Variations in strategic change cycle: Thailand's office board of investment, tri-county foundation and UN Women Egypt as case studies

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Abstract

Purpose – Combining two organizational change theories, life cycle and organizational development, this study examines how strategic change cycle has been adopted and implemented across three different organizations, a public organization, an NGO and an intergovernmental organization toward achieving their goals.

Design/methodology/approach – This study triangulates three different qualitative research methods: open-ended semi-structured interviews conducted with UN Women Egypt's director, text analysis of the three organizations' websites and the discourse analysis of the Tri-County Foundation's leaders.

Findings – Strategic change cycle has been differently formulated, adopted and implemented by the three organizations based on their goals, resources and contexts. While Office Board of Investment adopted a comprehensive reactive change, Tri-County Foundation followed a partial proactive transformation and UN Women Egypt developed a partial reactive strategy. Henceforth, public organizations and nonprofit organizations can develop different strategies of change in function of needs, resources, goals and context.

Originality/value – This study advances a theoretical framework on organizational change by integrating two theories, life cycle and organizational development, presenting four patterns of change: comprehensive reactive, comprehensive proactive, partial reactive and partial proactive.

Keywords Strategic change cycle, Life cycle theory, Organizational development, Organizational change

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Strategic management as a managerial innovation has been transposed to the field of Public Administration in an attempt to revive public and nonprofit institutions and ensure their sustainable productivity. The private sector has largely benefited from the flexibility and malleability of strategic management as a planned process of change without a strictly defined structure or processes, which inspired scholars in Public Administration to adopt it for the public sector. Abundant scholarly writings on strategic management have recognized its value as an inspiring guideline for organizational change where institutions are not compelled to strictly follow a sequence of actions. Yet, scholars did not explain or examine the reasons and forms of variations in the adoption of strategic management. In this perspective, this study aims to clarify how and why variations occur within organizations adopting strategic management. In this vein, how they differently adopt and

implement strategic management and why these variations would manifest during the process of organizational change.

In answering these questions, this study examines a wide array of organizational change theories, which devoted ample writings on reasons and processes of change from different scientific perspectives. While scholars have conceived organizations as organic entities mimicking individuals in their process of change, others introduced change as a mechanical process of transformation, which was either reactively or proactively induced to ensure survival and improve organizational performance. Taking into consideration the diversity and complexity of theoretical frameworks addressing organizational change since the 1960s, this study relies on the combination of two theories, the organizational development process and life-cycle theory, in order to explain variations in the adoption and implementation of strategic change cycle across organizations in the public sector. The integration of organizational theories enabled the study to shed light on additional factors and dynamics of change, which were left unaddressed by the existing literature. It also strengthens and sharpens the theoretical lenses used in examining cases of change since it increases the plethora of explanatory frameworks on organizational change and how they are adopted and implemented. Besides, it allows the adoption of different unusual methodological tools, such as the qualitative research methods, in depicting and recording changes across organizations in a discipline that has been mainly dominated by quantitative research tools (Donaldson, 1996).

By combining organizational development and life-cycle theories, the author selected three cases of analysis in order to examine how and why variations in the implementation and adoption of strategic change occur. Encompassing a national American NGO, an intergovernmental organization and a public organization in a developing country, this study dwells on the different profiles of three public and nonprofit organizations, examining how they incorporated either a partial or comprehensive, reactive or proactive strategic change based on diverse environmental instigators toward achieving different goals. Based on the examination of the three cases, this study argues that variations in strategic management across organizations are due to differences in the type of change instigator, the scope of change and the departments involved into the process. While UN Women Egypt adopted a partial strategic planning for improving its tools of action toward increasing awareness of women rights in the Middle East, Thailand's Office Board of Investment (OBOI) adopted a comprehensive strategic management in response to eminent changes in its external environment that instigated a reconsideration of the organization's strategies and employees' competencies. As for Tri-County Foundation, a US-based NGO, it adopted a partial change addressing human resources in order to improve its personnel performance within the limits of its budget.

The three cases experienced different challenges both within and outside their organizational structure, which required the adoption of a strategic management. Doing so, they developed their own strategic change cycle and followed different steps that were not necessarily adopted in a chronological and systematic order but consisted of combined procedures that helped in achieving goals and implementing visions. The three cases focused on different strategic change cycle steps they designed and carried out in order to induce a strategic change and achieve their goals within a changing environment. By adopting organizational change, each institution has tailored its own plan, steps and strategies.

In conducting this study's research, the author triangulated three qualitative research methods by carrying out open-ended and semi-structured interviews with the former representative of UN Women Egypt, conducting a meticulous content analysis of the website of both the OBOI and Tri-County Foundation and a discourse analysis of Tri-County Foundation's leaders. The paper is structured as follows: the first part elaborates on the literature addressing strategic change cycle while the second one focuses on examining organizational change theories and identifying the study's theoretical combination. The third

part explores three cases of organizational change by highlighting how and why variations occurred in their implementation and adoption of strategic change cycle.

Strategic change cycle

The literature addressing strategic change cycle has underlined a process of organizational change where employees and managers define a plan for reaching a specific goal and means to achieve it in function of resources and environmental challenges. While scholarly writings have widely emphasized the absence of universal guidelines for organizations to follow and that each entity has its own needs according to which it will tailor the dynamics of the change process in line with its contextual exigencies, they did not explain how variations occur within organizations conducting strategic management.

