of emphasis on this factor among the top management officials could be related to their emphasis on other factors they regarded as more relevant to them. As illustrated in the data analysis, most of the explanations offered by representatives of the top management for the detected variations among the succession processes emphasised the management style of the organisation's head and the adopted procedures for executing the process, both of which relate directly to the top management. Thus, the representatives of the top management were possibly demonstrating a form of bias by overstating these two factors closely linked to them in comparison to factors such as the organisational culture. Indeed, one of the top management representatives argued that the organisational culture is a by-product of the management style of the organisation's head.

11.2.5.3 Positional Level Factors:

The data analysis emphasised the impact of two factors related to the position under consideration for the succession process. The first positional level factor was the importance of the position as perceived by the decision maker, whereas the second factor was the requirements for assuming the position in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude. Although both these factors were highlighted by internal and external stakeholders in one way or another, the internal stakeholders' representatives gave them most emphasis. The top management officials reflected the perceived importance of the

position by stressing the position's role and consequences on the organisational performance. The representatives of the HRM and executive class reflected the same notion by highlighting the perceived sensitivity of the position. For example, with regard to variations among the decision makers, representatives of the internal stakeholders affirmed that the higher the perception of the importance of the position is, the higher the hierarchal levels at which the succession decisions are made. In addition, the perceived importance of the position was highlighted in the justification for the variation in the formality of the succession process. The data analysis revealed that the sensitivity of the information related to certain positions (e.g. selection criteria) might dictate informal means of communication in executing the succession process, while it may also lead to less transparent procedures for executing the succession process.

The following point is noteworthy in relation to the need to distinguish between the decision maker's perceived importance of the position under consideration and the stakeholders' perceived importance of their stakes in the succession process. The data analysis indicated that while the stakeholders' perceived importance of their stake in the succession process influences their *involvement* in the process, the decision maker's perceived importance of the positions influences the *execution* of the succession process per se. Furthermore, since the latter factor varies from one position to another, the decision maker's perceived importance of the position was highlighted as a distinctive factor at the positional level.

The second positional-level factor that influences the succession process is the requirements for assuming the position in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude. The data analysis indicated that due to the differences in the nature of the job requirements, variations in the succession processes might occur. For example, regarding the variations among decision makers, the data analysis indicated that when the job requirements are more specialised, such as in the case of executive positions in technical departments, the succession decisions involve those who are capable of evaluating the candidates' capabilities. However, if these requirements are general requirements, such as those required for general administration, then the decisions making is dominated by the organisation's top management. Moreover, the data analysis suggested that such differences in the job requirements facilitated/hindered the recognition of heir apparent successors. Interviewees

affirmed that there is more identification of heir apparent successors for positions which require professional “know-how” or have more clearly defined job requirements.

11.3 EXPLAINING HOW STAKEHOLDERS INFLUENCE THE SUCCESSION PROCESS

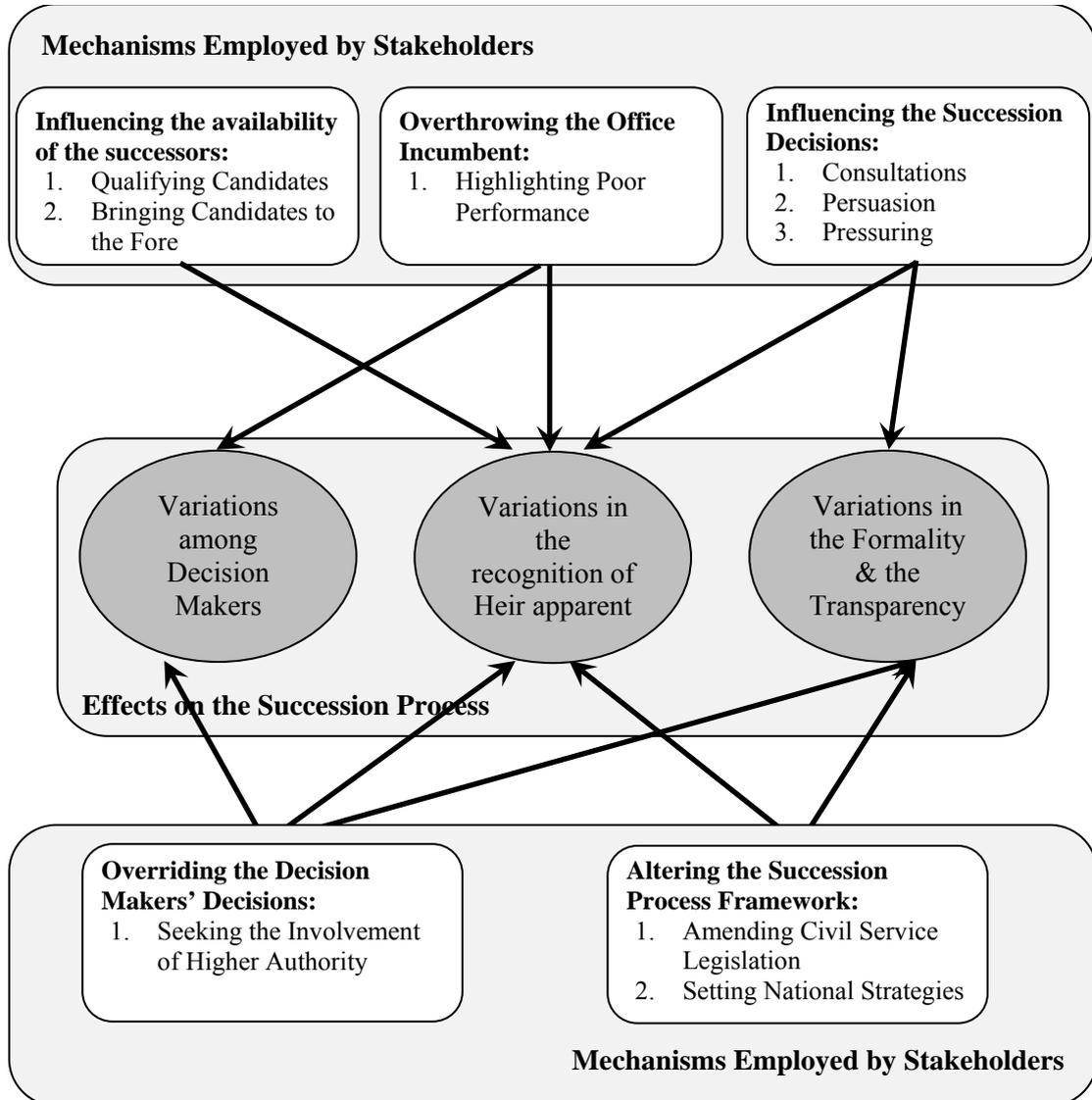
The third and final objective of the research was to explain *how* the identified influential factors shaped the succession process leading to the detected variations. The previous section discussed and demonstrated how the context-related factors influenced the succession process, whilst the way in which the stakeholders influenced the succession process is discussed in this section. A model was developed to illustrate the mechanisms employed and the potential consequences for the succession process. Figure 11-3, in the following page, displays this model.

As shown in the model, stakeholders employed various mechanisms to satisfy their claims and interests in the succession process. These mechanisms were categorised into five categories according to the aim of the mechanism. The categories are: (1) mechanisms aimed to influence the availability of the successors; (2) mechanisms aimed to overthrow the office incumbent; (3) mechanisms aimed to influence the succession decisions; (4) mechanisms aimed to override the decision makers’ decisions and (5) mechanisms aimed to alter the succession process framework. The data analysis showed that the employment of such mechanisms by the various stakeholders has influenced the succession process and resulted in the detected variations among the reported succession cases. Specifically, the employment of these mechanisms led to variations among the succession decision makers, the recognition of heir apparent successors, the formality and the transparency of the succession process.

However, as suggested by the model, most of the employed mechanisms affected, in one way or another, the recognition of heir apparent successors. This could be explained in light of the stakeholder’s stakes and interests in the succession process. As stated earlier, stakeholders were involved in the succession process to preserve their stakes, which most often were reflected as interests in the appointment of those successors who would best serve the stakeholders’ interests. Thus, most of these mechanisms were directed towards ensuring the appointment of these

successors. Consequently, this affected the recognition of heir apparent successors. Further discussions along with supporting examples are presented in the following subsections.

FIGURE 11-3: MECHANISMS EMPLOYED BY THE STAKEHOLDERS TO INFLUENCE THE SUCCESSION PROCESS



11.3.1 Mechanisms Aimed to Influence the Availability of Successors

As discussed in the literature review, the number of appropriate and affordable successors available to replace the office incumbent determines the succession process type. The research findings showed that stakeholders influenced the succession process by influencing the availability of the successors. The data analysis highlighted that several mechanisms were employed to influence the availability of the successors. Via these mechanisms, the stakeholders strived to qualify and/or bring to the fore certain individuals for recognition as appropriate successors. Such mechanisms

include stakeholders' efforts to qualify candidates and equip them with the needed knowledge and skills to assume executive positions in the public sector (e.g. training programmes, seminars, and conferences). These mechanisms also include stakeholders' efforts to highlight or promote certain individuals as potential candidates.

Various stakeholders employed such mechanisms. For example, the data analysis highlighted office incumbents' efforts to facilitate/hinder the development of their apparent successors. As well, external stakeholders, such as professional associations, newspapers and the governmental bodies, utilised such mechanisms to increase the probability of appointing those who would best serve their interests. For example, professional associations qualify and promote their members to assume leading positions, as does the EDB, while newspapers market certain candidates for reasons which are beyond the scope of this discussion. In general, the employment of such mechanisms points to and emphasises the stakeholders' concerns about who should be the successor, which was demonstrated earlier in the justifications for the stakeholders' involvements.

Consequently, the success of these mechanisms in qualifying and/or highlighting candidates influenced the recognition of their apparent successors, as these qualified and marketed candidates were recognised as potential successors by the decision makers as well by the organisational staff. Thus, the model explaining the variations in the succession process illustrates a link between the employment of mechanisms aimed to influence the availability of successors and the variations in recognising their apparent successors.

11.3.2 Mechanisms Aimed at Overthrowing the Office Incumbent

Various scholars, such as Gephart (1978), Friedman and Olk (1995), Shen and Cannella Jr. (2002b) and Finkelstein et al. (2009), have highlighted the impact of the way in which the office incumbent departs the office on the succession process. The research findings showed that stakeholders influenced the succession process via their involvement in overthrowing the office incumbent. The data analysis highlighted several mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to overthrow the office incumbent. Via these mechanisms, stakeholders create a need for a successor by calling attention to the poor performance of an official, which consequently may lead to the official being overthrown.

Mostly, these mechanisms were employed by external stakeholders, such as political and professional associations, newspapers and the public. For example, political associations, via their representatives in the parliament, question, form inquiry committees and interrogate government officials, demanding their removal from office on the grounds of their poor performance. Furthermore, professional associations were found to cooperate with newspapers and politicians in launching public campaigns against officials in the government to highlight their poor performance, whilst the public uses social media to spread serious accusations about officials.

Some such efforts to overthrow the office incumbent were successful due to the political leadership (H.M the King and H.H. the Prime Minister) choosing to remove the accused officials from their positions, for one reason or another. Such action influences the succession process in two aspects. First, there is expected to be greater involvement of external stakeholders in the decisions making process. For example, decisions on the removal of an executive and the appointment of another for a director's position are normally based on the recommendation of the organisation's head. However, in abnormal cases where the political leadership order the removal of a director, the appointment of their replacement is more likely to involve consultation with stakeholders other than the organisation's head. Therefore, whenever an attempt to overthrow the office incumbent succeeds, this is likely to create more variation among the decisions-makers.

The second aspect of the succession process affected by success in overthrowing an office incumbent is the recognition of heir apparent successors. The greater involvement of external stakeholders in the process and the abnormality of the circumstances make the appointment of an heir apparent successor less likely. In addition, as was discussed in the literature review, the dismissal of an office incumbent based on accusations of poor performance is most likely to result in the appointment of an external successor. Thus, as shown in Figure 11-3, the variations among the decision makers and the recognition of heir apparent successors were linked to the employment of mechanisms aimed at overthrowing an office incumbent.

