Struggle for meaning in radical change: A critical discourse analysis of middle managers' discourse

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Although research on middle management is growing, it is locked into either/or and positive/negative views. For instance, the pessimistic view paints middle managers as foot-draggers, saboteurs, and resistant during radical change and suggests that the top management should watch out for middle managers during any radical change. On the other hand, the optimistic view suggests that middle managers have strategic contributions to make when strategies and changes are implemented. Hence, existing research on the middle management has two limitations: First, the agency of middle managers is denied space or it is presented as a phenomenon that is structurally determined. Second, middle managers are presented as a single, univocal and homogenous entity. This study tries to restore the agency and diversity of middle managers by using the discourse theory as its theoretical lens.

Discourse-based studies on organizational change in general, and those on the role of middle managers in radical change in particular, are increasing. However, I argue that these studies do not provide a comprehensive and integrated account of organizational change or the role of middle managers during radical change, thus, leading to their results being incomplete. Stated differently, these studies tend to overlook the 'plurivocality' and 'contextuality' of change. Therefore, the overall purpose of this thesis is to provide an integrated and comprehensive account of organizational change from the middle management perspective.

To achieve this, I conducted an in-depth case study of Dashen Bank which was undertaking organizational restructuring and investigated the role of middle managers during this restructuring process. The data was mainly generated using the interview technique. However, I also used secondary material and analyzed the data using the abductive approach. It was found that although the top management organized the restructuring team and assigned its members, it followed a hands-off approach. Therefore, this study empirically documents the discursive struggles of different groups of middle managers, that is, the protagonists (comprising the restructuring team and others who propagated the official discourse) and antagonists to fix meaning regarding the restructuring and the new structure. Both subject positions mobilized different discursive practices to make their discourse regarding the restructuring dominant and discounting their adversaries'

discourse thereby creating preferable social relations. This study also shows how textual level rhetorical appeals inform and justify the discourse practices of both the antagonists and protagonists of the restructuring and the new structure. It also found that both the antagonists and protagonists drew on different societal and grand discourses as resources in their discursive struggles. Stated differently, external discourses were imported to the organization in a way that supported their discourse and undermined the discursive practices of the other group.

In line with the view that discourse constitutes concepts, objects and subject positions, this study documents that different groups of middle managers who occupied different social spaces and thus warranted a voice (subject positions) struggled over questions of 'what', 'how', 'when', and 'why' about restructuring (concept) to create preferential social and material relations (objects). Finally, the discursive practices of the antagonists effectively undermined and reversed the discursive practices of the protagonists (the restructuring team and others) as the top management decided in favor of the former. As a result, the bank is currently undergoing a new restructuring, the second restructuring in less than two years.

This study contributes to middle management and change management literature. It extends middle management literature by restoring the diversity and agency of middle managers during radical change. Middle managers are not passive victims of organizational restructuring; they can actively shape or influence the restructuring process via their discursive practices. Moreover, this study also shows that middle managers are not alike and do not respond in a similar manner to changes or any other situation, and are instead a heterogeneous group of actors. This study also adds to change management literature by empirically showing that change and discourse are mutually constitutive.

This study identified different levels of discourses and shows how they influenced each other. It also shows empirically that no one enjoys sovereign power since there are always multiple and alternative (contradictory) discourses which constitute different subject positions. By assuming one of the subject positions, this study shows how middle managers exercised power and challenged the official discourse.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Middle managers were victims of radical downsizing and the re-engineering carried out by organizations mainly in the 1980s and 1990s. This reduced their numbers radically (Balogun 2003; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). For example, during a restructuring phase in the US economy during the early 1990s, about 2 million middle managers' jobs were cut (Thakur, 1998). Despite this, middle managers still exist (Balogun, 2003) and literature on middle management follows two contradictory views: The pessimistic view and the optimistic view (Dopson and Stewart, 1990, 1994). According to the pessimistic view, middle managers do not have any strategic role other than putting the top management's strategic intentions into practice. It also believes that middle managers were resistant, foot-draggers and saboteurs of strategic change, as a result of which they became a target of downsizing and right sizing (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992, 1997; Shi et. al., 2009; Wooldridge, Schmid and Floyd, 2008). Huy (2001: 73) says, "the very phrase 'middle manager' evokes mediocrity: a person who stubbornly defends the status quo because he's too unimaginative to dream up anything better-or, worse, someone who sabotages others' attempts to change the organization for the better." Scarbrough and Burrell (1996: 178) add that the image of middle managers appears to be "costly, resistant to change, a block to communication both upward and downwards. They consistently underperform; they spend their time openly politicking rather than in constructive problem solving. They are reactionary, under-trained and regularly fail to act as entrepreneurs." Drucker (1988) predicted that with the 'coming of new organizations' which were large and information-based, large and successful organizations would not have a middle management.

Some empirical evidence supports the pessimistic view on middle management. For instance, in her study of a merger between four Nordic partners, Meyer (2006) found that two groups of middle managers operationalized strategic intent in ways that led to implementation failure. "This destructive middle management intervention did not happen because the two groups resisted the implementation of strategic intent but because they acted according to their self-interests (Meyer 2006: 398-399). Guth and MacMillan (1986: 313) found empirical evidence that "middle managers who believe that their self-interest is being compromised can not only redirect a strategy, delay its implementation or reduce the quality of its implementation, but can also even totally sabotage the strategy." In their

framework of ethical corporate entrepreneurship, Kuratko and Goldsby (2004) argue that middle managers' entrepreneurial drive and career goals could lead them to unethical behavior like outright rule breaking.

On the other hand, the optimistic stream of literature suggests that middle managers make important contributions to strategy and change implementation (Balogun, 2003; Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994). Burgelman's (1994) work was among the first on the subject and also one the most influential in the middle management and strategic literature, which showed the indispensable role that mid-level managers played in the evolution of Intel Corporation from a memory business/company to a microcomputer business/company. Since then, a number of scholars have documented the middle management's important contribution to strategy and change (Balogun, 2003, 2006; Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Beck and Plowman, 2009; Dutton, Ashford, O'neill, Hayes and Wierba, 1997, Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992, 1997; Huy, 2001; Rouleau, 2005).

Floyd and Wooldridge (1992) identify four strategic roles of middle managers namely implementing deliberate strategies, championing alternatives, synthesizing information, and facilitating adaptability. In addition, different scholars have also portrayed middle managers as practitioners of ideas who bring hot ideas to the organization (Davenport, Prusak and Wilson, 2003); innovators who can rejuvenate an organization (Kanter, 1991); brokers who can enhance communication vertically and laterally between different groups of employees (Shi et al., 2009); entrepreneurs, communicators, therapists and tightrope artists during the realization of radical change (Huy, 2001); capability developers by engaging in knowledge search activities (Tippmann, Mangematin, and Scott, 2013); and facilitators of organization learning form rare and unusual events as a result of their involvement in organizational interpretations (Beck and Plowman, 2009). These scholarly works provide examples of the indispensable strategic role played by middle managers. In addition, middle managers' role has also been studied and well acknowledged in different areas such as corporate entrepreneurship (Hornsby, Kuratko, and Zahra, 2002; Burgelman, 1994; Kuratko and Goldsby, 2004); innovation and capability development (Davenport et al., 2003; Tippmann et al., 2013); strategy formulation and implementation (Balogun, 2003; Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Rouleau, 2005; Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992, 1997); total quality management (TQM) (Soltani and Wilkinson, 2010); and corporate social responsibility (CSR)(Vlachos, Panagopoulos, and Rapp, 2014).

Although existing research on middle management provides interesting and useful insights, its general approach has been criticized (McCann, Morris, and Hassard, 2008; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). For instance, Thomas and Linstead (2002) argue that the literature on the 'state' of the middle management is struggling to find out a more 'accurate' or 'truthful' depiction of the 'reality' of middle management work: the optimistic or the pessimistic thesis. They further lament, "in addressing this lack of conclusiveness, new research is often promoted on the basis of empirical superiority and therefore presenting a more 'truthful' reflection of middle management work" (Thomas and Linstead, 2002: 72). These authors suggest that it is the epistemological stance of much of the existing research that must be scrutinized as most research on middle management is based on positivist epistemology and thus ascribes facticity to phenomena that are socially constructed.