Bryson (2010) defined strategic planning as the process of reconsidering decision-making dynamics by defining the organization's position, mission and goals in order to develop effective managerial tasks and improve its performance. It aims to sustain administrative units' efficiency and productivity within a changing and challenging environment in light of obstacles and opportunities, which have to be carefully seized, analyzed and treated in order to survive and excel. In spite of variations in conditions and priorities, public organizations reconsider mainstream strategies and decision-making tools as a necessity. Seminal works on strategic change cycle have expanded on the different processes of strategic management (Johnson and Scholes, 1999). They envisioned it as a teleological process, which is conceived for the achievement of a particular goal. In this vein, the process of change does not require a specific sequence of steps or stages to follow as a precondition to reach the specified goal (Dawson, 1994; Dawson and Andiropoulos, 2009). Also, they conceived it as an evolutionary process that starts with a meticulous scanning of the internal and external environment toward the identification of the organization's position in the market and the determination of needs, plans and strategies (Pearce and Robinson, 1991). Dwelling on employees' awareness, sense of security, and abilities, strategic change cycle develops a road map for the organization to follow by anticipating its future status and projected missions toward achieving goals (Kanter, 1992). Based on a participatory process, it encompasses major steps of strategic change, which are environment analysis, the definition of strategic steps based on a mission and a vision, implementation and evaluation. Yet, scholars did not recommend a rigid sequence or form in the adoption of these steps and underlined strategic management as a flexible process in determining what to change, how and when within the organization, which implies variations in the adoption of strategic management.

Strategic change cycle examines public or nonprofit organizations' strategic objectives side by side to human resources activities in order to enhance overall performance and increase provisions' social values (Nkomo, Human Resource Planning and Organization Performance: An Explanatory Analysis, 1987). It enables public organizations to identify organizational performance and effectiveness in terms of cost and skills. It flexibly fits into organizations' corporate and business strategies as an ineluctable procedure in order to identify a clear prospective vision and the necessary tools for its achievement. Doing so, it focuses on two important goals, determining what kind of employees are needed to run the organization and identifying policies and programs for improving employees' skills and performance. Concerned with the personnel's well-being for boosting organizational performance and achieving strategic objectives, a planned strategic change enables public organizations to determine recruitment's costs and the means of effectively performing missions and carrying out operational and structural changes. In recognition of its importance, public organizations care about integrating employees' planning into their organizational structural in response to public demands for a better quality in service delivery (Sword and Cutsinger, 1984).

Organizational change theories

According to the sheer quantity of scholarly writings addressing organizational change, organizations go through the gradual or eminent process of change under the pressure of environmental challenges or a managerial intervention to develop and enhance its performance. In light of (Lewin, 1947)'s seminal work on organizational change, change occurs within organizations at the event of an alteration of the existing balance between driving and restraining forces. This process has been amply discussed among scholars who identified different currents in organizational change, such as environmental determinism and voluntarism, which tackled organizational change from different perspectives (Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997). The ongoing debate between supporters of both theoretical trends has underlined and recognized the presence of variations among organizations in their pursuit of change depending on their goals, structure, management style and the adopted strategies toward achieving the aspired goals (Child and Kieser, 1981).

In this perspective, both the proponents of voluntarism as expressed by the rational and organic adaptation and life-cycle theories and environmental determinism, encompassing the neo-institutionalists and population ecology have largely capitalized on the motives behind change while highlighting variations among organizations in their process of change (Demers, 2007; Cameron and Whetten, 1983). Scholars affiliated to voluntarism have asserted that organizations opt for a gradual change in the aim of structurally adapting to strategic environmental challenges. Although they agreed on change as a gradual process of structural response to environmental features, they underlined different mechanisms of adaptation. While the organic and rational change schools underscored the parsimonious nature of change in terms of grappling the suitable structural factors in adaptation with the maximum environmental features as possible in order to succeed and survive, the life-cycle indicated that change is proactively initiated in order to influence the environment instead of reacting to its features (Hannan and Freeman, 1984; Kimberly, 1980; Van de Ven and Poole, 1995). Due to the contingent pressure on managers, these theories did not prescribe a particular pathway of change to follow but allowed managers a large maneuver in defining their own strategy of change since they are strategically oriented in running their organization and devising the necessary plans to improve it.

Scholars affiliated to environmental determinism highlighted that organizations' recourse to change is either rare or a predetermined process that organizations adopt in order to conform to institutional norms and values (Baum and Oliver, 1996). While the theory of population ecology stated that change is rare since environment has the power to select which organizations will be able to survive threats, neo-institutionalists recognized organizational change as a process of conforming to institutional norms, standards and values without exhibiting differences (Baum and Singh, 1996). In this vein, the theories underpinning this trend in organizational change asserted that organizations are similar in their reaction to external challenges and internal responses and managers are left with a limited maneuver. By assuming similarity among organizations, scholars underscored the presence of predetermined and defined processes that managers would go through in order to induce change.

Another typology has distinguished between change within and across organizations. In this vein, scholars stated that managers usually follow the stage model and the organizational development theory in order to initiate a change from within, while the interorganizational relation theory and the community coalition action theory refer to changes in relations among organizations (Beckhard and Pritchard, 1992). Being the most frequent model in organizations, scholars referred to the stage model as a steps process that is implemented throughout the different departments of the organization based on a meticulous analysis of the environment (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999; Woodman, 1989). The adoption of this model requires the freezing/abandon of old and traditional practices and the move

toward newer approaches and attitudes, which should be frozen within the organization through the internalization of the new principles and values by individuals.

Similarly, organizational development consists of the application of scientific knowledge to planned changes within the organization, its components, human processes and interorganizational relations in the aim of increasing its efficiency and effectiveness (Beer and Walton, 1987). This approach adopts a holistic definition of change by embracing environmental factors, external partners and internal resources into the process of change. It encompasses both transformational and transactional changes where the former focuses on employees' behaviors and attitudes, while the latter emphasizes organizational and psychological factors that control the output of the working group (Carnal, 1990).