11.3.3 Mechanisms Aimed at Influencing the Succession Decisions

The data analysis indicated that stakeholders might influence the succession process via influencing the succession process decisions per se. As illustrated in the succession literature review, previous studies highlighted the impact of certain internal stakeholders on the succession decisions (i.e. the board of directors, the office incumbent and the successor). However, the impact of other stakeholders, and particularly that of external stakeholders, was rarely addressed. Furthermore, stakeholder theorists studied the strategies used by stakeholders to influence the organisation; nevertheless, they paid little attention to how those stakeholders influenced the organisation's internal decision-making process (Gomes et al., 2010; Reynolds et al., 2006; Spitzeck and Hansen, 2010).

However, in the efforts to explain how the stakeholders influence the succession process, the current research highlighted three mechanisms via which stakeholders influence the succession decisions. These mechanisms are consultation, persuasion and pressuring. Through the consultation mechanism, the stakeholders participate in the decision-making process; while via the other two mechanisms the stakeholders influence the decision-making outcome, the succession decision per se. The following parts discuss these mechanisms and demonstrate how their employment resulted in the detected variations in the succession process.

11.3.3.1 Consultation:

The data analysis showed that some of the stakeholders, formally or informally, were consulted by the competent authority during the succession process decision making. Thus, these stakeholders were able to influence the succession process via participating in the decision-making process. The data analysis indicated that these decisions, most often, were concerned with who should be the successor. The decision makers were not obliged to adopt the stakeholders' view, nevertheless, the data analysis showed that, in some cases, inputs of these stakeholders were considered and accepted by the decision makers. One may argue that the employment of the consultation mechanism is in the hands of the competent authority. Certainly, the competent authority may, or may not, consult these stakeholders, and can also decide whether to accept the stakeholders' inputs

or not. Nonetheless, such consultations, whenever they are asked for, provide the stakeholders with a mechanism to influence the succession process.

For example, with regard to internal stakeholders, in some cases, the recommendations provided by top management officials and office incumbents regarding who to nominate/appoint for executive positions were very influential¹. Sometimes, these recommendations were passed to the competent authority via a formal, documented and overt process; at other times, these inputs were conveyed verbally and behind closed doors.

With regard to external stakeholders, the data analysis showed that professional associations participated formally in the succession process decision making via their representatives in joint committees formed with public organisations. Thus, these professional associations influence the succession process by means of their involvement in relevant issues via these joint committees. For example, the representatives of the two professional associations affirmed that their association's recommendations regarding who should be appointed to executive positions were conveyed by their representatives in such joint committees. Moreover, these recommendations were considered and accepted by the competent authority of the ministry. In addition, sometimes these joint committees discuss issues that have direct implications on the succession process. For example, the data analysis highlighted the involvement of all of the investigated professional associations in developing their professions' cadres, which established a clear link between the positions and the qualities required by office incumbents.

Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that, in some cases, external stakeholders were also informally consulted regarding succession processes based on the links between the stakeholders and the competent authority. In these informal consultations, the external stakeholders, most often, nominate certain individuals to be appointed to executive positions, such as in cases where the political leadership (or the competent authority at the organisational level) consults representatives of the political associations. In another example, representatives of the women's association, via such informal consultations, present their inputs to the decision makers regarding how to empower women in general.

¹ Of course, this depends on the level of centralisation in the management style of the succession decision makers.

As demonstrated above, when stakeholders were consulted, they influenced the succession process in two ways. First, in terms of how the decision-making process was executed, the formality and the transparency of the succession decision-making process were influenced by the formal/informal consultations. Formal means of consulting with the stakeholders, such as asking them for formal recommendations and participation in the decision-making process, were associated with formal, documented and overt succession processes, whilst informal means were associated with less formal or transparent processes. Thus, the variations in the formality and transparency of the process could be related to the adopted formal/informal consultation mechanisms.

The second way in which the employment of the consultation mechanism influences the succession process is in terms of who should be the successor. As illustrated earlier, whenever the stakeholders are consulted, they can influence the successor appointment decisions via their recommendations and participation in setting the selection criteria. When these consultations are formal and openly disclosed, the recommended candidates or those who possess the required criteria for the executive positions are more likely to be recognised by others as their apparent successors. However, when these recommendations are conveyed informally and behind closed doors, their apparent successors are less likely to be recognised. Thus, the variations in the recognition of their apparent could be also related to the adoption of formal/informal consultation mechanisms.

11.3.3.2 Persuasion:

Via this mechanism, the stakeholders strive to convince the decisions-makers to adopt their points of view regarding the succession process. The data analysis indicated that, most of the time, such attempts were focused on persuading the decision makers to appoint specific individuals or to adopt certain criteria for selecting the successors. For example, representatives of the EDB, political, professional and women associations stated that they approached the competent authority regarding their concerns about who should assume executive positions. As well, the SCW's officials highlighted their attempts to convince the competent authorities in the public sector organisations to enhance women's representation in the leading positions in general. In some cases, these representatives affirmed the effectiveness of such mechanisms to influence the succession decisions in terms of who should be the successor.

Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that these stakeholders' attempts to persuade the decision makers were based on the connections between these stakeholders and the decision makers. The interviewees did not refer to the extent to which these attempts to persuade the decision makers were overt. Most likely, due to the sensitivity of the issue, the stakeholders concealed their attempts to persuade the decision makers from the public. Thus, based on this assumption, the employment of the persuasion mechanism had similar consequences on the succession process to those caused by the employment of the consultation mechanism. Specifically, employment of the persuasion mechanism by these stakeholders, based on the same argument presented earlier, influenced the succession process in two ways; first, it influenced who should be the successor; second, it influenced the formality and the transparency of the process.

11.3.3.3 Pressuring:

This is the third mechanism employed by the stakeholders to influence the succession process decisions. Through this mechanism, the stakeholders apply pressure on the decision makers to influence succession process decisions. The data analysis revealed that these external stakeholders adopt a variety of approaches to pressure the decision makers. For example, political associations were frequently accused of negotiating political deals with the decision makers, of forcing them to appoint the politicians' nominees or face political accusations and hardship in the parliament. Two of the professional associations mobilised their affiliated professionals and launched public campaigns to force the decision makers to accept the associations' viewpoints regarding issues with implications for the succession process (i.e. career development schemes and the advancement of their professions' cadres). In addition, women's associations and the SCW applied pressure on the decision makers to enhance women's representation in top management by taking advantage of the political leadership's keenness to reflect an image of Bahrain as a state that empowers women. They monitored and published surveys concerned with women's participation in the organisations' top management positions. Such efforts by the women's associations and SCW put pressures on these decision makers to take measures to empower women. The EDB, as a policy maker responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy, pressured the decision makers to appoint those who could meet the key performance indicators for the EDB's initiatives.

In general, and as demonstrated above, stakeholders employed these pressuring mechanisms to influence, most often, those succession decisions concerned with who should be the successor. This, in turn, influenced the recognition of heir apparent successors in two ways. First, when these pressures are invisible to the public and the stakeholders' nominees are unknown to the public, heir apparent successors are less likely to be recognised. Take for example the pressures applied by the political associations. These pressures materialised in secret and if these efforts were successful, the appointment of an heir apparent was less likely. The second way in which the pressuring mechanisms influenced the variations in the recognition of heir apparent successors was when the pressure was publically visible and the stakeholders' nominees were known by the public. In such cases, the organisation's staff would recognise the odds of appointing these nominees. Thus, the success of such pressure is most likely to result in the appointment of heir apparent successors.

11.3.4 Mechanisms aimed at overriding the decision makers' decisions

The data analysis showed that, in some cases, the stakeholders influenced the succession process by overriding the decisions made by the competent authorities at the organisational level. As discussed in the research context review (chapter 2), appointments for positions below director level are made by the competent authority of the organisation (the organisation's head). Appointments for positions at director level and above most often were based on the competent authorities' nominations. However, the data analysis showed that in some cases, and for one reason or another, the CSB rejected the appointments/nominations of the competent authorities. The data analysis also showed that some stakeholders strived to override the decision makers' decisions by seeking the involvement of a higher authority. Take for example the case where one executive employee complained at the Royal Court that she had been overlooked and denied promotion to a higher position. In another example from the data analysis, politicians approached the political leadership to reconsider the appointment or the nomination of a candidate made by competent authorities at the organisational level.

Whenever these efforts to override the decision makers' decisions were successful, two aspects of the succession process were influenced. The first is the decision maker, as the stakeholders' success in overriding the appointment/nomination by the competent authority at the organisational level

ended up with the decision being made at a higher level. This, in part, might explain the variations among the decision makers. The second aspect is the recognition of heir apparent successors. Executives who were nominated to assume executive positions by the competent authorities at the organisational level were most likely to be recognised by the organisation's staff as the next in line. Nevertheless, if the competent authorities' decisions are overridden and the nominations reconsidered, this would have an impact on the recognition of heir apparent successors.

11.3.5 Mechanisms Aimed at Altering the Succession Process Framework

Via these mechanisms, stakeholders strived to change the way in which the succession process is carried out. In order to achieve this aim, the data analysis indicated that stakeholders employed various means. For example, political associations used their legislative powers. Professional associations participated in joint committees formed to amend professional cadres and career development schemes. Women's associations and the SCW participated in setting national strategies concerned with women's empowerment, while the EDB, CSB and BIPA utilised their entitlements as policy makers and regulatory bodies to alter the succession process framework.

Such efforts to alter the succession process framework, theoretically, would influence all aspects of the process. Nevertheless, in practice, the data analysis showed that these efforts were more directed toward influencing who should be the successor. The emphasis on the need to ensure the desired criteria in the successors was evident in the interviewees' responses. Selection criteria were stressed in the stakeholders' attempts to alter the succession process more than any other aspect of the process, such as fairness or transparency.

Furthermore, the data analysis indicated that the extent to which these mechanisms were employed and the impact of such employment on the succession process varied. For example, politicians did not appear to make much effort to alter the existing succession process framework other than their attempt to pass an Antidiscrimination Act in 2006. There could be various explanations for this. For instance, due to the effectiveness of the other mechanisms they employed, these politicians were reluctant to pursue the lengthy process needed to pass legislation that would alter the succession process framework. This could also be due to the politicians' lack of enthusiasm for

altering the existing succession framework while they were able to take advantage of its drawbacks.

However, professional associations were very involved and successful in developing their professional cadres and career development schemes via their joint committees with the CSB and the competent ministries. The development of the cadres was linked with definition of the professional qualities required for the executive positions of these associations' professions, and which, hypothetically, would reflect on who should be the successor. Yet, due to the limited ability of these associations in enforcing the implementation of such cadres and schemes, the impact of these changes on the succession process was minor.

11.4 A TYPOLOGY OF THE MECHANISMS EMPLOYED BY THE STAKEHOLDERS TO INFLUENCE AN ORGANISATIONAL ISSUE

11.4.1 The Need for the Typology

According to the Stakeholder Salience Theory, the attributes of the stakeholders determine their saliency to the organisation's management. Specifically, the stakeholder's power, legitimacy and urgency determine the level of attention given to the stakeholder's claims and interests by the organisation's management (Mitchell et al., 1997). Recent refinements of the theory have shed more light on stakeholders' actions. Moreover, some of these refinements stressed the significance of the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to satisfy their claims and interests in determining the stakeholder's saliency and the subsequent attention given to these claims and interests by the organisation's management. For example, Eesley and Lenox (2006) highlighted request tactics and provided empirical evidence that coupled the legitimacy of the stakeholder with the adopted request tactics. Perrault (2012) argued that the legitimacy of the request tactic is one of the four elements that determine the stakeholder's salience.

Nevertheless, despite such emphasis on the mechanisms employed by stakeholders, the stakeholder literature still lacks studies concentrating on such mechanisms. As illustrated earlier in the literature review, most of the stakeholder literature, which addressed the question concerning how stakeholders influence organisations, has focused on the stakeholder's adopted strategies. Little

attention has been given to the employed mechanisms via which such influence occurs. This notion was highlighted by Whetten et al. (2001, p 384). More recently, den Hond and de Bakker (2007) stated, “In the management literature the question of stakeholder tactics largely has been left unattended” (p. 901). The same notion was reaffirmed by van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010).