Thomas and Linstead (2002) also argue that the research question posed by Dopson and Stewart (1990), 'What is happening to middle management?' on which subsequent streams of research were based locked research on middle management into the dualism of positive/negative and either/or. For example, in the first half of the question 'what is happening to…?', "managerial work is presented as a neutral set of activities and change is seen as impacting on middle management, with middle managers being reduced to phenomena that are structurally and empirically determined" (Thomas and Linstead, 2002: 73). Therefore, in this case, structure is privileged over agency and middle managers' role in the restructuring process (or in any change process) is totally neglected. In the second half of the question, middle managers are portrayed as "a single, univocal, homogeneous entity" (Thomas and Linstead, 2002: 73) so that individual differences and contexts are either ignored or denied. This is quite visible Balogun's (2003) paper titled 'From Blaming the Middle to Harnessing Its Potential: Creating Change Intermediaries'. For example, in the first half of the title, 'its' connotes the singleness and homogeneity of middle managers but also 'creating change intermediaries' inscribes the same role and contribution to all middle managers. Even when differences in the middle management are acknowledged, these are portrayed as structural and hierarchical (Floyed and Wooldridge, 1997; Pappas and Wooldridge, 2007) and again homogeneity is maintained in each structural position. For instance, according to Floyd and Wooldridge (1997), managers in 'boundary spanning' are more likely to engage in strategic activities, and Pappas and Wooldridge (2007: 323) claim to have found evidence of "boundary-spanning managers to be more strategically

active than their non-boundary-spanning counterparts." Therefore, although differences are acknowledged between boundary spanners and non-boundary-spanners, middle managers in both the groups are portrayed as a single and homogeneous entity (Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

In general, Thomas and Linstead (2002: 71) argue, "there is a need to move beyond current attempts to find the most 'accurate' and 'truthful' picture on the state of middle management, to adopt a theoretical framework that can accommodate both diversity and agency." Concurring with this argument, I studied middle managers using the discourse theory, which restores diversity and agency (Alvesson and Karremann, 2000; Fairclough, 1992; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Discourse restores diversity and agency by constituting subject positions (in addition to concepts and objects) from which actors produce and disseminate texts (Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips, Sewell, and Jaynes, 2008). Subject positions are categories of social actors who produce texts. Although different subject positions are associated with different degree of rights and voices (some warranting a louder voice than the others), being in subject positions bestows actors a degree of agency in producing, disseminating, and interpreting texts that may subsequently affect the discourse (Phillips et al., 2008).

Although the influence of middle management has been studied in different areas based on a variety of theoretical foundations (Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Balogun, 2006; Caughron and Mumford, 2011; Currie and Procter, 2005; Dutton et. al., 1997; Huy, 2011; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau and Balogun, 2011), research that uses language and discourse as the theoretical framework is very rare in management research in general. Given their potential to provide fresh insights into the growing body of research on middle management, lack of research based on language and discourse is very surprising (Alvesson and Karremann, 2000; Mantere, 2013). Notable exceptions are research by Laine and Vaara (2008) and Mantere and Vaara (2008). Having noticed this limitation, Mantere (2013) recommended that scholars should turn their attention towards language to understand strategy and solving different puzzles and dilemmas which mainstream research on management and strategy was not able to address. He further noted that a language-based view on strategy not only helped in finding out 'what strategy is' and 'who strategists are', but it also "helps to understand linkages between institutional, network, organizational, and micro level views on strategy. It also problematizes widely held intuitions regarding the relationship between strategy and organizational outcomes" (Mantere, 2013: 1408).

This study is a response to such a call and aims to shed fresh insights on middle management by using the discourse theory as its theoretical underpinning. This is in line with Wooldridge et al.'s (2008: 1213) call for research that examines, "how micro-processes connect to macro institutional settings, such as the strategic discourse."

1.2 Organizational Change

Organizational change is one of the most prevalent aspects in organizational studies and many approaches have been used for studying organizational change (Doolin, 2003; Grant and Marshak, 2011; Oswick, Grant, Marshak, and Wolfram, 2010; Tsoukas, 2005). Tsoukas (2005) identified three ways of making sense of organizational change: the behaviorist, the cognitivist, and the discursive. Similarly, based on Morgan and Sturdy (2000), Doolin (2003) identified three approaches to the study of organizational change: managerialism, processual, and social or discursive. *The managerialism approach* to change is functional and offers prescriptive techniques for managers on how to steer change. Given its functionality, the managerialism approach tends to be deterministic in that it assumes a direct consequentiality between the top management's actions and decisions and organizational change outcomes. "In doing so, they ignore the complexity and ambiguity of organizational change and the way in which organizational outcomes emerge as organizational participants appropriate and negotiate the change process. They tend to be silent on the existence and persistence of different, shifting and often conflicting orientations, alliances, interests, identities and values in any particular organization" (Morgan and Sturdy, 2000: 6 as cited in Doolin, 2003: 754).

The processual approach to change was developed by prominent change scholars such as Pettigrew and Mintzberg as a response to the deterministic tendency of the managerialism approach to change. The processual approach focuses on the complex dynamics of change, thus directing attention to the context of the change process–both the external environment and the internal (organizational) context. This approach also acknowledges and focuses on political bargaining and negotiations, power dynamics and coalition building in shaping change outcomes. According to Doolin (2003), three contributions can be taken from this approach to organizational change: a focus on organizational changing; the view that the process of change becomes understandable in terms of the wider context in which it occurs; and the political actions played by actors to secure legitimacy for the change. However, "the processual approach to studying organizational change remains largely uncritical,

because they often fail to question management's role in the change process" (Doolin, 2003: 754). Instead, a discourse approach clearly underlines the role of the management during change process.

A discourse approach to studying organizational change has become popular in recent years (Grant and Marshak, 2011; Grant, Michelson, Oswick and Wailes, 2005). "Discourses become the way in which individuals explain themselves, their actions and organizations—both to themselves and to others; they also underlie the mechanisms of control and coordination, the framework for building and maintaining order, that managers construct within and across organizations" (Morgan and Sturdy, 2000: 18 as cited in Doolin, 2003: 754). Grant et al. (2005) argue that unless organizational change is dealt with as a discursively constructed object, it is difficult to understand it completely. Similarly, Grant and Marshak (2011) highlight that discourse offers an interesting insight for understanding the nature and complexity of organizational change. However, a discursive approach to organizational change is very broad and there are a number of streams and research traditions within it. For instance, Heracleous and Barrett (2001) distinguish between functional, interpretive, and critical perspectives in discourse. In the *functional stream*, researchers' view discourse as "a body of communicative actions that is a tool at actors' disposal, emphasizing the purposive and instrumental use of such communicative actions for the facilitation of managerially relevant processes and outcomes" (Heracleous and Barrett, 2001: 756). Ford and Ford's (1995) work regarding the role of conversation in producing organizational change is taken as a typical example in this stream of research on organizational change (Doolin, 2003).

In the *interpretive stream*, instead of being seen as a means of information exchange, discourse is seen as a "construction of social and organizational reality through its effects on actors' thought, interpretations, and actions" (Heracleous and Barrett, 2001: 757). In this stream, the role of discursive elements such as stories, metaphors and humor in constructing meaning in organizational change are emphasized (Doolin, 2003). In the *critical stream*, discourse is concerned with power effects (Doolin, 2003) and "radical conceptions of subjectivity and identity have been applied to the analysis of organizational texts" (Heracleous and Barrett, 2001: 757). Mumby and Stohl (1991) examined the relationship between power, identity/subjectivity, and organizational discourse, and found that not only was power identified as a pervasive element in organizational elements which constituted actors' subjectivity but also that "discourse, as a structured social practice,

creates meaning formations rooted in a system of presence and absence which systematically privileges and marginalizes different organizational subjectivities (Mumby and Stohl, 1991: 313). This research is grounded in the critical tradition of discourse.