According to Klingner and Nalbandian (2003), organizational change consists of four complementary and simultaneous processes to guarantee a better personnel performance and a successful organization in its mission and vision, which are planning, budgeting and monitoring employees' productivity, job analysis, classification and rewarding system in terms of pay and benefits. It integrates the human resource activities, policies and programs into the organization's mission and needs in order to enable the organization to efficiently achieve its goals and create a public value. By scanning the organization's environment and identifying its strength, weakness, threats and opportunities, strategic planning guarantees employees' loyalty and high performance in implementing the different policies to deal with challenges, reduce weaknesses, benefit from strengths and grasp opportunities (Wayne, 2009). In this vein, a planned change enables the organization to reconsider its policies and activities in order to develop employees' competencies and skills that suit the organization's strategies and projected goals. The process of organizational development has to be constantly revised in order to develop and integrate new values and enhance overall organizational capacity without undermining individual rights and employees' social equity. New values would be integrated, such as flexible work relations, contracting-out, performance and regular evaluation where focus is shifted on people as the main and important concern of organizational management (Schuler, 1990). Unlike theories addressing change within organizations, interorganizational change theories are crafted for enhancing and developing coordination among different entities in the aim of increasing their aggregated ability to face a specific issue/threat or achieve a common goal.

Since planned change incorporates a wide array of factors including processes, strategies, visions, missions, individuals, skills, goals and competencies in reaction to threats and/or opportunities in the external environment, it requires an instigator in order to develop accurate plans for such transformation. In this respect, scholars assumed that anticipation is one of the key factors defining the trajectory of change within organizations and working as the vector of the designed strategies and plans in introducing a change within organization (Robertson et al., 1993). Anticipation is based on the careful and systematic scanning of the organizational environment on the external and internal levels, which involves the persistent evaluation of performance, material resources, available skills and competencies with respect to a constantly changing milieu.

In light of the disparity and abundance of theories addressing organizational change, this study opted for the integration of organizational development and life-cycle theories as a useful approach in combining theories providing alternatives visions, explanations and policies/processes of change without foregoing their areas of divergence. This approach is an innovative perspective in dealing with conceptual diversity since it provides a parsimonious explanation of organizational change, promotes the development of new theories on change and encourages inductive research based on the identification of aspects of transformation, factors of mutation and alteration within entities and the conditions under which they are likely to occur.

By combining the life cycle and organizational development theories, this paper developed a theoretical framework for organizational change based on the integration of both theories' differences (proactivity vs. reactivity and comprehensiveness vs. partiality in change) in order to identify four patterns of change, which were inductively traced throughout the three case studies as follows (see Table 1).

Variations in strategic change cycle

In order to explain how organizations do vary in the adoption of strategic change cycle, this part relies on two organizational change theories and three qualitative research methods. Combining the life-cycle and organizational development theories, this part sheds light on three cases of organizational change where the reasons and means of initiating change were different. The integration of both theories presents four scenarios of change: reactive/holistic, proactive/holistic, reactive/partial and proactive/partial change. While OBOI adopted a holistic reactive change in its organization in response to urgent external instigators, Tri-County Foundation went through a proactive partial change in its personnel, and UN Women Egypt opted for a partial reactive change in its strategy of action based on weaknesses and challenges in its internal and external environments. Based on the variety of data, the author combined different research methods: the text/content analysis of OBOI's website, the discourse analysis of Tri-County Foundation's leadership and open-ended and semi-structured interviews with UN Women Egypt's director.

Thailand's Office Board of Investment (OBOI)

Based on the meticulous text analysis of information and founding documents of the Thailand's OBOI available on its website (OBOI, 2022), OBOI adopted a holistic reactive change in order to reconsider its structure, goals, performance and increase its productivity as a public organization. Being unable to survive challenges related to weaknesses in its structure and external competitiveness, OBOI's board of directors initiated a radical change in its organizational structure and jobs' design. It has formulated a detailed and lengthy strategic change cycle in order to enhance its performance in response to defying circumstances, which acted as the articulator of the process of change in identifying the necessary steps and their sequence as follows:

Assessment of internal and external environment. In the 1990s, OBOI's board of directors recognized the organization's lack of capacities and resources to carry out development and investment projects, which was manifested in the decline of its assigned projects by 40% due to internal and external challenges (OBOI, 2022). External challenges stemmed from Thailand's conclusion of the GATT treaty, which undermined OBOI's attractiveness and underlined the outdated nature of its investment and incentives policies. Also, the Gulf crisis'

Elements of difference between life cycle and organizational development theories	Reactive Change (Organizational development)	Proactive Change (Life cycle)
Comprehensive/Holistic Change (Organizational Development)	Comprehensive and Reactive Change OBOI	Comprehensive Proactive Change
Partial Change (Life Cycle)	Partial Reactive Change UN Women	Partial Proactive Change Tri-County

Table 1.
Matrix of change

repercussions on the global capital market and the emergence of alternative poles of attraction for foreign investors in Eastern Europe and Asia have jeopardized Thailand's part of the FDI floods. Thailand's military coup d'état and the country's loss of its attractiveness due to the elimination of the special tariffs treatment on some products have undermined Thailand's ability of economic development, emphasized the weakness of its economic infrastructure, including OBOI, and underscored its inability to foster economic growth based on investment promotion.