Furthermore, the review of the stakeholder literature revealed numerous mechanisms via which stakeholders might influence organisations. However, whenever these studies refer to such influential mechanisms, the authors most often merely list or briefly discuss these mechanisms to demonstrate their viewpoints. Only three studies were found to go beyond the simple listing of the mechanisms to provide classification. The first is the work of Green and Hunton-Clarke (2003). The authors advocated the potential benefits of stakeholders’ participation in organisational decision making, and highlighted the need for developing a systematic approach for classifying such participation. They affirmed that there is “*no systematic method for its [the stakeholders’ participations] application within companies and company decision-making*” (p. 292). Thus, they proposed a typology that reflects the key purpose of the stakeholders’ participations from the perspective of the company. The other two studies were the work of den Hond and de Bakker (2007) and Zietsma and Winn (2008). Both studies developed typologies for the mechanisms employed by specific stakeholder groups, the activist groups, rather than stakeholders in general¹. Thus, there has still been little *systematic classification of the mechanisms employed by stakeholders to influence organisational decisions*.

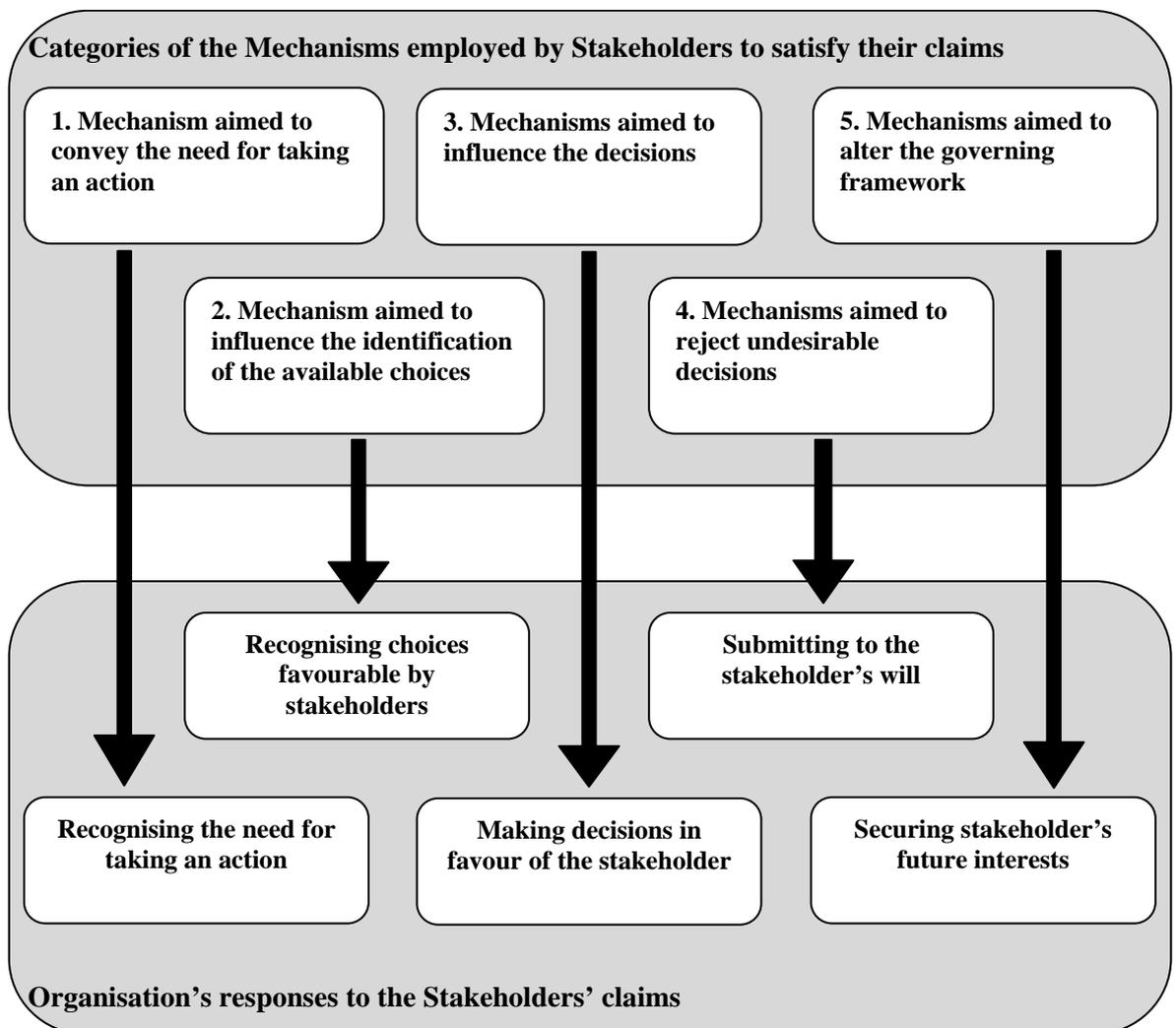
In light of the lack in the literature of a systematic description of these mechanisms and the perceived significance of these mechanisms in understanding stakeholder saliency, a typology of such mechanisms is needed. Systematic classification would enhance our understanding of these mechanisms in terms of the decisive factors and pave the way for further empirical research relating these mechanisms to other constructs and key propositions of the Stakeholder Theory.

¹ Other studies, from the general literature provided typologies of the mechanisms employed by specific stakeholders in specific context; such as the work of Milligan, J., Hills J, Smith, T. & Le Tissier, M. 2004. A typology of coastal researchers’ modes of interactions with stakeholders. *Journal of Science Communication*, 2, 1-11. and Carney, S., Whitmarsh, L., Nicholson-Cole, S. A. & Shackley, S. 2009. A Dynamic Typology of Stakeholder Engagement within Climate Change Research. *Tyndall Working Paper*. Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. on stakeholders’ engagement in research activities.

11.4.2 The Proposed Typology

As demonstrated in the previous section, the study of the influential factors acting upon the succession process highlighted various mechanisms via which stakeholders have influenced the succession process. These mechanisms were grouped into five categories according to their aims. By generalising the findings related to the succession process to other organisational issues, a typology was developed categorising the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to satisfy their claims and preserve their interests regarding a specific organisational issue. The typology is illustrated in Figure 11-4 below.

FIGURE 11-4: TYPOLOGY OF THE MECHANISMS EMPLOYED BY THE STAKEHOLDERS



As shown in the figure, the typology groups these mechanisms into five categories based on the objective of each group of mechanisms. The labels of these categories differ from those used for categorising the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to influence the succession process in

order for the typology to embrace other issues specifically related to the stakeholders' concerns. As well, the typology illustrates the possible consequences of the employment of these mechanisms in terms of the responses of the organisations' decisions-makers; or in other words, the aim of the employment of these mechanisms. The extent to which the employment of a specific influential mechanism is successful in obtaining the intended effects on the organisation's decisions-makers is subject to the stakeholder's power and the nature of the stakeholder-organisation relationship. The following subsections demonstrate these categories and the probable consequences.

11.4.3 Mechanisms Aimed at Conveying the Need for Taking Action to the Decision Makers

The recognition of the need for taking an action precedes the action taken. Thus, from the outset, in order for stakeholders to satisfy their claims and preserve their interests in a specific organisational issue, they must convey their concerns to the decision makers in the organisation. Hence, the first set of influential mechanisms employed by the stakeholders aim to convey the need for taking action to the decision makers. In these mechanisms, the stakeholders, directly, inform the decision makers in the organisation about their claims and interests, as well as about what needs to be done regarding the specific issue. Consequently, the decision makers would be aware of and might recognise the need for taking action. Nevertheless, whether the decision makers respond positively or not is another issue.

Stakeholder studies have highlighted some of the mechanisms aimed at conveying the need for taking action. For example, Friedman and Miles (2006a) stated that stakeholders may convey their concerns to the organisations' decisions-makers and demand action via "*Voice Strategies*". Through these voice strategies, stakeholders aim to "inform, educate or persuade organisations to change" (Friedman and Miles, 2006a, p 191). Stakeholders may employ formal/informal meetings, correspondence, letter-writing campaigns, complaints or suggestions boxes. In another example, Zietsma and Winn (2008) affirmed that stakeholders, activists in particular, use "*issue-raising tactics*" to gain attention and support for their claims and interests regarding a specific issue via mobilising media visibility, public opinion and participation. The same notion was expressed as "*starting position tactics*" by den Hond and de Bakker (2007), highlighting similar mechanisms.

The literature on public participation highlighted mechanisms via which the public inform the decision makers in public sector organisations about their concerns regarding a specific issue under consideration. (Green and Hunton-Clarke, 2003; Rowe and Frewer, 2005). In addition to the methods highlighted above, the public may convey their concerns via, for example, interactive websites, hotlines, public hearings and public inquiries (Rowe and Frewer, 2005).

The findings of this research are in line with these studies. As demonstrated earlier, stakeholders employed various mechanisms to convey their concerns about the succession process to the decision makers in the public sector. Most often, these concerns were regarding who should assume executive positions. For example, internal stakeholders and officials representing the EDB, SCW, CSB or BIPA utilised formal/informal communication channels with the decision makers to nominate/recommend certain candidates or to disapprove the nomination of others. As well, these stakeholders utilised the same formal/informal communication channels to point out the need to replace inept office incumbents.

With regard to other external stakeholders, the findings indicated that some of these stakeholders utilised their connections with the decisions-makers to recommend certain candidates for executive positions or express their dissatisfaction with certain office incumbents. Furthermore, these stakeholders may convey their dissatisfaction with office incumbents via particular mechanisms at their disposal. For example, politicians can employ parliamentary instruments to highlight the shortcomings of office incumbents. Professional associations express their concerns of office incumbents via petitions submitted to the competent authorities at the organisational level as well as to the political leadership. Newspapers pass on their concerns to the decisions-makers via their news reports and columns. In general, the central aim in employment of all of the abovementioned mechanisms by stakeholders was to highlight the need for taking action, in order to satisfy their claims and preserve their interests.

11.4.4 Mechanisms Employed by Stakeholders to Influence Identification of Available Choices on A Specific Issue

Stakeholders influence the choices available to organisations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Mitchell et al., 1997). Furthermore, stakeholders may satisfy their claims and preserve their

interests in a specific organisational issue by influencing the identification of available choices for decision makers in an organisation. The stakeholders may push/pull these decision makers toward the choices that best serve their claims and interests. In pushing tactics, stakeholders influence the identification of the available choices by forcing the organisation's decision makers to adopt those choices favourable to the stakeholders, or suffer the consequences. Frooman (1999), for example, highlighted the notion of "*conditional usage strategies*", which was also advocated by other scholars such as Sharma and Henriques (2005), Friedman and Miles (2006a). By means of such strategy, the stakeholders condition the usage of the resources available for an organisation to influence the organisation's behaviour. Consequently, this influences the choices available to the organisation's decision makers. The author supported his argument by highlighting a case of a tuna canning company that restricted the fishing nets used by its suppliers. In such cases, organisations are pushed to adopt choices favourable to the stakeholders. Stakeholders may push the organisation's decision makers to such choices by various mechanisms that control the usage of the available resources, such as materials and operational specifications and standards.

Another way by which stakeholders influence the identification of the available choices is via promoting these choices to the decision makers. One way to do this is through positive screening, whereby stakeholders publicly announce their keenness for certain choices. For example, Andrew L. Friedman and Miles (2006) highlighted how socially responsible investments funds influence corporations' behaviour using positive screening. According to the authors, these funds show "their approval for certain corporate practices by publicly including companies that pass their positive screens" (p. 200). Similar tactics are used by environmentalists to promote a more environmentally conscious resource utilisation and methods of production.