Grant et al. (2005) argue that if one accepts the definition of discourse that it brings organizational related objects, subjects and concepts into being through the production, dissemination and consumption of texts (Grant, Oswick, Hardy, Putnam, and Phillips, 2004; Phillips and Hardy, 1997, 2002), a discourse analytical approach contributes to our understanding of organizational change in some significant ways including: 1) Organizational change as a socially constructed reality: a discourse analysis allows the researcher to identify and analyze the key discourses by which organizational change is formulated and articulated. 2) Organizational change as a negotiated meaning: a discourse analysis enables the researcher to show how a particular discourse which emerges as a result of a discursive struggle and the negotiation of meaning by different actors with diverse interests and views shapes the attitudes and behaviors of the organization's members to the change. "The emergence of this dominant meaning occurs as alternative discourses are subverted or marginalized and is indicative of the power relationships that may come into play" (Mumby, 1997; 2005). 3) Organizational change as an intertextual phenomenon: "To understand how and why particular discourses and their meanings are produced, as well as their effects, it is important to understand the context in which they arise" (Grant et al., 2005: 9). This is related to 'intertextuality' and 'interdiscursivity' and different levels of the discourse identified by Fairclough (1993) and Phillips et al. (2011). It implies identifying and analyzing specific instances of micro texts (discourse) and locating them in the context of macro-level societal (Fairclough, 1993) or 'meta' or 'grand' discourses (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). In sum, a discourse analysis offers an alternative approach to the study of organizational change and related issues and provides an interesting avenue for understanding the complexity and contextuality of organizational change.

Although discursive studies on organizational change have increased our understanding, according to Grant et al. (2011) they suffer from two major limitations which undermine the value of their observations. First, "taken either independently or as a combination, none of the studies attempt to provide a comprehensive or integrated discourse-based approach to change" and second, and emanating from the first limitation, "the value of the observations and results of studies of organizational discourse and change are open to

question or even undermined" (Grant and Marshak, 2011: 210). Hence, they call for studies that take their 'comprehensive and integrated' discourse-based framework to organizational change in general. However, they give many specific aspects that discourse based studies on organizational change should consider. For instance, although discourses do not exist or influence one level of behavior alone, nor are they isolated from each other, most extant research focuses on one or a few levels of a discourse and therefore, Grant and Marshak (2011: 224) suggest, "More multilevel research to determine the degree and extent of discursive linkages and how they reinforce or sometimes challenge the status quo are needed." Continuing their suggestion, they say, "Such research might also include consideration of the processes by which discourses are established, maintained, or changed at different levels as well as how different levels of discourse interpenetrate, influence, and inform each other." In addition, in line with their framework that "alternative discourses exist and may be drawn upon," they put forward the following argument:

> *"The view of organizations as inherently plurivocal (Boje, 1995), even when a dominant discourse may exist, highlights the need for further research on concepts and theories of plurivocality and how it may impact on change in organizational settings. This would also include inquiry into how latent, coexisting, or counter-discourses are dismissed, or can be appropriated and deployed in change situations (e.g., Clark & Jennings, 1997). Finally, given that power dynamics are involved in maintaining or "overthrowing" a dominant discourse, more inquiry into how political processes are involved in the way alternative discourses are defeated or deployed in change efforts would advance our understanding of plurivocality, power, and change" (Grant and Marshak, 2011: 225).*

In addition to these calls for more research works, Grant and Marshak (2011: 222-223) also outline some research questions that could guide researchers into more integrated and comprehensive discourse-based studies on organizational change. For instance, one of the basic assumptions of a discourse is that it is constructive and thus, changing the dominant discourse leads to change. Grant and Marshak (2011) provide the following research questions that researchers can pick to answer or examine this premise: 'How do discourses influence behavior and construct social reality, especially regarding organizational change?' and 'Are some types of discourses more influential than the others?' As has been discussed, there are multiple levels of linked discourses that influence change. Hence, this premise can be investigated using the following research questions: 'How do different levels of a discourse influence and inform each other?' Regarding the existence of

alternative discourses (which may be drawn on for challenging the official discourse), Grant and Marshak (2011) outline the following research questions: 'What are the sources of alternative discourses and how are they sustained despite a dominant discourse?' 'How can an alternative discourse be appropriated and deployed in a change situation?' and 'What are the political processes involved in the use of alternative discourses in change efforts?' Regarding the use of power to shape discourses about change, the following research questions help: 'How are dominant discourses established and maintained?' 'How can power be mobilized to change a dominant discourse?' and 'Are some types of power, political processes, and/or actors more influential in creating change and/or maintaining stability?'

This study is influenced by these premises and research questions and it provides answers to them directly and indirectly so as to have an integrated and comprehensive view of organizational change grounded in a discourse perspective. In other words, this study focuses on alternative and competing discourses on restructuring; the ensuing struggle for dominance; the subjectivities and identities constructed; and different levels of the discourse and how they influence each other. In this process, it sheds light on discourse and change.

1.3 Discourse Analysis

Earlier, the emphasis that was placed on 'talk' and 'language use' was very weak (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Weick, 2004) in social studies in general and management studies in particular. Action and talk were seen as being different and action was viewed as superior to talk. However, this is now changing and the view that language is active and constructs reality rather than mirroring it or simply reflecting it is more established (Hardy, Lawrence, and Grant, 2005). "Language use, in any social context, is active, processual, and outcome oriented. Language is used to persuade, enjoy, engage, discipline, criticize, express feelings, clarify, unite, do identity work, and so on. It constructs reality in the sense that every instance of language use is to some extent arbitrary and produces a particular version of what is it supposed to represent" (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000: 142). Therefore, discourse is receiving increasing attention by scholars for a better understanding of organizational phenomena. An organizational discourse examines the process through which discursive objects are brought in to being in an organization; the way these discursive objects constitute the social world; and the consequences of these discursive

processes and objects for organizations. In other words, research on organizational discourse investigates discourse and its constitutive and performative effects (Hardy et al., 2005). However, although organizational discourse is emerging as an important research field, Grant et al. (2004: 26) argue that it is the least explored:

> *"Yet despite the contributions to our understating of organizations that studies of organizational discourse have so far made, there remains the sense that its considerable potential remains relatively under-utilized – a point made all the more significant when we consider that most of the activity in organizations (i.e., organizing and managing) is primarily discursive. In this regard, the study of discourse in organizations is in many ways analogous to the notion of 'oceans on earth.' Both organizational discourse and the oceans form the largest part of the macro phenomena in which they are embedded but they remain the least explored, least understood and most under-utilized parts"*

I will explain the critical discourse analysis, which is one version of organizational discourse analysis which frames this study.

1.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

There are different versions of a Critical Discourse Analysis such as of van Dijk's (2001) socio-cognitive/socio-psychological model of Wodak's (2002), discourse-historical model and Fairclough's (2005) textual oriented three-dimensional model. This study is mostly informed by Fairclough's approach to CDA as it aims to provide an integrated and comprehensive account of organizational change by analyzing different levels/dimensions of the discourse. CDA was developed as a response to many discourse analytical approaches which are either too narrowly focused on the micro linguistic aspects at the expense of the macro-social aspect or vice versa. Therefore, to establish a methodological link between the micro-level of everyday language and the macro-scale of the social structure, Fairclough conceptualized that language is a form of social practice—discourse is shaped and constrained by social structures, whereas the discursive practice simultaneously shapes the social structure that constrains it (Phillips et al., 2008). This study adopts the following widely used definition of CDA (Wodak and Meyer, 2001; Wodak, 2002):

> *"CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of "social practice". Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is*

shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned; it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. As discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects; that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between, for instance, social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258).