On the other hand, OBOI's internal environment has shown a low level of performance due to its lagging bureaucratic system and managerial misconducts, which impeded the adoption of investment projects, the increase of its public share of economic growth, the equitable distribution of benefits and technological transfer. OBOI's rigid administrative structure impeded its ability to respond to the government's tax reform and adaptation of tax structure and regulations to meet investors' needs, which scrutinized OBOI's mission of investment promotion.

Initiation of strategic planning. OBOI's new leadership initiated a strategic change process. It constituted of clarifying the organization's mission and vision, defining its stakeholders and identifying OBOI's mandates and strategies vis-à-vis threats. Having the staff's consent, the new leadership defined OBOI's stakeholders who would be either national or foreign investors, individuals or firms and are interested in carrying out investment and development projects in Thailand and/or abroad. OBOI's mission was to promote investment in Thailand by adopting an ambitious vision of being a leading investment consultation firm in Thailand. For this aim, it identified a set of strategies revolving around OBOI's technical and informational assistance of stakeholders about investment opportunities and useful business networks in Thailand and/or abroad (OBOI, 2022). Also, these strategies targeted OBOI's organizational structure and employees' capabilities and mandates.

Definition of missions and values. OBOI's mission consisted of promoting investment in Thailand through the adoption of a proactive service-oriented vision rather than being tax-incentivized or a privilege provider (OBOI, 2022). Its leading value was to provide consultation services to investors in order to help them in carrying out projects and promote investment projects in Thailand.

Identification of strategic issues. Strategic issues encompassed OBOI's rigid bureaucratic system, mismanagement, ineffective coordination between departments, workforce's limited skills, centralized decision-making process and the multiplication of administrative procedures, which impeded the development of organizational performance and efficiency.

Formulation of strategies. In reflection of its vision, OBOI developed new tasks and functions, which consisted of policies and strategies addressing investors to help them in adopting and implementing projects. OBOI would provide information and facilities about business formalities, procedures and opportunities in Thailand or abroad for national and foreign investors. It would assist investors in creating a new business in Thailand through the facilitation of administrative requirements and procedures prior to business installation (OBOI, 2022). It would give an orientation service to investors and advise them about positive and negative aspects across various Thai regions and provinces. It would coordinate between stakeholders, develop their networks, assets, production and performance standards in order to successfully carry out their projects.

Definition of mandates. In light of strategic issues that threatened OBOI, different mandates were assigned to address challenges and carry out strategies. These mandates focused on the rehabilitation of administrative procedures and decision-making mechanisms and the development of an effective HR management inside the organization (OBOI, 2022). In addition to the adoption of the New Information Technology, the organization decentralized the decision-making process, implemented a horizontal coordination structure for the different tasks, delegated administrative authorities to regions and provinces and contracted

out functions to private contractors. On the other hand, it improved employees' abilities and skills in order to increase their performance, ability to cope with OBOI's new strategy and mission, and provide a new workforce mindset and culture. OBOI adopted a training program and techniques to improve staff performance, such as the inquiry approach, work improvement team, and the improvement of personnel functions, such as evaluation, sanction, acquisition and tasks planning.

Crystallizing an organizational vision. OBOI's vision as a top leading investment consultation firm and a customer-oriented institution that provided services for investors instead of being function-oriented, implied the shift toward service provision instead of being tax-oriented.

Planning and strategies' assessment. OBOI developed, formulated and communicated its strategic management plan to its staff through a team work committee that was responsible for refining the vision and mission statements, strategies, mandates and stakeholders' analysis so that the plan would be more efficient in empowering OBOI's efficiency and underlining its centrality in the public sector. This step confirmed and approved the prior agreement obtained for initiating the necessary procedures and steps of the strategic change cycle.

Strategic plan adoption and implementation. OBOI has successfully adopted and implemented a strategic change process. OBOI Secretary General was praised and awarded prizes by the Asian Institute of Management, the Public Administration Association of Thailand and the Civil Service Commission (OBOI, 2022).

OBOI adopted a holistic reactive strategic change, which consisted of revisiting its strategies, mission, vision, role and personnel functions in order to improve its performance in light of a challenging environment and decaying internal conditions. As a result, OBOI had to go through a lengthy and detailed process starting with an environment analysis followed by the identification of stakeholders' needs, expectations, mandates, strategies and vision-mission statements. OBOI's board of directors has specifically drafted these steps in function of the organization's needs, points of weakness, external challenges and goals, which required the initiation of a top-down participative strategic change across the whole organization.

Tri-County Education Foundation

Tri-County Educational Foundation is a US-based nonprofit organization that opted for a proactive partial change in order to expand its activities through the formulation of a cost-saving recruitment strategy. The analysis of Tri-County's strategic change was based on a rigorous discourse analysis of members' declarations and statements about the initiated change (Tri-County, 2022). Tri-County's founders were enthusiastic about expanding the organization's activity in order to have a further outreach for its educational mission. Yet, they were hesitant in achieving this goal in light of year-round programs that exhausted their budget. Therefore, they designed a strategic change for a low-cost recruitment process, which was designed based on the expected revenues, costs and contributions. In order to initiate such a partial proactive change, Tri-County had to identify its key weaknesses and strengths in managing prospective projects and programs in terms of expenses and time.