The findings of the current research affirmed this notion regarding the stakeholders' effects on the identification of the available choices. Specifically, the findings indicated that stakeholders strived to influence the identification of the candidates for the succession processes. However, due to the nature of the specific issue under consideration (the succession process), the research's findings revealed that stakeholders utilised pulling tactics more than pushing tactics. This is expected, as stakeholders do not control the usage of the available resources, the executive staff in the public

sector. Nevertheless, the data analysis indicated that some of the stakeholders tried to enforce certain criteria for selecting the successor, for instance, professional associations' made efforts to establish detailed standards for assuming executive positions. Yet, with regard to pulling tactics, the data analysis revealed various mechanisms. For example, the SCW's representatives referred to a kind of positive screening represented by the award from H.H. Princess Sabeeka for women's empowerment in public organisations. Newspapers were found to promote certain individuals for consideration as potential candidates for executive positions, whilst professional associations trained and facilitated the recognition of certain individuals as potential candidates. In general, all of these mechanisms were aimed at influencing the identification of the choices available in selecting a successor.

11.4.5 Mechanisms Aimed at Influencing Decisions Concerning the Stakeholders' Claims and Interests

After conveying the stakeholders' concerns and trying to influence the identification of the available choices, stakeholders might resort to mechanisms aimed at influencing the decisions, per se, concerning their claims and interests. Thus, the third set of influential mechanisms employed by the stakeholders strives to influence the organisational decisions in an attempt to obtain decisions that suit the stakeholders' claims and interests. Such mechanisms may influence the decision making process or the decision makers themselves.

The relevant literature has identified several mechanisms via which stakeholders influence the decision-making process. For example, such studies have highlighted various incidences of the decision makers of organisations involving stakeholders in decision-making processes concerning their particular claims and interests. In such cases, the decisions-makers consult these stakeholders via various mechanisms, such as *Stakeholder Advisory Panels* (Spitzeck and Hansen, 2010), *consultations processes* (Zietsma and Winn, 2008), and surveys (Green and Hunton-Clarke, 2003). Meanwhile, the literature on public participation has highlighted other mechanisms, such as citizen panels, consultation documents and websites, focus groups, opinion polls, referendums and surveys (Rowe and Frewer, 2005). In such consultations, the stakeholders provide their formal/informal inputs to the decisions-makers; however, the decisions-makers are not obliged to consider such

inputs. Furthermore, some of the public participation studies highlighted that the public exert a greater influence over the decision-making process if they are part of the decision-making body (Green and Hunton-Clarke, 2003). In such cases, the stakeholders are members of the teams responsible for making such decisions.

Another way for the stakeholders to influence the decisions is via influencing the decision makers themselves. The stakeholders may persuade/pressure these decision makers in order to obtain favourable decisions. Whilst via consultation mechanisms the decision makers invite the stakeholders' input, persuasion tactics involve the stakeholders in taking the initiative to convince the decision makers to adopt their viewpoints regarding what has to be done and how it should be done. For example, van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010) affirmed that an environmental group played this type of advisory role in the issuance of a "*climate-neutral credit card*" by a Netherlands bank, whilst Spitzack and Hansen (2010) highlighted a similar advisory role in what they labelled "*formal stakeholders dialogues*".

With regard to pressuring tactics, stakeholders might resort to more hard-line mechanisms to influence the organisational decisions if their claims and interests are not met. Various studies have asserted this notion and highlighted some of the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to pressure the organisation's decisions makers, for example, protesting, boycotting, lobbying and disrupting the organisation's operations (Eesley and Lenox, 2006; Lee, 2011; Sharma and Henriques, 2005; Zietsma and Winn, 2008).

As discussed earlier, the findings of the current research also highlighted the employment of such tactics by the stakeholders to influence the succession decisions. For example, politicians affirmed that, in some cases, they were consulted by the political leadership regarding who should be appointed to executive positions in the public sector. In other cases, politicians utilised their connections with the political leadership and other competent authorities at the organisational level to persuade them regarding who should be appointed. Also, the data analysis showed that, in some cases, politicians pressured competent authorities at the organisational level either to appoint certain candidates or face political problems in the parliament.

11.4.6 Mechanisms Aimed at Rejecting Undesirable Decisions

If the stakeholders are not able to influence the organisational decisions and these decisions are not in line with the stakeholders' claims and interests, the stakeholders might challenge these decisions via complaining to higher authorities. These complaints could take the form of lawsuits. Various studies have highlighted lawsuits as one of the mechanisms by which stakeholders attempt to influence an organisation's behaviour. For example, Hendry (2005) highlighted the lawsuit of the Natural Resources Defence Council against American Electric Power, Eesley and Lenox (2006) reported that 144 lawsuits were filed against organisations concerning environmental issues by various stakeholders and den Hond and de Bakker (2007) advocated lawsuits as one of the material damage tactics used by stakeholders to influence an organisation's behaviour.

The findings of the current research asserted, in addition, that stakeholders resorted to higher authorities to get undesirable succession decisions overridden. For example, the Bahrain Medical Society filed a lawsuit challenging a specific decree issued by the Ministry of Health. As was illustrated in the analysis chapter, various stakeholders utilised their connections with the political leadership to complain against certain decisions made by public organisations. For example, on several occasions representatives of the professional associations affirmed that they approached the political leadership to complain regarding specific issues that were related to the succession process (such as career development schemes and professional cadres).

11.4.7 Mechanisms Aimed at Altering the Governing Framework Concerning the Stakeholders' Claims and Interests

Organisations are constrained by the frameworks in which they operate. These frameworks are the conceptual structures that govern the organisations' operations and organise the relations among the various parties involved. As illustrated in the literature review, some of the stakeholders, such as legislators and governments agencies, are able to influence such governing frameworks by establishing and enforcing laws and regulations (Freeman, 1984; Lee, 2011). Furthermore, some of these stakeholder studies asserted that those who possess institutional/coercive powers are very influential stakeholders. For example, Harvey and Schaefer (2001) affirmed that governmental agencies and industry regulators were the most influential stakeholders in the environmental

decisions of electricity and water companies in the United Kingdom. This finding was echoed in Henriques and Sharma (2005) study of stakeholder influence on the Canadian forestry industry.

In addition, stakeholders' efforts to alter these governing frameworks have been highlighted by various scholars, particularly those who studied stakeholder influence on the organisations' environmental and corporate social responsibility decisions. For example, den Hond and de Bakker (2007) highlighted the activist groups' efforts "to influence the diffusion, interpretation, and implementation of laws and regulations, as well as in lobbying for the formulation of new laws and regulations" (p. 918). Thus, the final typology of mechanisms employed by the stakeholders to influence organisations' decisions includes those mechanisms utilised to alter the frameworks governing the stakeholders' claims and interests in these organisations.

As stated above, the stakeholder literature affirmed the employment of mechanisms aimed at altering governing frameworks. Specifically, stakeholders' political efforts at the macro level to formulate new legislation via lobbying and cooperation with politicians and legislators were highlighted in studies by such as Harvey and Schaefer (2001), Sharma and Henriques (2005), Hendry (2005) and Zietsma and Winn (2008).

The current research provided further empirical evidence supporting this notion and went beyond the existing research to affirm that some of the stakeholders strived to influence the governing frameworks of the succession process in public sector. For example, the CSB is developing a new "Executive Regulation for the Civil Service Law", which would replace the existing regulations and have an impact on the succession process in public organisations. Furthermore, the research findings showed that some of the stakeholders were able to influence governing frameworks at the organisational level through their engagement in the development of such governing frameworks. For example, the data analysis indicated that professional associations were involved in the development of their professions cadres and career development schemes. Another example shows that the EDB, via its various initiatives to improve public sector performance, advocated the employment of key performance indicators and new appraisal schemes for evaluating executives' performance in public sector organisations. This has resulted in various improvements in the way

in which executives are evaluated, through the embracement of more objective methods of measurement in the appraisal schemes.

11.5 THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The core argument of the current research is that we need to improve our understanding of the way in which successors follow office incumbents in order to understand the succession phenomenon and the mixed findings produced by relevant studies. Thus, the research strived to enhance our knowledge about the succession process by investigating the impact on it of various internal and external factors in the public sector context. In the pursuit of this aim, the research, primarily, contributed to the theory and literature of the succession phenomenon in several respects. However, as by-product, the research's findings also provide a contribution to the stakeholder field of studies. Furthermore, the findings have made some practical contributions to succession management. In the following subsections, these contributions are illustrated.

11.5.1 Theoretical Contributions to the Study of the Succession Phenomenon

By focusing on the succession process and investigating the influential factors acting upon it in the public sector context, the research made three theoretical contributions to the study of the succession phenomenon. The first and foremost is the two conceptual models developed to enhance our understanding of the succession process, which are illustrated in Figure 11-2 on page 339 and **Error! Reference source not found.** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**. Such models enhance our knowledge about the succession phenomenon by providing a holistic perspective to view phenomenon that incorporates the various influential factors and highlights the means by which these factor act upon the phenomenon and shape the ways in which it unfolds in public sector contexts.

According to Giambatista et al. (2005), the use of theoretical lenses to study the succession phenomenon is vital for the development of succession research theory. In addition, those scholars who reviewed the succession literature, such as Kenser and Sebora (1994) and Giambatista et al. (2005), highlighted the need to make fuller use of qualitative research methods to enhance our understanding of the succession phenomenon. Based on these remarks, the two conceptual models

were developed. These models were derived from a comprehensive literature review and were based on reconciliation of recognised theoretical foundations. Furthermore, the current research verified and supported the proposed models with empirical evidence obtained via qualitative methods.

Specifically, the current research proposed a model that identifies/specifies the influential factors acting upon the succession process in the public sector (Figure 11-2 on page 339). Based on an extensive review of the succession literature and founded on theoretical propositions derived from the stakeholder theory and the contingency theory, the model adopts a holistic approach to identify the potentially influential factors acting upon the succession process from within and outside the organisation and at macro, organisational and positional levels. Furthermore, the model brings into the picture the impact of various influential stakeholders and context-related factors, which were overlooked in previous studies. All the identified factors were verified by empirical evidence, as is demonstrated in section 11.2. For example, the model facilitated the recognition of the impact of various external stakeholders (e.g. political and professional associations) and macro level context-related factors (e.g. state reform project), which were neglected in previous succession studies.

Various succession scholars, such as Kesner and Sebor (1994), Giambatista et al. (2005) and Hutzschenreuter et al. (2012), have long called for holistic approach to study of the phenomenon. Furthermore, these scholars have attributed the mixed findings in the field to the lack of such approaches in the succession field of studies. Thus, by developing a model for the influential factors acting upon the succession processes in the public sector, the current research is a step forward in the right direction to understand the succession phenomenon in organisational context in general.

In addition, the current research proposed a second model that identifies the mechanisms employed by the various stakeholders to influence the succession processes in general. Specifically, this model was developed to bridge the gap in knowledge regarding how the succession process is influenced by the involved stakeholders (Figure 11-3 on page 356). Based on the Stakeholder Theory and supported by empirical evidence, the model illustrates the consequences of the different mechanisms employed by the stakeholders on the succession process. As illustrated in Section

11.3, the model explained the detected variations in the succession process in light of the impact of mechanisms employed by the stakeholders. Thus, by proposing this model, the current research contributes to the explanation for the different ways in which the succession phenomenon unfolds in the organisational context by highlighting the impact of stakeholder mechanisms.

The second theoretical contribution of the research is the proposed method for distinguishing succession processes. In order to detect the variations in the succession process, the current research identified six key aspects to reflect what happens in the process and how it happens. The review of the available succession process typologies highlighted three key aspects of the process for reflecting what happens. These aspects are who the decision maker is, the predetermination of the succession process outcomes and the type of the successor. The other three key aspects were proposed by the researcher to reflect how the succession process occurred. The researcher described the way in which the process was executed in terms of the formality, transparency and integration of the process. The identification of these six key aspects could lay the foundation for a more comprehensive typology of the succession process. Furthermore, this would also assist future comparison studies in focusing on succession processes in different contexts.

The third theoretical contribution is the proposed definition for the succession process. In this research, the succession process was defined as *the complex course of individual and collective events, actions and activities directed toward replacing the incumbent of a position; and the accumulated effects of all the interactions between those who are involved in the process and the organisational contexts determine how the process unfolds*. As discussed in the literature review (page 71), the proposed definition is a significant improvement on the existing succession process definitions. This definition for a key construct in the succession phenomenon is a contribution to the study of the phenomenon as it proposes a holistic frame of reference by which to view the process and incorporates the interactions of the various stakeholders and context-related factors.