Different authors have summarized CDA's general characteristics. For example, based on Fairclough's work, Vaara, Tienari and Laurila (2006: 792-793), summarized the following features of CDA: CDA aims at revealing taken-for-granted assumptions in social, societal, political, and economic spheres and examines power relationships between various kinds of discourses and actors. In a sense, CDA attempts to make visible problems that often pass unnoticed. Second, contextuality is a key issue in CDA. This means that a discourse should be studied at three levels: textual (micro-level textual elements), discursive practices (the production and interpretation of texts), and social practices (the situational and institutional context). According to Fairclough (1993), each discursive event has three dimensions: it is spoken or written language text; it is an instance of a discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of a text; and it is a piece of social practice. These three dimensions are important for understanding a complex social event, that is, for linking the micro-macro perspective and for systematically examining the opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events, texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes in a given discursive event. Third, intertextuality is also identified as another feature of CDA. That is, specific texts or discursive acts cannot be understood without linking them with other texts. According to Vaara, Tienari and Laurila (2006), a fourth point related to the third point, is that discourses are not neutral with respect to ideological content. Fifth, all these requirements and the inherent complexity of meaning implies an interdiscursive approach to understanding the discursive construction of specific social phenomena.

Another important concept of CDA is that a discourse has ontological characteristics. In other words, a discourse constitutes concepts, objects and subject positions (Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Concepts are theories and relationships through which we understand the world; objects are 'social relations' and 'material objects' that

are formed as a result of the application of concepts; and subject positions are locations in the social space in which different actors warrant voices and rights, and thus have agency to produce and disseminate texts.

1.5 Purpose and Research Questions

Although a discourse analysis informs a number of research works on change management, 'plurivocality' and 'contextuality' have not been accentuated (Grant and Marshak, 2008). This implies that alternative and competing discourses have been neglected and only the dominant or the official discourse in relation to change has been reported. Further, existing studies on organization change largely treat an organization as an entity isolated from its broader societal and institutional context. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap in middle management and organizational change literature collectively. In other words, it aims to address the middle management's diversity and agency and provide an integrated and comprehensive understanding of organizational change by analyzing alternative discourses and bridging the micro and macro perspectives.

The purpose of this study is to provide an integrated and comprehensive account of organizational change from the middle management perspective. The purpose is addressed through the following research questions:

- How do middle managers struggle to fix meaning around a restructuring?
- What are the texts (rhetorical appeals) that the different groups of middle managers use in their discursive struggles (in their discursive practices)?
- What are the influential societal and contextual factors that are appropriated into a discursive struggle (into their discourse practices)?
- How do different levels of discourse influence each other?

By showing the struggles of different groups of middle managers in relation to the restructuring, the first research question accentuates the agency of middle managers (Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Contrary to previous research which shows how middle managers are affected by a restructuring program thus painting a largely passive picture for middle managers (Balogun, 2003; Dopson and Stewart, 1990, Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994; McCann et al., 2002), this study shows how middle managers themselves affect the restructuring program by negotiating meaning. The first question is also related to the subjectivities that are constructed via a discourse practice in the course of the restructuring.

This helps to accentuate diversity among middle managers (Thomas and Linstead, 2002; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). In addition, following Fairclough's (1993, 2001) framework, the first question is aligned with the discursive practice dimension which links specific texts to broader societal and institutional discourses (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips et al., 2008). The second and the third questions are aligned to the text dimension and the social practice dimension of Fairclough's (1993) framework respectively.

In relation to the fourth question, this study shows how textual level rhetorical appeals inform and justify middle managers' discourse practices and how this in turn is shaped and affected by societal level discourses. Therefore, by analyzing different levels of text production, interpretations and consumption, this study answers the call by different researchers (for example, Grant and Marshak, 2011 and Phillips et al., 2008) for multilevel research on change management using a discourse perspective.

1.6 Expected Contributions

This study extends previous work in different ways. First, it extends prior work in relation to the middle management and their role during change and strategy. Although existing work has increased our understanding of middle management, the agency and heterogeneity/diversity of middle managers has been neglected. Therefore, by using the discourse theory, this study empirically shows that middle managers are not passive victims of organizational restructuring; rather, they can actively shape or influence the restructuring process via their discursive practices. This study also shows that middle managers are not alike and do not respond in a similar manner to change or any other situation; they are a heterogeneous group of actors.

Second, this study also contributes to change literature in different ways. First, it shows the mutually constitutive nature of change and discourse. In the case study that it discusses, a restructuring initiated by the top management and the board and undertaken by a restructuring team without any involvement of other staff members, let to a discursive struggle between different groups of middle managers; and after intense negotiations of meaning between the restructuring team (protagonists) and other middle managers who came up with an alternative and competing discourse (antagonists), the former was undermined which resulted in a decision by the top management to reverse the change program, so that a wholly new restructuring will be undertaken after the new strategy has

been developed (which has already been awarded to a foreign consulting company). These steps show the iterative and recursive nature of change, rather than its being a linear and sequential process (cf. Grant and Marshak, 2011).

Third, this study contributes to change management by identifying different levels of a discourse and how they influence each other. By using Fairclough's (1993, 2001) three-dimensional approach to CDA, this study shows how rhetorical appeals (as the textual level of the analysis), discourse practices, and the societal level discourses are interrelated and inform each other. By doing so, this study answers Grant and Marshak's (2011) call for a multilevel understanding of change so that the organization/change is positioned in the external context, rather than treating the organization as an isolated entity.

Fourth, and related to the earlier point, this study contributes to the body of literature on discourse and rhetoric. Although discourse and rhetoric are related, research in both the fields has grown separately. This study empirically shows how discourse and rhetoric are highly interrelated. When they mobilized a given discourse around restructuring, the middle managers used different text-based persuasive and rhetorical appeals. In short, it can be argued that in any discursive struggle (at Fairclough's analytical level of discourse), rhetorical appeals can be noticed explicitly or inferred implicitly.

1.7 Thesis Outline

The next chapter provides an in-depth discussion on middle management and discourse. The chapter's main focus is on the fact that although middle management literature is growing, it still is still locked-up in the dualities of negative/positive or either/or views. In addition, the agency and heterogeneity of middle managers has been overlooked in past scholarly works. This chapter presents and discusses the discourse theory, which helps fill these gaps. It also discusses organizational change and how discourse provides fresh insights into organizational change are discussed in detail.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological issues that the thesis applies to answer the research questions and fill gaps that were identified in the previous chapters. In addition to discussing the philosophical stance of the study, this chapter also explains how a single case study is appropriate for investigating this phenomenon; it also discusses how the case was selected. This chapter also presents interviews, secondary data and other informal tools that were used for generating the data. The chapter further discusses the approach followed

in the data analysis and other related issues. Lastly, the chapter also discusses the quality of the research and ethical concerns.

Chapter 4 provides the case description. It presents the following points about the case company: general information, its history of change implementation since its establishment, and its newly introduced structure, which this study investigates.

Chapter 5-8 provide the findings of the study. Chapter 5 presents the discourses of the restructuring team and the protagonists (simply protagonists). This can be considered the official discourse. It also provides the different discursive practices used by the protagonists.

Chapter 6 presents the discourses of the antagonists. It also discusses the different discursive practices mobilized by the antagonists. In general, the two chapters represent the discursive struggles between different groups of middle managers, who occupied different subject positions.

Chapter 7 presents the rhetorical strategies that groups of middle managers applied in their discourses. It discusses the micro discourses (text-based analysis) of the critical discourse analysis.

Chapter 8 presents the societal level discourses that were appropriated and introduced in the discursive struggle around the restructuring in the organization.

Chapter 9 discusses the contributions of the study to different streams of literature (middle management, discourse, and change), as well as its limitations and future research directions.