Tri-County's leaders formulated their concerns around these questions: How would Tri-County acquire the managerial expertise to carry out a successful and efficient expansion of activities? How would it develop a budget planning that efficiently manages funding shortage without being a time-consuming design? How would Tri-County's two major programs be better developed and designed in light of its mission in order to attract more funds and allow employees to reallocate their time in a more productive way? As a result, they initiated a strategic change cycle, which mainly addressed urgent strategic issues that threatened its expansion goal as follows:

Identification of strategic issues. Tri-County's leaders framed their major concern around the lack of managerial skills and expertise among its staff members. Being a nonprofit organization,

Tri-County has mainly been oriented toward the development of artistic and scientific programs (Tri-County, 2022). Although it had professional and skilled members to develop such programs, it lacked the basic knowledge about management within nonprofit organizations due to its limited scope of activities and funding. The board of directors has expressed the urge of expanding activities as a projected vision to increase the organization's sustainability and outreach. For this aim, they embarked on activities based on the development of costing year-round programs in order to reach out for further communities. In managing financial and staff shortage, they looked forward to defining goals, programs, actions and plans that suit their limited resources.

For leaders, activities' expansion required expertise in designing job tasks and recruitment, which constituted a strategic issue since it would affect the entire organization, especially with the introduction of more activities that surpass the staff's working capacity and the organization's resources. Tri-County Foundation was not able to effectively develop its year-round programs without a managerial expertise in managing programs, employees' functions and roles within these programs in order to come up with effective results. The lack of managerial expertise had a broad impact on a wide array of stakeholders ranging from employees inside the organization to schools and communities, which benefited from the Foundation's scientific and artistic workshops and programs (Tri-County, 2022). Staff members were scientists and artists, who lacked the professional background to manage a team work within an organization, plan the overall organizational strategy, design the different jobs and identify potential opportunities and challenges.

The second strategic issue was about attracting more financial resources in order to manage funding shortage through an effective budget planning. This issue was related to the development of attractive proposals for different projects in order to gain more funding, which required the competency of budget planning in terms of taking into consideration the time and money spent on the different activities. According to the organization's leaders, Tri-County Foundation received grants and donations, which it could not efficiently use through an informational budget planning that determines the different sources of income and expenses it would afford (Tri-County, 2022). In addition to attractively presenting projects, the organization had to adopt a realistic budget planning based on accurate information about income.

Although Tri-County Foundation's staff had always recourse to giving up parts of their salaries to the organization, the lack of funding persisted and obstructed the long-term implementation of scientific and artistic activities. This issue affected a wide array of stakeholders, such as employees, schools interested in the organization's activities, students who needed educational workshops and donors. Being paralyzed by the cumulative effect of fixed and variable costs, Tri-County Foundation's leaders mentioned that the organization would be deprived of its necessary materials in the creation of new scientific and artistic programs. In this vein, they believed that they would not be able to develop sustainable educative and cognitive programs in terms of paying its staff or financing scientists and artists who would be working on the different programs and activities (Tri-County, 2022).

The third strategic issue was related to job planning in terms of the adoption of a more balanced distribution of labor in function of time and resources. Tri-County Foundation's leaders underscored the presence of qualified scientists and artists among the board of directors for the development and the design of scientific and artistic projects who lacked knowledge about HR management in a way that achieves efficiency in spite of limited funding (Tri-County, 2022). The organization lacked a clear structure of HR functions related to planning, acquisition, development, and sanctions. According to leaders, these functions, especially the first two, were extremely needed in identifying and addressing Tri-County's needs; henceforth, recruitment, job design and budget planning were ineluctable HR functions that the organization needed the most.

These issues have impeded the organization from expanding its activities. Tri-County's leaders asserted that even if more projects would be implemented in a high scientific and

artistic design, they would not produce the expected results in disseminating science and arts due to financial and administrative deficiencies. They feared that their main stakeholder, schools would look for alternative research and scientific systems as a result of a decrease in productivity and the lack of efficiency in budget planning and recruitment.

Plans formulation and assessment. In response to the first suggested plan they received, hiring HR experts, Tri-County leaders perceived the financial issue as a barrier in the recruitment of HR experts as consultants and advisors to the organization since the board of directors could not afford to hire them and/or provide them with the necessary materials and technical expertise. On the other hand, there might be a resistance to change from the board of directors who might find HR experts' suggestions unrealistic and incompatible with their artistic taste. As for the second suggestion, they mentioned that offering HR management courses to the organization's personnel with reduced fees would result in a significant delay in its activities, which would be detrimental for both the organization and its stakeholders. To overcome these barriers, leaders considered a midway solution between both suggestions by exchanging the organization's artistic and scientific research and projects for art and science schools at universities in return for receiving help from HR and public administration professors (Tri-County, 2022). The organization designed new programs on environmental studies focusing on recycling and generating electricity from permanent resources, such as solar and wind energy, which encouraged schools to conclude partnership agreements with the organization for considerable grants and funding in return for benefiting from the organization's courses.

Tri-County Foundation capitalized on these partnership agreements by contributing to the design of doctoral and master programs in public management, which allowed students to provide HR consultation services to the organization in return for reduction in enrollment fees. The Foundation allowed students to pursue internship programs on its premises in order to apply what they have learned throughout their academic years (Tri-County, 2022). Being interns, students would take part into the Foundation's regular meetings among the board of directors in order to discuss actions, come up with suggestions, and introduce incremental changes into the organization. The Foundation's leaders emphasized that this suggestion would contribute to the elimination of psychological barriers between consultants and the board of directors who became more receptive of advises and incremental changes (Tri-County, 2022). By applying these suggestions, the organization has overcome its financial problems and has efficiently managed its staff members through the incorporation of professionally designed jobs, which saved artists and scientists' time to focus on the expansion of activities through the formulation of attractive designs and services.

Another suggestion consisted of holding a series of weekly seminars in order to discuss the managerial experiences of public and nonprofit organizations by inviting over members from these organizations or by showing documentaries illustrating the main features of their experiences. Leaders underscored the originality of the idea but expressed concerns over the seminars' funding, especially for inviting over members of other institutions to discuss their managerial experiences. They indicated that this suggestion was not feasible for the organization that needed to cover its costs and pay salaries (Tri-County, 2022). They added that other organizations' experiences may not be beneficial for the Foundation in light of contextual disparities and differences in needs and goals. Although some organizations might be specialized in the same domain as the Tri-County Foundation, they may be less opened to reveal details about their experiences due to competitiveness or privacy issues.