11.5.2 Contributions to the Succession Literature

The current research provides two contributions to the succession literature. First, it contributes to the study of the succession process. As illustrated in the literature review, numerous scholars, such

as Kesner and Sebra (1994), Dyck et al. (2002), Giambatista et al. (2005) and Finkelstein et al. (2009), have highlighted the lack of such studies,. The current research responded to these calls by focusing on the succession process.

The second contribution to the succession literature is the investigated context. While most of the literature focused on the private sector in the western sphere, the current research investigated the phenomenon in distinctive organisational and geographical contexts. The succession phenomenon was examined in the public sector, which is a rarely investigated organisational context in succession studies, whilst the study was set in a new geographical context, Bahrain. Examining the phenomenon in such organisational and geographical contexts enhances the general state of knowledge about the succession phenomenon.

11.5.3 Contributions to the Stakeholder Field of Studies

By using the Stakeholder Theory as the theoretical lens to identify the potential influential actors of the succession process, the research contributed to the stakeholder literature in several aspects. First, the research offered an insightful examination of the relationship between the stakeholder's objectives and actions. The research identified the stakeholders' precise claims and interests in the succession process (*the stakeholder's objectives*) and linked these claims and interests to the mechanisms employed by the stakeholders (*the actions to satisfy such claims and interests*). As illustrated in section 11.3 (p. 355), most of the stakeholders of the succession process were concerned about who should assume the executive position; and thus, most of the employed mechanisms influenced the identification of heir apparent successors, one way or another. According to (Winn, 2001), measuring stakeholders' objectives and then tracing their effect on the stakeholder's actions opens up the inquiry into the relationship between the stakeholder's objectives and the effects of the stakeholder's actions. This in turn, according to the author, may contribute to the robustness of the theory by unravelling "the Gordian knot of the inextricable definitional link between *stakeholder* and *stake*" (p. 134)¹.

The second contribution of the current research is the empirical evidence that verifies the main proposition of the Stakeholder Identification and Salience Theory. According to the theory, the

¹ Italics text is original.

stakeholder salience is a function of the stakeholder power, legitimacy and urgency as perceived by the organisation's decision makers. The main proposition is that organisations pay more attention to the claims and interests of powerful, legitimate and urgent stakeholders, as these stakeholders have the potential (in terms of interests and capabilities) to influence the organisation's behaviour regarding the focal issue of concern (Mitchell et al., 1997). The current research provided empirical evidence supporting this notion. Furthermore, the current research affirmed this notion not only from the perspective of the organisations (represented by the top management), but also from the perspectives of the various stakeholders. However, as discussed in section 11.2.4.1 (p. 346), the data analysis revealed that stakeholder power more than the other attributes reflects stakeholders' potential influence, and thus, saliency. The legitimacy and the urgency of the stakeholder claims and interests were only reflected in the justifications for, or in the counter arguments questioning, the stakeholder's involvement in the succession process. Nevertheless, this finding could be related to the nature of the investigated issue, the succession process.

The third contribution of the current research is its application of Stakeholder Theory to the study of a unique phenomenon, namely the succession phenomenon. Winn (2001) advocated the investigation of non-routine and conflict-ridden issues to provide important insights, and even a more fertile research theme, for the Stakeholder Theory. The fourth contribution to the Stakeholder Theory is that this research applied the theory in an unexplored context, the Bahraini public sector. Examining the theory and obtaining supporting empirical evidence in a new context adds to the robustness of the theory. Another contribution to the theory is the adoption of a finer grained stakeholder analysis, which takes into consideration the heterogeneity among the stakeholders and the variations in their claims and interests. Such an approach contributes to the precise identification of the stakeholders, which in turn, enriches the theory. It is noteworthy that as the focus of the current research was the identification of stakeholders' influences on the succession process rather than the identification of the stakeholders per se, this finer grained stakeholder analysis facilitated the categorisation of the stakeholders' impact according to the aims of the mechanisms employed by these stakeholders. Finally, this led to another contribution to the Stakeholder Theory, which was the development of a typology of the mechanisms employed by the

stakeholders to satisfy their claims and interests. For further discussion of the last contribution to the Stakeholder Theory, refer to section 11.4 (p. 365).

11.5.4 Practical Contributions to Succession Management

In terms of practical contributions of the research, the findings of the research contributed to succession management in two respects. First, the identification of the influential factors acting upon the succession process facilitates succession planning and management. The decision makers of the succession process have now a holistic view of these factors. Awareness and consideration of the impact of these influential factors could enhance the management of the succession process by enabling decision makers to be proactive in improving succession planning and establishing the appropriate managerial procedures. The second practical contribution is that the identification of influential stakeholder mechanisms and their impact on the succession process facilitates the improvement of succession management. In addition, the typology of stakeholder mechanisms provides organisations' decision makers with valuable insights for enhancing stakeholder management. Significantly, the research's findings also highlighted the need for Bahrain to improve the quality of its civil service legislation and to address the gaps in the existing framework pertaining to successor selection criteria and standard procedures for executing the succession process in the public sector.

11.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND FURTHER RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This section is divided in two subsections. In the first subsection, the limitations of the current research are discussed, illustrating the impact of these limitations on the research findings and highlighting the researcher's efforts to overcome or reduce such impact. In the second subsection, the directions for future studies are outlined.

11.6.1 Limitations of the Research

Like any research, the current research has some limitations. Mainly, these limitations were imposed on the research by the existing state of the succession theory and literature and the research methods. However, before discussing these limitations, one issue needs to be clarified

concerning the scope of the research inquiry and the lack of differentiation among the investigated executive positions.

11.6.1.1 The Scope of the Research Inquiry

The research investigated the influential factors acting upon the succession process for executive positions in the public sector. In so doing, the research compared the succession processes for executive positions in the Bahraini public sector ranging from Undersecretary level to Section Chief level. One may point to the lack of differentiation among these executive positions as a shortcoming of the research inquiry. For example, one might argue that the research did not differentiate between these positions in terms of whether the needed successor was a strategic leader or managerial executive and that differences in the qualities needed in such successors could affect the succession processes. Thus, the argument continues, the research intended from the outset to investigate the influential factors acting upon two distinctive sets of succession processes, which consequently led to the blending of these factors in the research findings.

Indeed, the researcher was aware of such differences in the investigated executive positions and the potential effects on the succession process from the outset of the research. Nevertheless, to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon and the influential factors acting upon it, such differences were overlooked, purposefully, in the research inquiry. However, the researcher overcame this omission by controlling the differences in the hierarchal levels used in the questionnaire. It is noteworthy that the main objective of the questionnaire was to detect the variations in the succession processes and not to identify the reasons behind such variations, which was left for the qualitative data to reveal. In addition, the researcher's awareness of such differences is evidenced by the incorporation of the position's perceived importance and requirements in the interview analysis template, which captured the main differences between executive positions. This approach facilitated the avoidance, as well the examination, of any priori assumptions about the effects of these differences in the executive positions on the succession process. Thus, this lack of differentiation among the executive positions is more a research design issue than a shortcoming of the research inquiry.

11.6.1.2 Limitations imposed by the State of the Succession Theory and Literature

A limitation was imposed on the research by the existing state of the succession theory and literature regarding the identification of the influential factors acting upon the succession process. As stated in the literature review, no prior research has been dedicated to the study of the influential factors acting upon the succession process in the public sector. Furthermore, there is no overarching theory for viewing the succession phenomenon and the field is still fragmented in terms of theoretical lenses. To overcome this limitation in theory, and in order to identify these influential factors from a holistic view, the researcher reconciled two theories to form the theoretical foundation. Specifically, the research adopted a stakeholder perspective to identify the influential stakeholders of the succession process, both from within and outside the organisations. With regard to context-related factors, the researcher adopted a contingency perspective to identify factors at the macro, organisational and positional levels context.

Furthermore, to identify these influential factors acting upon the succession process, the researcher reviewed the available literature. Most of the succession studies were found to focus on the private sector. Thus, due to the dearth of studies addressing the succession phenomenon in the public sector, the model for identifying influential factors acting upon the succession process was based on those factors identified in the private sector context. One may raise two concerns regarding the suitability of the reviewed literature for identifying the influential factors acting upon the succession phenomenon in the public sector.

The first concern is that, while all organisations are subject to similar pressures in general, there are fundamental differences between the private sector and public sector in relation to the succession phenomenon in terms of autonomy and competition. Private sector organisations are independent entities that compete among themselves to attract and retain employees. However, public sector organisations are governed by central bodies such as the Prime Minister Council and the CSB. The structure of the public sector and the existence of superior governmental bodies supervising the civil service imply that there is a sort of control and coordination over workforce movements between the various organisations in the public sector. This is not the case in the private sector. In addition, the competition among public sector organisations is limited due to the similarities in the compensation packages.

The second issue concerning the suitability of the reviewed literature for identifying these influential factors is the possibility of incorporating inappropriate factors or neglecting other potential ones. As demonstrated in the literature review, some of the stakeholders highlighted in the reviewed literature are exclusive to the private sector context, such as the board of directors and the shareholders. Furthermore, one may argue that, due to the reliance on private sector studies to identify these factors, the researcher may overlook possible influential factors in the public context.

In response to these concerns, the researcher can argue that such differences between the private and public sectors do not affect the essence of the influential factors acting upon the succession process. In other words, the same influential factors exist in both contexts, nevertheless, they are materialised in different forms. For example, there is competition in the public sector to attract and retain employees. Public sector organisations compete with other private and public organisations. However, this competition is not only based on the differences in the compensation packages offered, but also on the prestige, power and career development opportunities in the offered position. Furthermore, the recognition of the influential factors in the private sector context facilitated awareness of the parallel factors in the public sector context. For example, by recognising the impact of interest groups on the private sector, the researcher was able to identify and examine the involvement of parallel interest groups in the public sector, such as political, professional and social associations.

Nevertheless, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to attempt to overcome any potential limitations due to the existing state of the succession literature in the identification of influential factors related to the public sector context. The preliminary research investigated the applicability of those factors highlighted in the reviewed literature as well as exploring any other potentially influential factors specific to the public sector context¹. In addition, the researcher was open to reconsidering these influential factors in the data collection and analysis in order to enhance the robustness of the developed model for identifying the influential factors acting upon the succession process.

¹ For further information about the preliminary study, kindly contact the researcher via email: phd10ha@mail.wbs.ac.uk

Similarly, based on the aforementioned argument about the similarities between the public and private sectors concerning the essence of the influential factors acting upon the succession process, some of the findings of the research could be, albeit with caution, generalised to the private sector context. For example, the findings highlighted the impact of various special interest groups (i.e. political, professional and social associations) on the succession processes in the public sector. Similar interest groups also exist in the private context. Thus, this finding could be generalised to the private sector highlighting the impact of those interest groups, which have interests in the private sector succession processes. The extent to which a factor is relevant in the public sector depends on a host of factors including ownership type - private and private public partnership, level of political interference in the running of the private business, and private firm's dependency of political resources.

11.6.1.3 Limitations imposed by the Research Methods

The research is a cross-sectional study providing a snapshot for the influential factors acting upon the succession process at a particular point of time and from a historical perspective that depends on the interviewee's memory. One of the limitations imposed on the research by the research method is related to the qualitative data. The research identified the influential factors acting upon the succession process and the influential mechanisms based on data obtained via semi-structured interviews. Such self-reported data contain four unavoidable potential sources of bias that should be noted as limitations of the research. The first is selective memory. Despite the significance and uniqueness of the succession process, there is the possibility of interviewees forgetting important issues that occurred in the past. The second source of bias is telescoping, whereby an interviewee recalls events in a different time frame from that in which events actually occurred. The third is attribution, whereby an interviewee attributes positive events and outcomes to him/herself, while attributing negative events and outcome to others and external forces. The fourth source of bias is exaggeration, whereby interviewees, for different reasons, overstate certain issues or events.