Chapter 10 is an epilogue which provides an information about the new structure that was introduced after the discursive struggle.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction: Middle Management

Although scholarly work on middle management has increased dramatically over the last few decades, the role of middle managers during organizational change and strategy implementation remains a central debate and literature is divided into pessimistic/negative and optimist/positive views (Balogun, 2003; Meyer, 2006, Thomas and Linstead, 2002). The pessimistic view of middle management emphasizes that organizations should watch their middle managers whenever they are implementing radical changes or strategies (Huy, 2001), as middle managers who believe that their interests are being compromised might be ready to derail the change program through acts of sabotage and foot-dragging (Guth and MacMillan, 1986). Meyer (2006) claims that two groups of middle managers operationalized the strategic intent in a way that leading to implementation failure. Kuratko and Goldsby (2004) also warn of middle managers' unethical behavior during corporate entrepreneurship as they may pursue their career goals rather than the well-being of the entire organization. Hence, the pessimistic view tends to emphasize reducing the middle management layer as a solution to problems of efficiency and effectiveness during organizational change and strategy implementation.

Middle managers are a prime target whenever organizations want to be cost-conscious, adaptable, and flexible due to pressures of globalization, because middle managers are assumed to add costs, slow-down decisions and obstruct the flow of information (Balogun, 2003). "The downsized, re-engineered, flatter organization has less need for people whose primary role is to transmit senior manager orders down the organization, particularly when those individuals fail to perform this role effectively" (Balogun, 2003: 70).

On the other hand, the optimistic view paints a positive picture of the middle management and states that middle managers have strategic roles and are an organization's asset (Balogun, 2003; Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997; Meyer, 2006). Van Rensburg, Davis, and Venter, (2014) mention three reasons for the growing importance and strategic role of middle managers. First, as organizations decentralize their decision making, lower level and mid-level workers can participate in taking strategic decisions. Second, managers are better trained and educated, making them more eager, able, and willing to participate in strategic decisions. Third, the shift of the economy from being a traditional manufacturing

based one to professional services means that a key source of its competitive advantage lies in the knowledge of people who participate in a business' operations. In other words, middle managers who are located at the operational level and equipped with operational knowledge are in a much better position to understand and shape the knowledge-based sources of competitive advantage as compared to the remote top managers. In addition, "the nature of the contemporary environment complicates the strategic management as the time and information to analyze and execute a carefully conceived strategy are often not available. The view that the middle manager's role in strategy goes beyond merely implementing top-down strategies has thus developed over years in response to a changing business environment" (Van Rensburg et al., 2014: 166). The following section discusses studies on middle management that follows a positive/optimistic view.

The most fundamental and influential work in relation to middle management's strategic role is forwarded by Floyd and Wooldridge (1992, 1994, and 1997). They developed a typology of middle managers' strategic activities and this typology influenced many subsequent works (e.g., Balogun, 2003; Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Currie, 1999; Pappas and Wooldridge, 2007; Shi, et al., 2009; Wooldridge, Schmid and Floyd, 2008). Studies suggested that middle managers had a strong upward and downward influence, acting as 'linking pins' in the organizational hierarchy. In their upward influence, middle managers shaped or challenged the views of the top management. "Middle management's upward influence activities have the potential to alter the firm's strategic course by providing top management with unique interpretations of emerging issues and by proposing new initiatives" (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997: 466). In their downward influence, middle managers tried to create an alignment of "organizational arrangement with strategic context" (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992: 152), as they had positional leverage and power to exercise downward influence.

The second distinct aspects of the middle management's strategic role is the dichotomy of 'divergent and integrative.' Middle managers' divergent actions refer to actions that are deviant or different from the top management's intentions and the organization's mainstream strategy. Integrative actions imply facilitating the implementation of the organizational strategy as intended by the top management and integrating different divergent views for creating coherence and shared mental models for achieving the organizational objectives. Beck and Plowman (2009) argue that the active involvement of middle managers in the interpretation process which is initially divergent thus bringing

different views forward and later that converges into one view enhances organizational learning from rare and unusual events. Integrative action "requires ideas that coordinate dissimilar activities and support a coherent direction" (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992: 154). Based on these dichotomies, synthesizing information, championing alternatives, facilitating adaptability, and implementing a deliberate strategy are identified as the middle managements' strategic roles (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992, 1997).

Synthesizing information is the middle management's upward and integrative role. Middle managers scan the internal and external environment and try to supply relevant and important information to the top management. Floyd and Wooldridge (1992: 155) define synthesizing information as "the evaluation and interpretation of information and thereby affects top management perception."

Championing alternatives is an upward and divergent strategic role of middle managers. Middle managers try to champion new alternatives originating from the operating management, lower level employees, and/or the middle management level thereby influencing the strategy of the organization. With this role, middle managers try to attract the attention of the top management towards new ideas that deviate from the normal course of the organization or from its mainstream strategy. 'Issue selling' (Dutton et al., 1997) is one technique of championing alternatives and is a well-developed concept in strategy and middle management literature (Floyd, Schmid and Wooldridge, 2008). Floyd and Wooldridge (1997: 467) outline specific activities that middle managers do as champions such as "justify and define new programmes", "evaluate the merits of new proposals", "search for new opportunities", and "propose programmes or projects to higher level managers."

Facilitating adaptability is a downward and divergent strategic role of middle managers. In this role, middle managers try to encourage the exploration of and experimentation with new ideas and opportunities that deviate from the mainstream organizational strategy or the dominant paradigm of the organization. In other words, middle managers allocate resources for experimenting with new initiatives and approaches that are brought about by lower level employees in their units. Facilitating adaptability is "fostering flexible organizational arrangements" (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992: 155).

Finally, *implementing a deliberate strategy* is a downward and integrative role of middle managers. This role has traditionally been thought of as middle managers' main task, that

is, converting the top management's strategic intentions into action. Stated differently, in this role, middle managers are supposed to breakdown and interpret the organizational strategy and coordinate and direct their lower level employees to ensure its effective implementation.

Even if these topologies advance our understanding about middle managers' strategic roles, they are rather broad and the specific activities that are performed for playing each role are hardly addressed. For example, Shi et al. (2009) outlined that middle managers' strategic roles involve different information flows and communication. "People belong to different affiliations, which may represent alternate interests, norms, and values. Moreover, the behaviors and communication patterns differ by hierarchical level" (Shi et al., 2009: 1462) (Table 2.1). Thus, they argue that middle managers play different brokerage roles in their communication upwards and downwards for influencing the top management and their subordinates.

Table 2. 1 Middle Managers' Brokerage Role

Brokerage roles	Description	Importance
Cosmopolitan I	A middle manager connects with two lower level managers who belong to the same group	Synthesizing information Championing alternatives
Gatekeeper I	A manager who connects peer middle managers with lower level managers	Synthesizing information
Representative	A middle manager is either a formal or informal an agent for relaying information (about the market, technology, etc.) from the peers to the top managers	Championing strategic initiatives
Liaison I	A middle manager links the lower-level managers with the top-management	Championing strategic initiatives Foundation for strategic implementation
Cosmopolitan II	A middle manager is connected to two senior managers	Implementing deliberate strategy
Gatekeeper II	A middle manager relays information from the top managers to his peers	Implementing deliberate strategy Facilitate adaptability
Liaison II	A middle manager relays information from the top managers to the lower level managers	Implementing deliberate strategy Facilitate adaptability
Coordinator	Middle managers facilitate information among their peer group	Facilitating adaptability

Source: Shi et al. (2009).

Thus, it can be stated that brokerage activities underpin middle managers' different strategic roles. Middle managers' brokerage roles in vertical and lateral communication and mediation provide one answer to the question: "How do middle managers perform their strategic roles?"