In light of these concerns, leaders held seminars on a limited scale for sharing others' experiences based on documentaries in order to overcome costs (Tri-County, 2022). The organization initiated a series of consultation with stakeholders, including a wide array of schools, students, teachers, professors and donors, to track their expectations and, accordingly, reach out for more partners, especially universities, for consultation during these seminars.

A third suggestion consisted of seeking the financial support of the state's research department in order to finance seminars on a larger scale, include representatives from other organizations and experts in HR management, and formulate an adequate budget. Tri-County Foundation's leaders were enthusiastic about this idea and created informal networks with educational organizations to inspire from different managerial experiences based on funding proposals addressed to the state (Tri-County, 2022). This option enabled the Foundation to expand its activities based on inspiring cases of other educational organizations and advices from experts, which enabled leaders to reconsider their budget formulation and HR functions. The state's fund enabled the board of directors to reach out for top experts in HR management in order to get acquainted with managerial tasks.

Tri-County Foundation faced three major strategic issues, which impeded the expansion of its activities toward more customers. By considering to seeking expanding activities, the organization lacked the financial and managerial prerequisites for meeting its stakeholders' expectations and covering expenses. Tri-County Foundation opted for a proactive partial change by identifying and addressing the potential strategic issues through the appropriation of its staff's suggested actions and strategies with regard to the acquisition of managerial expertise and the increase of financial resources. In light of its limited resources and low experienced staff in HR management, the organization adopted three strategies toward achieving the organizational goal of expansion. These strategies consisted of creating partnerships with public institutions and schools, holding seminars for discussing inspiring managerial experiences and applying for the state's research grant to tackle costs and increase benefits during expansion.

Intergovernmental organizations: UN Women Egypt
Based on an extensive open-ended and semi-structured interview conducted by the author with Dr. Maya Morsi, former head of UN Women office in Egypt and the text analysis of UN Women documents, the organization adopted a reactive partial change in reaction to the lack of awareness of women issues and the rising violations of women rights in the Middle East. It tailored a strategic change cycle as follows (see Table 2).

Conducting an environment scanning

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
- Strong leadership - Higher status within the UN - High caliber of expertise in management and programming - Wealth of knowledge and updated research - Credibility	- Insufficient organizational visibility and communication - Understaffing slows responses on operational and programmatic levels - Bureaucracy, rules and procedures are tight and lengthy - The difficulty of attracting funds
Opportunities	*Challenges*
- Interest from donors and partners - More resources allocated for mandates' fulfillment - Strategic partnerships - Expansion of UN Women operations - Decentralization and efficiency - Globalization and interconnectedness increased awareness about women's rights	- Women's rights agenda is at risk in the Arab region - The abolition of national counterparts, the restructuring of governments and changes in mandates - Rise of fundamentalist groups affecting coordination on a grassroots level - Lack of coordination and duplication of work - Impact evaluation - Cultural heritage in developing countries

Table 2.
UN women SWOT
analysis

Identification of strategic issues. The main strategic issue for UN Women was how to identify women's needs, address them effectively, empower women's rights and increase awareness about them. According to Morsi, the diversity of women's needs is a significant impediment for UN Women toward increasing their outreach in the Middle East since they differed in function of environmental contingencies and problems, which required adapted tools, strategies and intervention projects. This issue required a long-term immediate action and a visionary approach in light of gender inequalities, the limited attention given to women and reluctance in resolving and addressing their issues. UN Women carried out a series of multi-level consultation with partners in order to tackle this issue on the regional and country levels in light of its mission and objectives. Based on UN Women's strategy documents and its mission, the staff expressed concerns about how and where UN Women would add value to the cause in light of its capacities, financial resources, social and academic networks as well as legal mandates, potential areas of action and partnerships on the country level (UN, 2011). Also, there was an additional concern about the identification of changes that UN Women would support for women's empowerment.

UN women Egypt identified a second strategic issue with respect to the accountability process. According to UN Women's official documents, this issue revolved around the multi-level involvement of governments and nonstate actors in the assessment and implementation of UN Women's policies, programs and actions. Documents revealed a third strategic related UN Women's coordination role toward the realization of its priorities on the regional and national levels through other UN agencies, such as the UN Country Teams (UN, 2011).

Morsi emphasized the presence of issues impeding UN Women's mission, such as the lack of resources, the difficulty of ideational change in the society, and the disparity of women's needs and concerns within the Middle East (Morsi M., Head of UN Women Egypt, 2011). For her, funding problems emerged due to the unattractiveness of gender equality as a cause for donors, which do not prefer to invest in projects related to the elimination of discrimination against women. This issue incited the organization to reassess and reformulate project proposals in a more attractive way in order to get financial support and have access to media and electronic social platform to reach more supporters and convince them with innovative means. Morsi added that ideational change constituted a long-term impediment for UN Women since decision-makers do not express interest in issues of gender equality and women needs, especially in patriarchal societies. Also, the diversity of women's needs implied the adoption of different strategies and action plans in order to effectively address women's problems and concerns.