To reduce the impact of these sources of bias in the obtained qualitative data, the researcher conducted a large number of interviews and incorporated various perspectives to identify these influential factors and mechanisms. Moreover, the researcher was very careful in using and

interpreting these data. As illustrated in the data analysis chapters, the researcher highlighted the extent to which interviewees' responses were in agreement regarding the issue under consideration. Most often, issues stated/emphasised by only a few interviewees were excluded from the interpretation of the data.

Another limitation imposed by the research methods is related to linguistic issues. Even though the questionnaire was in Arabic and English, some of the terms, particularly those used to differentiate the various parties involved in the succession process, could have posed difficulties to some of the interviewees. To reduce the impact of this issue, the researcher simplified these terms as much as possible and provided brief definitions in the introduction of the questionnaire for those terms that might have confused the participants. Another linguistic issue is related to the interviews. While most of these interviews were conducted in Arabic, the data analysis was performed in English. The interviewees' responses were transcribed in Arabic, and then translated to English. Transcription is one source of error in documenting the data. Also, translation presents its own difficulties due to the differences in the structure, style and idioms between Arabic and English.

To minimise the impact of these linguistic issues, the audio records of these interviews were transcribed word by word by several assistants. Then, the Arabic transcriptions were crosschecked with the actual audio records by the researcher to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Next, the Arabic transcriptions of the interviews were translated to English by the researcher or certified freelance translators. As a recheck on the accuracy of the final transcriptions of the interviews, the researcher re-examined the transcriptions by listening to the audio records while reading through the English transcriptions of the interviews to ensure that nothing was overlooked.

11.6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

The current study is a step forward in understanding the succession phenomenon by focusing on the process by which it evolves and unfolds. Nevertheless, further work is needed in this direction that adopts a holistic approach to study the succession process taking into consideration the interests of the various influential stakeholders and the impact of the organisation's context. Furthermore, to grasp the essence of the phenomenon, more research is needed in new

organisational contexts and settings. For example, studying the how the succession process occurs in non-governmental-organisations may shed new lights on this important phenomenon. Along this direction, comparative studies are very helpful for highlighting key issues in the phenomenon.

In addition, the current research's findings highlighted the impact of several stakeholders and context-related factors on the succession process in the Bahraini public sector. The researcher advocates other researchers to examine these influential factors in different countries. Moreover, the researcher suggests the examination of how the formality, transparency and standardisation of the succession process affect its outcomes, for example, in terms of the qualities of successor.

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Appendix A-1: Copy of the letter sent to the President of the CSB requesting succession rates for 2008, 2009 and 2009.



سعادة السيد أحمد بن زايد الزايد رئيس ديوان الخدمة المدنية الموقر

تحية طيبة و بعد،

أقدم لسعادتكم بخالص الشكر و التقدير لما بذلتموه و تبذلونه من جهود لتسهيل مهمتي في جمع البيانات اللازمة لإعداد بحثي الأكاديمي مقدرا لكم سعة صدركم و حسن تعاونكم. كما ان توجيهاتكم كانت و مازالت خير عون لي و سند في الكثير من مراحل اعداد هذا البحث، أسترسد بها لدراسة ظاهرة تعاقب الموظفين على المناصب التنفيذية بالقطاع الحكومي، فلكم جزيل الشكر و عظيم الامتنان.

هذا و لا يخفى على سعادتكم أن دراسة اي الظاهرة بحاجة لعملية حصر يوضح من خلالها حجم هذه الظاهرة في بيئتها. فلما كانت ظاهرة تعاقب الموظفين على المناصب التنفيذية معنية بعمليات التعيين بهذه المناصب، برزت الحاجة لبيان متوسط التعيينات السنوية بهذه المناصب (كم موظف يتم تعيينه بمنصب تنفيذي سنويا).

و كما تعلمون فإن حكومة مملكة البحرين وفرت جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمراسيم الملكية و القرارات الصادرة من رئاسة مجلس الوزراء بخصوص التعيينات في المناصب التنفيذية من خلال الجريدة الرسمية. الا انه لا يوجد مصدر يوضح اعداد الموظفين الذين يتم تعيينهم بمناصب تنفيذية و التي ما دون منصب المدير و التي لا تتطلب صدور مراسيم ملكية أو قرارات من رئاسة مجلس الوزراء، بل تقتصر هذه التعيينات على قرارات وزارية من الجهة المعنية و بالتنسيق مع ديوان الخدمة المدنية.

و لما كان ديوان الخدمة المدنية هي الجهة المعنية بمراجعة و اعتماد ترقيات و تعيينات جميع الموظفين الحكوميين، و في ظل عدم وجود احصائيات تفصيلية مطنة، فأنتي التمس منكم توفير احصائية توضح أعداد التعيينات بالمناصب التنفيذية بالمؤسسات الحكومية الخاضعة لقانون الخدمة المدنية خلال السنوات 2008 و 2009 و 2010 ليتسنى لي احتساب متوسط التعيينات بالمناصب التنفيذية لحصر الظاهرة و معرفة حجم العينة المطلوبة لدراستها.

شاكرا لكم حسن تعاونكم و مقدرا لكم جهودكم الخيرة. هذا ما لزم و تقبلوا وافر التحية و التقدير.

مقدمه

هشام عبدالرحمن البينعلي

هاتف رقم: 39339223

البريد الإلكتروني: h.albinali@shef.ac.uk



المحترم

السيد/

تحية طيبة و بعد،

أتقدم لسعادتكم بخطابي هذا ملتصقا تسهيل مهمتي في جمع البيانات اللازمة لإعداد بحث أكاديمي، حيث انني موظف حكومي مبعث لإعداد رسالة دكتوراه في إدارة الموارد البشرية بجامعة شيفيلد بالمملكة المتحدة في موضوع التعاقب الوظيفي (الاحلال الوظيفي) بالكادر التنفيذي بالمؤسسات الحكومية بمملكة البحرين. و تحت الدراسة بالتحديد في ظاهرة تعاقب الموظفين الحكوميين على المناصب التنفيذية و الكيفية التي من خلالها يتواء هؤلاء الموظفين التنفيذيين مناصبهم التنفيذية. و عليه فإن الدراسة غير معنية ببحث من يتولى المناصب التنفيذية و لا تتطرق للأثر المترتبة على عمليات التعاقب الوظيفي.

و لما كان الكادر التنفيذي بمؤسستكم الموقرة خاضع لنظام الخدمة المدنية، فأنتني أرغب في استطلاع آراء الموظفين التنفيذيين بمؤسستكم الموقرة حول هذه الظاهرة (التعاقب الوظيفي). و قد أعدت لذلك الاستبيان المرفق بطيه نسخة منه لقياس الاختلافات في عمليات التعاقب الوظيفي و الذي روعي في تصميمه خصوصية الكادر التنفيذي و اخلاقيات البحث الأكاديمي. علما بأن جميع البيانات المستخلصة من الاستبيان ستستخدم لأغراض أكاديمية بحتة.

و لتسهيل عملية توزيع و تعبئة و جمع الاستبيانات فقد تم وضع الاستبيان على الشبكة العنكبوتية على الرابط التالي و الذي تستغرق عملية تعبئته في المتوسط 20 دقيقة:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VJ6V897>

هذا، و كون سعادتكم أحد الموظفين التنفيذيين، فأنتني أأمل ان تقوموا بالمشاركة في الاستبيان عن طريق زيارة الرابط اعلاه، كما أأمل من سعادتكم تمرير هذا الرابط اعلاه لزملائكم الموظفين التنفيذيين بالمؤسسة و حثهم على المشاركة في الاستبيان. شاكرا لكم تعاونكم المثمر و مقفرا لكم جهودكم الخيرة في تسهيل عملية جمع البيانات لبحثي الأكاديمي.

هذا ما لزم و تقبلوا وافر التحية و التقدير.

مقدمه

هشام عبدالرحمن البنعلي

هاتف رقم: 39339223

المرفقات: (1) نسخة من الاستبيان

(2) رسالة من الجامعة

Appendix A-3: A sample of the positive response from one of the ministries, which establish a contact point



وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development



مملكة البحرين
Kingdom of Bahrain

ك ت هـ / ٢٦٥ / ٢٠١٠

٢٨ سبتمبر ٢٠١٠

حضرة الفاضل الأستاذ هشام عبدالرحمن البنعلي المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

يسرني أن ابعث لكم بخالص التحيات والأمنيات، وبالإشارة إلى كتابكم بشأن طلب الموافقة على استطلاع آراء الكادر التنفيذي بالوزارة من خلال الاستبيان المطلوب إلكترونياً.

نفيدكم بالموافقة على تنفيذه بالوزارة و ترشح السيد مصطفى المرابطي القائم بأعمال مدير إدارة الموارد البشرية للتواصل والتنسيق مع المسؤولين في استيفاء بيانات الاستبيان .

متمنين لكم دوام التوفيق والسداد،،

وتفضلوا بقبول واخر التحيات ،،،،

حنان محمد كمال
وكيل وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية



ها نسخة إلى :

- القائم بأعمال مدير إدارة الموارد البشرية .

نرتقي بالفرد... نرتقي بالمجتمع

ص ب ٢٢٨٦٩ - مملكة البحرين - هاتف: +٩٧٣-1711881 - فاكس: +٩٧٣-1711500
P.O. Box 22869, Kingdom of Bahrain. Tel: +973-17101881 Fax: +973-17101555 E-mail: info@social.gov.bh www.social.gov.bh

Appendix A-4: A copy of an the official internal memo used within one of the ministries to distribute the questionnaire among executive employees

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE & ISLAMIC AFFAIRS
DIRECTORATE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & FINANCE



مملكة البحرين
وزارة العدل والشؤون الإسلامية
إدارة الموارد البشرية والمالية

م ب م / ١٧٧٤ / 2010

التاريخ: 2010/10/14

معادة الفاضل: الأخ/ سالم محمد الكواري المحترم
وكيل الوزارة لشؤون العدل

تحية طيبة وبعد،،،

الموضوع: ملئ استبيان لإعداد رسالة الدكتوراه في إدارة الموارد البشرية والمالية

مقدم من السيد هشام عبدالرحمن البنعلي

بناءً على امر معالي وزير العدل والشؤون الإسلامية، بشأن مساعدة السيد هشام عبدالرحمن البنعلي لإعداد رسالة الدكتوراه في الموارد البشرية والمالية، ولأنه جمع المعلومات فقد قام بإعداد استبيان لاستطلاع آراء التنفيذيين حول ظاهرة (الاتفاق الوظيفي)، وقد أعد لذلك الاستبيان المرفق بطلبه لقياس الاختلافات في آراءات التعاقد الوظيفي، مع مراعاة خصوصية الكادر التنفيذي وأخلاقيات العمل، الأكتيمي، وعليه نأمل من سعادتكم ملئ الاستبيان المرفق.

كما أنه بالإمكان تعبئة الاستبيان من خلال الرابط التالي:

التالي: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WYC5FYN>

شاكرين لسعادتكم تعاونكم الأتم معنا.