In addition to their brokerage roles, literature also discusses knowledge search that leads to developing organizational capability as another important role of middle managers (Tippmann et al., 2013, 2014). Testing the conventionally held assumption in the literature that middle managers have an inherent structural advantage of access to knowledge because of their location as a 'linking pin.' Tippmann et al. (2013) found that this advantage was not automatic but needed proactive and thorough search efforts. They state, "searching for knowledge to solve non-routine problems allows middle managers not only to design new solutions but also to develop organizational capabilities" (Tippmann et al., 2013: 1869). By investigating middle managers' knowledge search practices in response to non-routine events, they identified four practices: isolating; overcoming knowledge distribution challenges; socializing; and mastering solution development. From these, they emphasized two aspects of knowledge search: not only does it produce solutions for non-routine problems, but it also has an effect on developing organizational capability by either modifying the existing routine or by developing new routines. This clearly shows the important role that middle managers play in solution search and capability development by creating new routines or modifying existing routines to accommodate alien experiences (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994).

In addition to these roles, Van Rensburg et al. (2014) synthesized the following roles of middle managers from literature: initiators and implementers (Burgelman, 1983); innovators and implementers (Nonaka, 1988); communicators and implementers (Westley, 1990); issue sellers (Datton and Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 1997); builders and integrators of knowledge domains, social networks and resources; and implementers (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1999); emotional balancer, helper of others to adapt and implementer (Huy, 2002); prioritizers (Marginson, 2002); corporate agents, implementers, staff managers, leaders and liaison (Briggs, 2005); builders of strategic networks and leaders (Kodama, 2005); entrepreneurs, resource allocators, socializers and issue sellers (Kuratko et al., 2005; Ling et al., 2005); strategic champions and implementers (Mantere, 2005); sensemakers, sensegivers and implementers of change (Rouleau, 2005), and narrators, resource allocators and referees (Mantere and Vaara, 2008).

Middle management literature also discusses factors that enable (or constrain) middle managers' strategic contributions. Role theory is among those theories used to inform research on middle managers' strategic involvement. For example, Currie and Procter (2005) examined the expectations that executive managers, government policy-makers and academic professional (doctors) had of middle managers' role, their response to these expectations, and how organizations might intervene to develop middle managers' capabilities to make greater strategic contributions. Besides supporting many contingency factors that affect middle managers' strategic involvement, these authors also found one additional factor, job insecurity, that affected the middle management's strategic involvement.

An important finding when it comes to middle managers'' role transition to a more strategic one is socialization processes. In general, 'dissensus' of key stakeholders' expectations of middle managers' role sends conflicting signals which result in role ambiguity and role conflict as a result of which middle managers might act in a way that is characterized by disillusionment and disaffection.

Based on the four roles identified by Floyd and Wooldridge (1992), Mantere (2008) examined why role expectations enabled or constrained middle managers' strategic agency. He identified eight conditions that positively affected middle managers' strategic agency: narration, contextualization, resource allocation, respect, trust, responsiveness, inclusion and refereeing. In addition, the author also states, "the eight enabling conditions show that while strategic role expectations are placed on middle managers, this alone does not fulfil agency that is coherent with the expectations," and indicates that middle managers' role expectations should be reciprocated by the top management's action for there to be strategic agency.

Using the role theory, the theory of information processing and the interpersonal view of strategy implementation, Raes, Heiilties, Glunk, and Roe (2011) emphasized that although the interaction between the top management and the middle management was very important for the effective formulation and implementation of organizational strategy, the two streams of research on the top management and the middle management research are growing divergently without one considering the other's perspective. These uuthors proposed that top management's role behavior had a very strong impact on the interaction between the top management and the middle management even during 'episodes of no

contact' between the two management teams. In other words, without the help and active involvement of the top management, middle managers' role is undermined. In the following section, I briefly discuss the role of middle managers during organizational change.

2.2 The middle Management and Organizational Change

Although most scholarly work considers strategic involvement and organizational change interchangeably (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994), some specifically discuss the role of middle managers during radical organizational change.

Huy (2001) identified four roles that middle managers play during the realization of radical change. The first is an *entrepreneurial* role. He documents that middle managers can have innovative ideas that can bring solutions to organizational problems because of the following characteristics: first, middle managers are closer to the day-to-day activities and the frontline staff and thus have a better understanding of where and what the problems are; second, they are far enough from frontline work (and closer to the strategic apex than the frontline staff) to see the big picture; and third, middle managers as a group are more diverse than the top management and thus their insights tend to be more diverse than the top management's. Hence, the middle management is "fertile ground for creative ideas about how to grow and change a business" (Huy, 2001: 73-74).

The second role that the middle managers play during the realization of radical change is that of *communicators*. Effective change implementation requires effective communication throughout the organization. According to Huy (2001), no group of employees in an organization is better positioned than the middle managers to effectively communicate about the change and ensure its successful implementation because they have the best social networks in the company. Middle managers tend "know which groups or individuals most need to be on board and bow to customize the message for different audiences" (Huy, 2001: 76-77).

The third role that middle managers play during radical change is as *the therapists*. It has been well documented that radical changes can cause high levels of fear and uncertainty among employees which can deflate morals and trigger anxiety (Balogun, 2003; Huy, 2002). Middle managers are better positioned to address the emotional well-being of the employees than the top managers who are far away from many workers to understand what

is going on and are also more focused externally than internally. Therefore, middle managers are there to address the emotional well-being of the employees during radical change; failing to do so might disrupt the entire process of transition as there could be a high turnover rate or people might be reluctant to act. "Even as they privately deplore the lack of attention from their own bosses, many middle managers make sure that their own sense of alienation doesn't seep down to their subordinates. They do a host of things to create a psychologically safe work environment" (Huy, 2001: 77).

The final role that middle managers play during radical change is the *tightrope artist*. In this role, middle managers pay attention to the balance between change and continuity. Maintaining this balance between change and continuity is very important because if change happens very fast, there will be chaos and disorganization whereas if change occurs too slowly, organizational inertia sets in and the planned change will come to a halt. Avoiding these two extremes is important as they can both result in severe underperformance. Hence, "even during normal times, middle managers allot considerable energy to finding the right mix of the two. When radical change is being imposed from the top, this balancing act becomes even more important - and far more difficult" (Huy, 2001: 78).

Sense making, sense giving and interpretation have been extensively used as theoretical lenses for advancing our understanding about the role of middle managers' roles during radical change (Balogun, 2006, 2003; Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau and Balogun, 2011). Balogun (2006: 31) emphasizes, "if we are to understand better how middle managers, and change recipients in general, respond to the top-down strategies of their seniors, we need to examine their sense making processes. For organizational change to succeed, it must involve a shift in the shared assumptions and beliefs about why events in an organization happen as they do and how people act in different situations."

Using the sense-making theory, Balogun (2003) argues that middle managers should be considered as 'change intermediaries' in strategic change rather than by the usually denoted terms such as 'change recipients' or 'change agents' which undermine their role in the strategic change implementation. She identified four tasks that middle managers perform during change implementation: (1) undertaking personal change, (2) keeping the business going, (3) helping others through change, and (4) implementing the change in the

departments. However, she also notes that the interpretations that middle managers make as part of undertaking personal change is the most fundamental activity as other activities are dependent on this interpretation about the change process. Similarly, taking a sense making perspective, Balogun and Johnson (2005) show how top down change initiatives are mediated by middle managers' interpretation as they try to make sense of the change that is happening and how it will lead to intended and unintended outcomes. Hence, according to these authors, 'managing' change is less about directing and controlling and more about facilitating the recipients' sense making processes to achieve an alignment with their interpretation. The main essence is that an organizational change initiative is underpinned by a wide range of social interactions. As a result, besides formal information dissemination from the top management down the hierarchy about the 'what', 'why', and 'how' aspects of the planned change, middle managers engage in informal social interactions via gossips, rumors, and informal discussions to make sense of the nature and process of the initiated change. This sense making through informal discussions can lead to unintended consequences if middle managers' interpretation is not aligned with the top management's intentions. Thus, effective implementation of change cannot solely be achieved by disseminating information via formal channels; instead the top management should try to influence informal social interactions between middle managers and other employees at all levels and create an alignment between the interpretations and the objective of the change (Balogun 2003, 2006).