Formulation of strategies. Based on the examination of UN Women strategy documents, the organization developed a series of multi-level consultations in order to come up with an effective strategy that serves its mandates, considers different stakeholders' needs and successfully implements its action plans. These consultations were held within the framework of the 100 Day Action Plan, which was developed in order to empower UN Women to achieve its goals and objectives. This plan consisted of a strategic planning process to rally different UN agencies around gender equality through a coherent process based on accountability within the UN system (UN, 2011). The UN Women promised to concretize this plan by carrying out actions on the country-level and developing national partners' capacities and potentials. According to Morsi, based on the field capacity assessment, UN Women supported national partners and UN Contact Team; henceforth, the strategy focused on the provision of a stronger administrative and operational support and the nomination of a senior management team for UN Women.

UN Women's strategy documents underlined the organization's participatory approach in developing a country-level strategy and engaging with different parties and stakeholders concerned with women's rights (UN, 2011). A series of country-level consultations highlighted women's needs through a detailed action plan entitled, "UN Women 100-day action plan." Thanks to partners' support, consultations focused on women's empowerment through the establishment of a democratic community where gender equality prevails based on the principles of liberal citizenship and equal opportunities in public and private spheres (UN, 2011). UN Women reports indicated that consultations highlighted the most important and visible principles in support for women's rights, such as economic empowerment, leadership and participation, national budgeting planning and resources orientation toward actions that immediately tackle women's conditions and respect the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) convention. Consultations gave a significant weight to women's presence and involvement in public areas where discriminatory practices prevail. In this vein, consultations referred to monitory and evaluation accountability as a comprehensive mechanism to guarantee the achievement of these priorities and the rectification of violations.

Based on the examination of the strategy's official documents, the 100-day action plan consisted of eight strategies, which were formulated in order to carry out a strategic intervention and action plans in different countries. The first strategy aimed for improving the UN coordination system among UN agencies with the participation of the UN Development Group in line with their mandates and regulations toward the elimination of gender discrimination. This coordination system would develop a resource-tracking mechanism in support of gender equality. This strategy empowered women through the creation of partnerships with universities in order to increase awareness of gender inequality and attract funds and grants for governments and nonstate actors from the Multi-Donor Fund for Gender Equality (UNIFEM, UN Women: Vision and 100-Day Action Plan: A Summary Briefing, 2011). The second strategy aimed to end violence against women in cooperation with the UNITE campaign and other UN agencies. This action encouraged regional countries to firmly address violence against women through concrete measures. Relying on coordination with UN instances, including the Secretary-General and UNICEF, UN Women retrieved valuable data and formulated potential actions that would be globally diffused through the Virtual Knowledge Center on Ending Violence against Women. Also, UN Women participated in the Global Safe Cities for Women and Girls' initiative to improve the potentials of local authorities, women and youth groups and community-based organizations in curbing violence against women through the guarantee of viable participation in shared public spaces between women and men. UN Women developed an action plan to implement the UNSC Resolution number 1,325 on women's inclusion in peace settlement negotiations and processes related to the conciliation of antagonist parties. In light of the seven-point action plan on women's participation in peace building, UN Women collaborated with the Peace Building Support Office and the Secretary General to work on sexual violence in conflict in light of alarming indicators. With the participation of the OHCHR, UN Women focused on reparations and compensations that should be paid by aggressing parties in case of sexual violence during conflicts and turbulences. Different mechanisms of conflict prevention were developed through the peacekeeping troops' innovative training with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) for troops' deployment in underdeveloped and unstable countries (UNIFEM, 2011).

The third strategy addressed women empowerment on the economic level in partnership with international organizations, such as the UNDP, ILO and IFI in terms of developing a comprehensive UN strategy. The organization cooperated with UN partners on different areas of action, including trade and employment in order to enhance rural women's conditions. Another partnership was developed with the World Bank in order to produce Women's Economic Opportunity Index and include women's economic empowerment on the agenda of international and global conferences.

The fourth strategy targeted gender equality within countries on the national, local and sectoral levels as well as in planning, budgeting and statistics. The organization incited its national partners to prepare regular reports analyzing women's conditions to influence and orient national decision-makers toward better legislations and budgets allocation for addressing gender inequality (UNIFEM, 2011). UN Women developed joint initiatives and partnerships with different organizations in order to ensure the implementation of policies and laws promoting gender equality on the country level. For example, it developed the UN–EC partnership on gender equality and women's empowerment with the ILO in order to support this cause through the allocation of funds toward different countries. By underlining the centrality of UN human rights mechanisms, it collaborated with the OHCHR to ensure national legislations' respect of the CEDAW convention and develop a monitoring system based on technical expertise on women's conditions. In line with the MDGs, UN Women focused on different areas, such as HIV and AIDS, migration, the rule of law, climate change, social protection, education, maternity and child health and deployed efforts in order to help the different countries by relying on experts in gender equality.

The fifth strategy emphasized the importance of creating partnerships with different UN Women stakeholders, such as women's organizations, women movements in civil societies, excluded, disabled, HIV, minority, poor, and migrant women (UNIFEM, 2011). In this vein, UN Women prioritized partnerships with academic institutions, research centers and UN agencies in launching common initiatives and action plans, such as the series of consultation that was held in different regions with the UN Women Executive Director and other stakeholders.

The sixth strategy addressed gender equality through partnerships with UN agencies in order to ensure sustainable and long-term funds since, according to Morsi, almost 50% of UN Women fund has been attributed by UN member states, the Fund for Gender Equality and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (Morsi, 2011). This multi-donor funding system diversified partnerships with more trusted institutions and constituencies, such as the private sector and wealthy individuals and encouraged the widespread electronic advertisement in support for women rights. In addition to the financial support, UN Women formulated a seventh strategy for ensuring political support for its cause for encouraging governments' involvement in increasing UN Women's position and accelerating the effective implementation of its action plans and priorities.