وتفضلوا سعادتكم بقبول وافر التحية والاحترام،،،

عساك أحمد إبراهيم عبيد

وكيل الوزارة المساعد للموارد البشرية والمالية

مرفق في طيه الاستبيان

2010
البحرين

هاتف المكتب: ١٧٥١٢٦٠٠ - ١٧٥١٢٦٠٦ مباشر: ١٧٥٢٠٤٦٢ - فاكس: ١٧٥٢٢٩٨٤ - ص. ب. ٤٥٠ - المنامة - مملكة البحرين
Tel. Off.: 17513800 - 17513806 - Dir: 17530562 - Fax: 17532984 - P.O. Box: 450 - Manama - Kingdom of Bahrain

APPENDIX B: EXECUTIVES EMPLOYEES DISTRIBUTION AND THE PARTICIPATION IN THE EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES SURVEY

ORGANISATION		Hierarchal levels										Total		
		Section Chief/Head level (Grades E1-E3)			Director level (Grades E4-E5)			Undersecretary level (Grades E6-E7)			other			
Ref No.	Title	No.	P No.	P%	No.	P No.	P%	No.	P No.	P%			No.	P No.
1	Broadcast & TV Corporation	21	4	19	4	1	25	1	0	0	0	26	5	19
2	Central Informatics Organisation	29	10	34	12	3	25	3	0	0	6	44	19	43
3	Civil Aviation Affairs	8	1	13	11	1	9	4	0	0	1	23	3	13
4	Civil Service Bureau	47	7	15	25	4	16	4	0	0	12	76	23	30
5	Deputy PM*	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	8	0	0
6	Electricity & Water Authority*	35	0	0	26	0	0	6	0	0	0	67	0	0
7	General Organisation for Youth & Sports	19	8	42	9	1	11	0	0	0	1	28	10	36
8	High Council for Judiciary*	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
9	Legal Affairs Department*	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0	0
10	Ministry of Cabinet Affairs*	6	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	13	0	0
11	Ministry of Commerce & Industry	28	8	29	34	2	6	5	0	0	11	67	21	31
12	Ministry of Education	72	0	0	42	1	0	12	0	0	1	126	2	2
13	Ministry of Finance	19	5	26	25	4	16	5	0	0	1	49	10	20
14	Ministry of Foreign Affairs*	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
15	Ministry of Health	53	20	38	23	12	52	76	4	5	6	152	42	28
16	Ministry of Housing	11	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	18	0	0

ORGANISATION		Hierarchal levels										Total		
		Section Chief/Head level (Grades E1-E3)			Director level (Grades E4- E5)			Undersecretary level (Grades E6-E7)			other			
Ref No.	Title	No.	P No.	P%	No.	P No.	P%	No.	P No.	P%			No.	P No.
17	Ministry of Information and Culture	61	3	5	9	2	22	2	1	50	6	72	12	17
18	Ministry of Labour	16	7	44	12	2	17	3	0	0	0	31	9	29
19	Ministry of Shura Council	4	1	25	5	0	0	1	1	100	0	10	2	20
20	Ministry of Social Development	29	4	14	15	4	27	2	0	0	0	46	8	17
21	Ministry of State*	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0		3	0	0
22	Ministry of Transportation	17	8	47	7	1	14	2	0	0	0	26	9	35
23	Ministry of Works	18	3	17	20	2	10	6	0	0	2	44	7	16
24	Min of Justice & Islamic Affairs	48	7	15	16	4	25	4	1	25	3	68	15	22
25	Min of Municipality & Agriculture Affairs	6	5	83	10	3	30	2	1	50	5	18	14	78
26	Prime Minister's Court*	27	0	0	14	0	0	18	0	0	0	59	0	0
27	Survey & Land Registration Bureau*	11	0	0	10	0	0	3	0	0	0	24	0	0
28	Tenders Board*	2	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	0	0
Grand Total		594	101	17	352	47	13	168	8	5	55	1161	212	18

No. = the number of executive employees available P. No. = the number of executive employees participated P% = the participation percentage

* This organisation was not included in the survey.

APPENDIX C: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Appendix C-1: The Final Analysis Template for Internal Stakeholders' Responses

No.	Nodes	No.	Sub-Nodes level 1	No.	Sub-Nodes level 2
1 st Theme: Variations among the decision Makers					
1.1	Interviewee's perception about the reported variation	1.11	Normal and exists in reality		
		1.12	Abnormal and does not exist in reality		
		1.13	Supporting examples		
1.2	Explanations for the variation	1.21	Macro-level factors	1.21a	Political Pressures
				1.21b	Economic Pressures
				1.21c	Social Pressures
				1.21d	Cultural Pressures
				1.21e	Trends
				1.21f	Laws & Regulations
		1.22	Organizational-level factors	1.22a	Organizational Culture
				1.22b	Organization's Perceived Significance
				1.22c	Organizational Strategy
				1.22d	Organizational Performance
				1.22e	Organizational Size
				1.22f	Organizational Structure
				1.22g	Organization Core Profession
				1.22h	Organizational Procedures
				1.22i	Sects' balance & quota
				1.22j	Gender balance & quota
		1.23	Positional-level factors	1.23a	Position's Hierarchal level
				1.23b	Position's Perceived Significance
				1.23c	Position's configuration
				1.23d	Position's requirements
1.23e	Position's core function				
1.24	Predecessor Related Factors	1.24a	Post-succession links with Organization		

No.	Nodes	No.	Sub-Nodes level 1	No.	Sub-Nodes level 2
				1.24b	Post-succession links with Position
				1.24c	Post-succession links with Successor
		1.25	Successor Related Factors	1.25a	Successor's Appropriateness
				1.25b	Successor's Availability
				1.25c	Acting in Charge in the Position
		1.26	Head of organization Related Factors	1.26a	Management Style
				1.26b	Believes and Mindset
				1.26c	Favouritism and Bias
				1.26d	Conflict between Decision makers
		1.27	Other Stakeholders' Related Factors	1.27a	Awareness
				1.27b	Urgency
				1.27c	Capability
2 nd Theme: Variations in the Successors					
2.1	Interviewee's perception about the reported variation	1.1	Normal and exists in reality		
		1.2	Abnormal and does not exist in reality		
		1.3	Supporting examples		
2.2	... similar to the 1 st theme nodes' structure ...				
3 rd Theme: Variations in the Process Formality					
3.1	... similar to the 1 st theme nodes' structure ...				
4 th Theme: Variations in the Process Transparency					
4.1	... similar to the 1 st theme nodes' structure ...				
5 th Theme: Influential factors acting upon the succession process					
5.1	Stakeholders	5.11	Political Leadership		
		5.12	Gov. Org		
		5.13	Political Associations		
		5.14	Professional Associations		
		5.15	Social Association		
		5.16	Media Organizations		

No.	Nodes	No.	Sub-Nodes level 1	No.	Sub-Nodes level 2
		5.17	Consulting Agency		
		5.18	Other		
5.2	Stakeholders' employed mechanisms to influence the succession process	5.21	Influencing the successors' availability		
		5.22	Overthrowing office incumbent		
		5.23	Influencing Decision makers		
		5.24	Overriding Decision makers		
		5.25	Altering the framework		
5.3	Key context related factors	5.31	Macro-level factors	1.21a	Political Pressures
				1.21b	Economic Pressures
				1.21c	Social Pressures
				1.21d	Cultural Pressures
				1.21e	Trends
				1.21f	Laws & Regulations
		5.32	Organizational-level factors	1.22a	Organizational Culture
				1.22b	Organization's Perceived Significance
				1.22c	Organizational Strategy
				1.22d	Organizational Performance
				1.22e	Organizational Size
				1.22f	Organizational Structure
				1.22g	Organization Core Profession
				1.22h	Organizational Procedures
				1.22i	Sects' balance & quota
				1.22j	Gender balance & quota
		5.33	Positional-level factors	1.23a	Position's Hierarchal level
				1.23b	Position's Perceived Significance
				1.23c	Position's configuration
				1.23d	Position's requirements
				1.23e	Position's core function

Appendix C-2: Final Analysis Template for External Stakeholders' Responses

No.	Nodes	No.	Sub-Nodes level 1	No.	Sub-Nodes level 2
1st Theme: Stakeholder's claims and interests in the succession process					
1.1	Urgency of the claims	1.1	Perceived Importance		
		1.2	Time Sensitivity		
		1.3	Justification for such urgency		
1.2	Stakeholder's stakes in the succession process	1.21	Concerned with "Who would be the successor?"	1.21a	Specific Individual
				1.21b	Specific Selection Criteria
		1.22	Concerned with "How the succession process is executed?"	1.22a	Specific part of the process
				1.22b	The entire process
		1.23	Concerned with "Where the succession process is taking place?"	1.23a	Particular Organizations
				1.23b	The entire public sector
2nd Theme: Stakeholders' mechanisms to bring about their claims					
2.1	Mechanisms aimed to influence the availability of the successors	2.11	Qualifying certain individuals to be considered as successors		
		2.12	Highlighting certain individuals to be considered as successors		
2.2	Mechanisms aimed to remove the office incumbent				
2.3	Mechanisms aimed to influence the decision makers' decisions	2.31	Advisement & Consultation		
		2.32	Persuasion		
		2.33	Negotiation		
		2.34	Pressuring		
2.4	Mechanisms aimed to override the decision makers' decisions	2.41	Civil Service Bureau Decision		
		2.42	Court of law verdict		
		2.43	Higher Authority Decision		
2.5	Mechanisms aimed to alter the succession process framework	2.51	Establishing or amending the regulating system		
		2.52	Establishing new bodies to be involved in the succession process		
		2.53	Altering the role or the involvement of a stakeholder entity		
2.6	Mechanisms Effectiveness	2.61	KPI's for mechanisms' effectiveness		
		2.62	Limitations and Drawbacks		

No.	Nodes	No.	Sub-Nodes level 1	No.	Sub-Nodes level 2
3rd Theme: Reciprocal interactions between the various stakeholders and the organizational context					
3.1	Key external stakeholders involved	3.11	Political Leadership		
		3.12	Gov. Org		
		3.13	Political Associations		
		3.14	Professional Associations		
		3.15	Social Association		
		3.16	Media Organizations		
		3.17	Consulting Agency		
		3.18	Other		
3.2	The nature of the interactions with key stakeholders	3.21	Cooperation		
		3.22	Competition		
3.3	Key context related factors	3.31	Environment related factors	3.31a	Political Pressures
				3.31b	Economic Pressures
				3.31c	Social Pressures
				3.31d	Cultural Pressures
				3.31e	Trends
				3.31f	Civil Service Law
		3.32	Organizational contingencies	3.32a	Org. Perceived Significance
				3.32b	Culture
				3.32c	Procedures
				3.32d	Sects' balance & quota
				3.32e	Gender balance & quota
		3.23	Positions contingencies	3.33a	Position Perceived Significance
				3.23b	Hierarchal level
				3.33c	Job Requirement
3.33d	Professional Nature				
3.4	The nature of the interactions with key context-related factors	3.31	Coping with the context		
		3.32	Amending the context		

Appendix C-3: A Sample for an Interview Transcript

Interviewee Category	External Stakeholder/Political Association
Interviewee Coded Name	A. L.
Interviewee Position	Head of Organisation
Interviewee Organisation	Political 1
Interview Date	23/09/2010
Interview Location	Interviewee's Office
Duration	30 min
Remarks	

Interviewer: As I explained earlier, my research is focusing on the succession phenomenon in public sector organisations and more precisely on the succession process for executive positions.

Interviewee: About the first issue "succession", from my position in Parliament and as (*position was omitted*) of Al-Nuwab Council and as a member of one of the largest blocs in the council, which is the (*bloc's name was omitted*) bloc, and the Chairman of the (*association's name was omitted*) Association, succession is a fundamental topic and it is a matter which is addressed from time to time in the agenda of (*association's name was omitted*), directly and indirectly. The importance of succession emerges because we believe it should be based on an institutional framework rather than on personal interests or "Waseta". We believe in an institutional grounding with regard to the succession process and who should follow the office incumbent in the position, especially for those at a high level in the state and its organisations, where there must be a normal, correct and right process. This replacement is based on several factors. Firstly, the successor should have the efficiency and experience required for the position. He should be familiar with the institution from within and he should not be a part of the ingoing processes and procedures of the institution. However, it is not necessary for the successor to be the one who is holding the position which is directly underneath the office incumbent. But, if the succession was carried out in the correct way, from our perspective, this would maintain the stability and the balance of the institute and avoid any confusion. And if the succession was not executed in a smooth way this would affect the productivity and work of the institution, because the succession process did not bring the right person in. So, the rule for us with regard to the succession process is "the right person in the right place".

Interviewer: You mentioned that the bloc addresses the succession directly and indirectly. Would you please clarify this statement?