Using a sense making and sense giving perspective, Rouleau (2005) explains how middle managers interpret and sell strategic change at the organizational interface through their routines and conversations. The author argues that "middle managers' tacit knowledge, used throughout their sense making and sense giving micro-practices, constitutes them as strategic asset in a world where value creation lies in details" (Rouleau, 2005: 1437). Accordingly, she identifies four micro-practices of strategic sense making and sense giving by middle managers during the implementation of strategic change: translating the orientation, over-coding the strategy, disciplining the client, and justifying the change. In other words, middle managers' involvement in strategic change implementation is highly mediated by their sense making and sense giving daily practices. In so doing, they interpret change and sell it to others inside and outside the organization. In line with this, the author stresses that "it is necessary to recognize that every interaction that a middle manager has with an external constituency is potentially relevant to how the external actor interprets the

focal organization's strategy" (Rouleau, 2005: 1437). This outlines the strategic role that middle managers play in selling change to the external parties.

Floyd and Wooldridge (1997) and Pappas and Wooldridge (2007) argue that boundary-spanning middle managers are a buffer between the organization and its external environment and are thus in a better position to influence the organization's strategic activities as compared to non-boundary spanners.

Rouleau and Balogun (2011: 976) make a link between middle managers' sense making and their capabilities to act politically. "To act politically middle managers need to be socialized within their context of action to understand the symbolic and verbal representations and sociocultural systems, but that this is not some abstract/cognitive understanding, since it is connected with and embedded in situated practice relevant to a particular context." Specifically, these authors identified two activities that middle managers perform to play their strategic role: 'performing the conversation' and 'setting the scene.' 'Performing the conversation' means a constructive verbal exchange that tries to bridge the divergent interests of employees at different levels of the organizational hierarchy or of different organs of the organization. 'Setting the scene' means middle managers' capacity to rally people around the change so as to make them understand it and forge alliances that work towards the change. Specifically, "it refers to the knowledge of who to contact, who to bring together, and who to use to influence things" (Rouleau and Balogun, 2011: 973).

Although a sense-making/sense-giving perspective of change has advanced our understanding, this approach has been variously criticized. For instance, Tsoukas (2005) argues that the cognitive approach to change takes 'meaning' very seriously. However, meaning has been viewed in terms of information processing. "Individuals represent the world in particular ways, which are stored as knowledge structures in the form of 'schemas' or 'scripts.' To understand intentional action one ought to look into the black box – the individual mind – to see how schemas operate" (Tsoukas, 2005: 97). As a result, cognitive researchers of change want to intervene and direct people's thinking towards the desired goal that is effecting change. In addition, change is not only viewed as episodic but even the knowledge about it is considered to be objective. Hence, Tsoukas (2005) recommends discursive studies on change, which understand meaning not in the way people think but in the way people act. The basis of thinking is concepts, and concepts are

expressed in words and their meaning is derived from the language game in which the expressions are made. This is discussed in detail later.

As indicated earlier, the agency theory has also been used by many researchers (Caza, 2011; Shi et. al., 2009; Shimizu, 2012) to gain insights about middle managers' strategic involvement in the process of change. Specifically, the agency theory has been applied to inform organizations that they need to be cautious when involving middle managers in organizational strategy. In line with this, Shimizu (2012) argues that corporate entrepreneurship (CE), in which middle managers are encouraged to come up with new ideas, is not a panacea as a risk is inherently involved in it. He points out two dilemmas that the top management always faces. First, in order to unleash the innovative potential of risk-averse middle and lower level managers, the top management must adopt autonomous behavior. However, if this behavior is extended to middle and lower managers, it could exacerbate another problem—the agency problem. In other words, autonomous employees could pursue opportunistic behavior at the expense of the organization. Second, encouraged by autonomous behavior, middle and lower managers could explore many new innovative ideas that could renew the strategy of the organization, but evaluating these ideas is very difficult because of their newness. Hence, the selection procedure for new innovative ideas might be perceived by these middle and lower managers as unfair and subjectively biased. Therefore, the author proposes solutions that can attenuate perceptions of the procedural justice problem and striking a balance in providing autonomy to middle and operating managers for promoting corporate entrepreneurship and alleviating the agency problem. These are: stock options, passive monitoring, and perceived procedural justice which will attenuate the negative side effects associated with CE such as opportunistic behavior and perceived unfairness.

There is no guarantee that middle managers' strategic roles will not be directed towards their personal benefits or the benefits of their specific units at the expense of the organizational objective. Hence, the work of Shimizu (2012) highlights the associated problems in relation to autonomy of the middle management which is given in the hope of encouraging CE. As employees explore different ideas, the inherent problem of idea selection could discourage middle managers from engaging in subsequent corporate entrepreneurship behavior.

Although previous studies on the role of middle managers during organizational change and strategy implementation have improved our knowledge, their philosophical underpinnings have been criticized (Thomas and Linstead, 2002). According to Thomas and Linstead (2002), most existing research is locked in the dualities of either/or, and positive/negative in pursuit of the 'truth' about the middle management. For instance, the management is presented as a neutral set of activities and change is viewed as impacting the middle management, and thus middle managers are presented as structurally or empirically determined. Stated differently, structure is privileged over agency and the middle managers' role in shaping the change process itself tends to be overlooked. The second limitation of previous studies on middle management is that middle managers are portrayed as 'a single, univocal and homogenous entity' (Thomas and Linstead, 2002) whereby individual differences or differences of any sort along with the context are neglected. Even when the differences are occasionally acknowledged, they are presented as structural/hierarchical, that is, boundary-spanners are more strategic in their contribution than non-boundary-spanners (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997; Pappas and Wooldridge, 2007). Nevertheless, homogeneity and 'univocality' are still maintained in each structural position. In other words, boundary-spanners/non-boundary spanners as a group are still considered as univocal and homogenous where there are no differences among themselves.

Owing to these limitations, Thomas and Linstead (2002) call for studies that are grounded in theoretical frameworks and philosophical underpinnings that restore/accommodate both diversity and agency. Partially related to the limitation that middle managers tend to be presented as a homogenous entity, most studies focus on middle managers during organizational change either as change recipients (targets of change) or as change agent (Balogun, 2003). One notable exception to this is the study by Balogun's (2003) study which argues that the term 'change intermediary' explains middle managers better as they can be or they can play the role of change recipients and change agents simultaneously (they implement changes in their own department/section and help others through the change). However, it can intuitively be argued that some middle managers can be change agents and others can be change recipients, and this acknowledges diversity, rather than claiming that 'change intermediary' better explains the role of a homogenous middle management.

This study applies the discourse theory (critical discourse analysis) as a theoretical and methodological framework to accommodate the diversity and agency of middle managers and goes beyond 'the truthful picture' (Thomas and Linstead, 2002) of the state of middle management during organizational change and strategy implementation (as impediments to or facilitators of organizational change) (Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

Research on middle management grounded in the discourse theory is very rare with only a few exceptions (Laine and Vaara, 2007; Mantere and Vaara, 2008; Rouleau and Balogun, 2011). Laine and Vaara (2007) show the discursive struggle over 'strategic development' among different groups of employees in an engineering and consulting company. They empirically illustrate an effort by the top management to gain control of the organization that produced managerial hegemony by mobilizing and appropriating a specific kind of strategic discourse which in turn triggered a competing and alternative discourse. Thus, middle managers mobilized their own discourse to resist managerial hegemony and thus creating room for maneuver in controversial situations. On the other hand, they also show how project engineers mobilized their own discourse to distance themselves from the official discourse (management-initiated discourse) and maintaining a viable identity despite all kinds of pressures. Although Laine and Vaara's (2007) work provided insights into discourses around the strategic development, the discursive struggle took place among a group of employees at different hierarchical positions (top management, middle management, and project engineers). It does not discuss the impact of the macro context (societal discourses).