An eighth strategy was carried out by UNIFEM, as an integrated part of UN Women, within the framework of consultative meetings where it announced the different tools for empowering women in the Arab World (UNIFEM, 2011). In these meetings, representatives from civil society, women, regional organizations and universities' students from the Arab world gathered in order to have stakeholders and participants' feedback about UN Women. By stressing the importance of the Beijing conference resolutions, these meetings emphasized the necessity of women's participation in the preparation of national plans in their respective countries and the assessment of previous ones in light of the criteria of gender equality. It pledged for the adoption of laws, policies, and programs to enhance women's conditions in Arab countries. Moreover, UNIFEM exerted pressure on national governments to comply with international conventions and treaties on women's rights and gender equality in their legislations and policies.

Revision and adoption of strategic plan. Based on the examination of UN Women's strategy documents, UN Women presented the 100-day action plan to the Executive Board in June 2011 and adopted a broad and holistic strategy that defined its identity, mission and priorities (UNIFEM, 2011). UN Women aimed to promote gender equality by eliminating discrimination and violence against women, which would vary on the global, regional and national level. By developing principles and priorities related to gender equality, UN Women adopted and implemented strategies that were derived from its mission. Yet, in light of disparities in women's needs, UN Women's strategies had been supported by a multi-level strategic intervention and action plans in order to adapt to specificities on the regional and country levels.

According to Morsi, before adopting the strategic plan, UN Women held multi-level consultation meetings with stakeholders from the Arab world to highlight UN Women's priorities, challenges, expectations and needs, revise and implement strategies accordingly. In light of stakeholders' emphasis on challenges facing women's empowerment in the Arab world, the UN Women held a debate with UN officials about how to proceed toward resolving these issues in the Arab world and empowering women within the framework of human development. This debate recommended the creation of UN Women office in each Arab country to exert pressure on national governments to abide by the CEDAW and adjust laws and decrees accordingly. In addition, officials indicated that UN Women should give priority to women's mediocre conditions while shedding light on intervention projects that suit different Arab countries. These consultations helped in the identification of priorities on the regional and country levels regarding gender equality, resources and efforts in order to efficiently undertake a strategic planning and subsequent plans. In this perspective, UN Women addressed each of its stakeholders' needs and expectations by emphasizing consultation, coordination and networking as the main tools for successfully implementing strategies. Besides, it endorsed its partnership and policy coordination with UN agencies toward a better implementation, defined the 100-day action plan priorities and strategic issues and focused on priorities in addressing reasons behind gender inequality. UN Women shed light on accountability as a regulatory mechanism to ensure transparency, effective planning, and implementation of strategies and action plans in each country. It supported its stakeholders' emphasis on the importance of sustaining UN Women's functions, mandates and structures toward the achievement of gender equality and empowering national actors as a strategic action plan in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Conclusion
While strategic management presents an innovative dynamic for public and nonprofit organizations seeking to sustain productivity and maximize benefits, it did not provide a particular pathway to follow toward change. In addressing strategic management's universal value of change through a unique process and tailored steps in function of each entity's needs, goals, environment and resources, organizational change theories presented a glimpse of hope. In spite of the complexity of theories examining the process of change from various perspectives, this study opted for combining two theories in explaining variations in strategic change across organizations. Taking into consideration the life-cycle and organizational development theories, the study identified four patterns of variations that occur within organizations in function of their needs and goals. In this perspective, the examined cases presented an example of the plethora of changes ranging from the holistic reactive to the partial proactive change. While OBOI followed a reactive holistic pattern of change, Tri-County Foundation adopted a proactive partial change and UN Women Egypt developed a partial reactive pathway of transformation.

Through the triangulation of three qualitative research methods, open-ended and semi-structured interview, text/content analysis and discourse analysis, this study adopted an integrative approach by rallying two different theories of organizational change while recognizing their similarities and dwelling on their differences in identifying patterns of change that explain variations across organizations in their adoption of strategic management. This finding contributes to the literature addressing organizational change by suggesting recommendations of strategic changes. Strategic change cycle does not entail a particular pattern or a sequence of steps to follow toward the intended goal since organizations vary in their self-perception, environment, goals and resources. This means that change has to be carefully tailored in function of a meticulous examination of the environment, definition of goals and means. While each organization aims to thrive, they do not all adopt initiate an identical

pathway to change. Some organizations opt for change due to the anticipation of threats or opportunities whereas others would go through a strategic cycle of change in reaction to an eminent threat. Change may also be partial or holistic in terms of involving all employees and departments throughout a process of transformation. Unlike organizations that would go through a partial and limited change by going through few but sufficient alterations for the realization of objectives, others would undergo a comprehensive change through a lengthy process involving a detailed plan of change ranging from reconsidering the organization's mission and vision to programs and actions for achieving goals.

While change is an organizational necessity and structural imperative for survival and sustainability, it has to be a customized process in function of each organizational conditions, environment, resources, goals and needs. It is not a unified pattern of transformation or a predefined and standard pathway toward achieving ends but a unique venue that is gradually formulated throughout the process of change and oriented in function of organizational needs. Although the three cases went through a process of change, they did not follow the same steps as a prescribed recommendation. On the contrary, each launched a strategic change cycle for achieving a particular goal through the selection of specific steps. OBOI initiated an extensive analysis of internal and external environment, an in-depth examination of strategic issues, a revision of the mission and the vision. However, UN Women and Tri-County Foundation did not follow the same trajectory. While UN Women did an environment scanning, identified strategic issues and strategies, it did not change its mission, vision or goals. Similarly, Tri-County has only identified the strategic issues for expanding activities and, accordingly, designed projected strategies to overcome them.

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