Interviewee: for the case of the indirect way, for example, sometimes it is heard that succession processes were carried out in the state organisations and you find the individuals who have been appointed to leading positions are incompetent. This matter is addressed and discussed, then it will be mooted via the formal channels which (*association's name was omitted*) has with state officials to explain our viewpoints. This is the indirect way. The direct way is focusing on how to regulate the succession process. That is to say, “Is there a possibility to have a law which can regulate and organise the succession process for high positions in the state, instead of the current way which is subject to efforts and views which could have attributes of political, personal, or exchange of interests?”; this in turn would affect the institution’s performance. Therefore, when I said institutional framework, we want the succession process to be based on a regulating framework, so the one who is placed in any position would satisfy the legal requirements specified by the regulating framework and he is, actually, the right person for this sensitive position. So, this is the succession process from the regulating framework.

Interviewer: You also said “if the succession process was executed in normal and right way”. What do you mean by normal and right?

Interviewee: I mean that the successor should be able to manage the organisation in the appropriate way. For instance, sometimes a successor would be appointed to an Undersecretary or Undersecretary Assistant position, but he is not from within the institution and he does not have the expertise which qualifies him to this position; and, perhaps, he was only selected to the position due to political reasons. From our point of view, this would affect the status of the institution. For example, in the Ministry of Health, which is known to be providing health services, when you bring in an Undersecretary, who is external to the Health ministry and he does not have a background in health services, this affects the institution. While if the succession process were executed naturally and correctly via appointing someone from within the institution or someone who has a background in the health sector, they would be able to deal with the management of a health institute such as the Ministry of Health. So, this is what we mean by a natural succession and unnatural succession which affects the performance of the institute. And we, from the reality of the work, have witnessed some occurrences where some individuals arrived at sensitive positions even though they were not appropriate and therefore, the complaints towards these institutions have increased. And we are as a parliament movement and a representative bloc forced, sometimes, due to the poor succession processes in place, to question the competent minister regarding such succession processes; and this is one of the tool which we use.

Interviewer: This is if the succession process was executed and the successor assumed the office?

Interviewee: Yes, that is right, this is in the case of the succession process taking place. We would then question the competent minister about it. And if you are asking how we want to go about implementing the succession, we submit the project about regulating the succession process and placing it in a legal framework. We have examined how some countries execute the succession process, especially western countries such as Canada and the United States. They have some legislation which frames the senior positions, and thus the transition is not left subject to individuals' or institutions' interest, as it goes through several stages to make sure that the right person is in the right position. For example, in some countries, there is a panel formed, external to the ministry, where some figures who have long-standing experience in institutional work sit. This panel examines or ensures that the successor is appropriate for the position in the ministry as a consulting panel. The panel has an academic background. Therefore, the names are sent to the panel who study the nominations, and then the panel will make their recommendations to the competent authority. In other countries, the legislative authority plays a role in the succession process for the senior positions; so when someone has been nominated for a particular position by his/her direct superior or by the competent minister, the nomination is presented to the legislative authority for approval and blessing. And the objective from all of this is to ensure the approval of the various authorities regarding the successor.

Interviewer: You said that (*association's name was omitted*) Bloc considers the succession as an important issue. Is it more important for you in the whole public sector or it is more important in some organisations than in others due to certain criteria? Kindly, notice that I am not focusing on the ministerial level, as this level is under various political factors which for various reasons are beyond the scope of the current investigation. Therefore, the focal point here is the succession processes for executive positions which are below the minister's level, in other words the Undersecretary and the lower levels.

Interviewee: No, the main concern of the bloc in the governmental sector includes the ministries, institutions and the major companies under government. These organisations are our priority with regard to the succession process in terms the process should to be according to clear and accurate mechanisms. In some cases these mechanisms are not accurate and subject to matters which lead to the appointment of unsuitable successors. One of the mechanisms which we discussed with the responsible officials in the government is having multi-monitoring parties supervising these positions in middle management. Thus, there will be an agency within the institutions alongside another agency in the Civil Services Bureau; and in addition, a third agency was suggested which is absolutely neutral and independent of the ministries and the CSB, so that the succession process of the positions of the Directors, General Directors, Undersecretary Assistants and Undersecretary will go through three stages. In the current time and according to our experience in the Kingdom of Bahrain, there is an agency within the ministry and another agency on the CSB level, but there is no third agency which could be considered absolutely neutral with regard to the succession process

where the matters are examined before being presented to the final decision-makers. This is one of the ideas which we discussed with responsible parties in the government.

Interviewer: Don't you think that the executive positions in the Ministry of the Shura and Al-Nuwab Councils Affairs are closer to you than other executive positions in other ministries? Or, for example, aren't the executive positions in the Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Municipalities and Urban Affairs more important to you, as representatives in Al-Nuwab Council, than other positions in other ministries such as the Ministry of Transportation?

Interviewee: The case of the succession process concerns us in all ministries. However, as representatives in Al-Nuwab Council we have more interaction with some ministries than others. For example, the health, housing, and education sectors are closely related to Al-Nuwab Council. And thus, the succession process is a greater concern in these institutions especially in terms of the cooperation of officials with the legislative authorities and Al-Nuwab Council, whether those officials presently assume these positions or are due to assume them in the future. This is a matter which we pay major attention to. So, if you ask me "Is there a variation in the level of officials' cooperation, coordination and collaboration with the legislative authorities and Al-Nuwab Council?" I will answer yes. From my experience, there are variations between the undersecretaries and undersecretary. For instance, there are officials who cooperate significantly and respond to every question or correspondence that they receive from a representative of Al-Nuwab Council, while other officials neglect the questions and they do not, even, respond with positive or negative responses. And that is what strains the relations with some government institutions due to the lack of cooperation and coordination. And here the importance of the succession process is highlighted in terms of the individual who should be assigned to such tasks. Especially since Bahrain now is not as it was before. In the past 10 years, matters have changed and therefore the government should pay more attention to the succession process as the executives are no longer behind closed doors, now they are held accountable in front of their ministries, the people and the legislative authorities.

Interviewer: You mentioned that the succession process is an important issue in the agenda of your bloc, (*association's name was omitted*). So, have you introduced a legislations project or motions in this regard?

Interviewee: Yes, we have submitted a motion to the government between the first legislative and second legislative term, for the establishment of clear standards with regard to the middle positions, including undersecretary, undersecretary assistant and director positions. And since it is a motion and it is not obligatory, the government promised the council to study it, however, until now nothing has been accomplished.

Inter: Was this in the 2002 parliament, or in the parliament of 2006?

Interviewee: It was in parliament in 2002, the first legislative term. In parliament of 2006, there was a legislation project under deliberation, which was part of the Antidiscrimination Act which stresses qualifications, experiences and competencies as a basis for succession processes and appointments in general, rather than issues which do not have academic or administrative foundations. However, the Act is still within the council and it has not been presented to the government yet because of the long discussions and an agreement was not reached between the council and the government about this Act.

Interviewer: So, as a political bloc, you submitted a motion to establish the standards for appointing the successors for the executive positions and you are also working on a legislating Act which focuses on antidiscrimination. It seems that you are more concerned with finding the right person than establishing the mechanism for identifying the right person or preparing the right person for the position. Am I right?

Interviewee: I totally agree with you. Our efforts in addressing this issue focused on the establishment of criteria and standards to identify the right person rather than the development of the mechanisms to search for the right person. I think you outlined the problem thoroughly. I admit that we had never addressed the issue from this perspective which focuses on the mechanism for searching for the right person in all my 8 years' of experience in Al-Nuwab Council. All that has been discussed with regard to this issue, whether via motions, questions, interrogations, or legislative act proposals, focused on the standards and the attributes which are required of the successor to be considered as the right person in the right place. You raised a notion which seems to me to show that it is time to start considering the issue seriously as the idea for developing the mechanisms to search for the right person has been absent.

Interviewer: I see, so how do you go about obtaining what you aim for in the succession process? You mentioned questioning the minister as one of the mechanisms, what other mechanisms do you use?

Interviewee: To summarise the mechanisms employed with regard to the succession process and whether or not the right person has been appointed for the right position, we use parliamentary tools that start with the submission of a question to the competent minister. It is also possible to submit a motion to modify certain functions or set certain standards for a job in a ministry. Moreover, we have used another tool which is forming an inquiry committee to address some of the violations committed by some officials in the ministries and the institutions of the state. Sometimes we use the last tool which is interrogation. These are the mechanisms which are implemented via Al-Nuwab Council. Sometimes we use one mechanism, far from Parliament, which is direct communication with the top official in the organisation or the ministry; for example, contacting the minister directly and sitting with them to discuss how to appoint the right person with regard to the succession processes and the vacant positions. The third way is via sitting with

the minister concerned with the civil service. He oversees the operations of appointment and succession in all ministries of the state, and we would speak with him in a case where we had essential comments about vacant positions or about our expectations of appointments of certain individuals. And the last mechanism, as blocs and as (*association's name was omitted*), sometimes we nominate names to the decision-makers in relation to positions which are expected to go through change or through succession processes. And we are, as (*association's name was omitted*) bloc, keen, whenever we nominate a name, to satisfy the standards which we call for. That means we nominate the person who we believe possesses the required qualities and experiences for the position based on their qualifications and performance. Then the political leadership makes the decision as to whether this person is appropriate or not; nonetheless, this is one of the employed mechanisms.

Interviewer: So, according to what you are saying, the decision-makers in the Bahraini government give the council blocs and the political forces in Bahrain an opportunity for consultation...

Interviewee: Certainly and more than this, sometimes, the political leadership asks for names to be nominated for certain positions and we provide the names, and then the political leadership will choose the person that they deem appropriate. Therefore, the consultation reached a level where the leadership itself asks for nominations. I mentioned earlier that we may approach the leadership nominating the names; however, in many occasions, the leadership asks us to nominate names, in order for them to be discussed along with other nominations from other parties.

Interviewer: In the previous questions, you responded as member of (*association's name was omitted*) bloc or as member of (*association's name was omitted*) political association, what about your other arm in the Bahrain society, (*association's name was omitted*) association. (*Association's name was omitted*) has been around since the (*omitted*) and has a recognized weight in the society. And as you know, in other countries, political parties may launch campaigns and form lobbies to support their demands. So, to what extent (*association's name was omitted*) is involved in your pursuit to achieve your goals with regard to the succession issue?

Interviewee: As a matter of fact, (*association's name was omitted*), (*X*) association is the charitable and social wing of (*association's name was omitted*) association and (*association's name was omitted*) association is the political wing of (*X*) association. With regard to the succession process, there is a clear strategy between the two associations: (*X*) association does not interfere with issues of a political dimension, and vice versa (*association's name was omitted*) does not interfere with social and charity issues. This is to say, not as a direct interference. Thus, (*X*) does not demand via the public channels nor form pressure groups for succession issues and other issues of a political nature. This is the role of (*association's name was omitted*) Association. However, there are

consultative meetings between the two associations with regard to numerous issues such as those related to succession and other issues, if there are any particular orientations. For example, if the political leadership asked us to nominate the names for certain positions, we would consult them. Because sometimes you are searching for the right person and you may forget someone. So, these consultation meetings help. Therefore, we consult with (*association's name was omitted*) association and (X) association, saying that there is a vacant position which requires these conditions, is there someone who satisfies these conditions? So, the nominations are put forward to (*association's name was omitted*) which then, (*association's name was omitted*) works on and presents these names to the political leadership in the case that they ask us for the nominations.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time and input; it is a very rich interview in which you were, as usual, very open. If you have any more comments or remarks, feel free to highlight.

Interviewee: As a concluding remark, I would highlight that, from our experience in dealing with the government, there are some mistakes in handing over the positions from the predecessor to the successor. For instance, sometimes the successor assumes the position without meeting the predecessor for even one meeting. This happened in a lot of cases, and I do not think that this is the right mechanism. In other cases, the successor already knew that he would assume a certain position in a month's time or so, and he did not go the ministry to gather information about this position, he waited until the office incumbent's service in the position ended, and then went to the office. So there really was no positive interaction between the predecessor and the successor to transfer the duties of the position. Another problematic issue in the succession is the rush, sometimes, with which the succession is arranged. There could be sudden news about the discharging of an official and the appointment of another active from the date of issuance is arranged, and this may prevent the successor from collecting information about the new position.

Interviewee: I see, these issues may influence the outcomes of the succession process; however, I am mainly focusing on the process per se. I thank you again.