Rouleau and Balogun (2011) empirically document the discursive activities that middle managers perform to enact strategic change: 'performing the conversation' and 'setting the scene.' However, middle managers here are presented as change agents. Lastly, although not specifically about middle management, Mantere and Vaara (2008) examined the strategy discourses that enables or constrained employee participation in strategy. They argue that participation problems in strategy are linked to fundamental assumptions about the nature of the strategy work. In other words, understanding how the strategy works is made sense of and the roles that are assigned to specific organizational members has paramount importance to assess whether there is a conducive environment for participation or not. One way to do this is by identifying the dominant discourses in an organization and seeing whether they enable or constrain participation in strategy development. As a result, strategy discourses that are associated with a non-participatory approach are

'mystification', 'disciplining', and 'technologization.' That is, in organizations where these discourses are dominant in relation to strategic work, the employees' strategic participation is constrained. Whereas 'self-actualization', 'dialogization', and 'concretization' are central discourses that promote participation and hence, Mantere and Vaara (2008) argue that strategy-as-practice as an alternative and competing strategy discourse promotes employees' participation in strategy development. Although this work is insightful, it focuses on identifying discourses that promote or discourage participation in a strategy. Hence, it presents discourse as impacting or shaping the middle management and it denies the agency of middle managers. By using critical discourse theory, my study tries to fill these gaps. My study focuses on micro and macro perspectives and restores the agency and diversity of middle managers. The discourse theory is discussed in the next section.

2.3 Assumptions about Language

For a number of years, the emphasis on 'talk' and 'language use' has been very weak (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Weick, 2004). Action and talk are always seen as being different with the former superior over the latter (Weick, 2004). Similarly, Oswick, Keenoy and Grant (1997: 5-6) argue, "discussing and doing are invariably presented as consecutive rather than concurrent activities: we talk, then we act; or we act, then we talk. What unites these assumptions is the view that discourse and action are discreet activities and prefer to clearly delineated domains. However, this distinction is conceptually problematic and difficult to sustain in practice. 'Talking' can be an action and 'doing' can be discursive. … Once located in a context, the distinction between action and talk becomes even blurred."

In addition to the privileged status of action over talk or 'the discourse of action rather than the discourse of discourse' as mentioned by Oswick et al. (1997), research in relation to discourse/language seems to be neglected in mainstream and conventional management research. "…the 'soft', subjective and largely interpretive nature of discourse analysis when compared to the 'harder', rational and more objective study of actions. The indeterminacy and imprecision which is almost inevitably occasioned by the study of discourse is at odds with the aims of many managers and researchers who are looking for generalizable findings, prescriptive panaceas or essentialist solutions to the permanent 'problems' of management" (Oswick et al., 1997: 8).

However, in the last few decades, thinking about language has changed radically and it is now viewed as active and consequential:

> *"Language use, in any social context, is active, processual, and outcome oriented. Language is used to persuade, enjoy, engage, discipline, criticize, express feelings, clarify, unite, do identity work, and so on. It constructs reality in the sense that every instance of language use is to some extent arbitrary and produces a particular version of what is it supposed to represent. Language is also context dependent. The same statement may have different meanings. For instance, the statement "It is 9 o'clock" may mean blame ("You are late"), a signal to start a meeting, a response to a question, or a signal to prepare for the coordination of action through the synchronization of time: The intended meaning is context dependent. This is hardly novel, but it has far-reaching implications for the possibilities of abstract definition and generalization" (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000: 142).*

Oswick et al., 1997: 7) note that from the point of view of the social construction of reality, language is not passive, instead it shapes reality in such a way that it promotes particular behaviors and interests and discourages others. For instance, "The description or 'naming' of someone involved in an armed struggle as either a 'freedom fighter' or a 'terrorist' is an enduring reminder of how competing discourses can prescribe (rather than describe) and retract (rather than reflect) social reality. … If as we have suggested discourse and action are mutually implicated and intertwined, then the analysis of managers as discursive actors and of management as a discursive discipline can be regarded as a neglected but insightful avenue of enquiry."

In line with the view that language is active, greater emphasis is given to language and talk as a research object and this, according to Alvesson and Karreman (2000), marks a 'linguistic turn' in social science. In general, researchers of social science view language as: 1) an active, autonomous, and productive mode of expression; 2) the central object of study in social science; 3) a rhetorical device for creating a credible research text; 4) the very stuff researchers work and struggle with; 5) a carrier of power through its ability to order and constitute the social world; and 6) a vehicle for potential critical clarification of social issues. I now explain discourse and then introduce the critical discourse analysis and its important dimensions.

Organizational discourse has emerged as an important lens for studying organizational phenomena. According to Oswick, Keenoy and Grant (2000), one of the reasons for this increasing popularity is because it addresses the fragility, rather than the solidity, of

organizations or organizing processes. However, questions such as 'what is discourse?' and 'what is a discourse analysis?' are far from reaching consensual answers and the various conceptualizations and perspectives are common. However, there is one common denominator among the variety of perspectives regarding discourse and discourse analysis—they are concerned with the role of language and discursively mediated experience in organizational settings. Marshak and Grant (2008), for instance, mention that since discourse is concerned with the role of the language in organizational phenomena, it can be construed as 'a set of interrelated texts.' Therefore, organizational discourse focuses upon the production, dissemination, and consumption of such texts and is now being used for studying organizational and managerial phenomenon (Marshak and Grant, 2008). They argue, "different groups or silos or strata of an organization might develop their own discourses about a particular issue through stories and narratives that define the way things are as they see and experience them. This can lead to different and competing versions of reality wherein no one version is 'objectively' correct. Attention to the prevailing discourses within an organization, how they are created and sustained, what impacts they may have on perception and action, and how they may change over time becomes, as a result, a central aspect of organizational discourse theory and research" (Marshak and Grant, 2008: 11). This indicates that there could potentially be multiple realities (different stories, narratives, interpretations, views) regarding a given phenomenon.

Hardy et al. (2005) highlight that organizational discourse examines the process through which discursive objects are brought into being in an organization, the way these discursive objects constitute the social world and the consequences of these discursive processes and objects for organizations. In other words, research on organizational discourse investigates discourse and its constitutive and performative effects.

Consistent with these points, I accept the argument that discourse is comprised of related texts, and therefore, research on organizational discourse is concerned with the production, dissemination, and consumption of texts in an organization. This implies that there could be different and contradictory versions of reality about the same issue or phenomenon.

2.4 What is a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)?

A critical discourse analysis is one version of a discourse analysis and it is a research tradition that was developed by scholars in Europe in the late 1980s (Deetz and Anderson, 2004; Wodak, 2002). Having noticed limitations in earlier approaches to discourse which

either focused on the micro-linguistic aspects or macro-social aspects, Norman Fairclough and his colleagues developed their version of a critical discourse analysis. To establish a methodological link between the micro level of everyday language and the macro scale of the social structure, Fairclough (1992) conceptualized language as a form of social practice—discourse is shaped and constrained by social structures, whereas a discursive practice will simultaneously shape the social structure that constrains it (Phillips et al., 2008). Fairclough (1992) forwarded three methodological traditions: a close textual and semiotic analysis of the linguistic; the analysis of social practices in relation to the social structures associated with macro-sociology; and the interpretivism of micro-sociology whereby social practice is actively produced by people sharing commonsense procedures. According to Phillips et al. (2008: 772), this process is "a theoretically and methodologically parsimonious attempt to combine an interest in textual production with an interest in social structures through the addition of the intermediate concept of a discourse as both a collection of texts and the social practices through which they were produced, distributed, and interpreted." Since discourse can be regarded as both an object and a social practice, discourse and social structure are conceptualized as having dialectical and mutually constitutive relations with discourse. In other words, discourse shapes social structures and social structures in turn shapes/legitimize the discourse. Discourse recursively and iteratively influences individual meaning making through the operation of texts.

Wodak (2002) argues that a critical discourse analysis is a problem oriented interdisciplinary research program, which subsumes a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods, and agendas. Based on the research agenda and aims, critical discourse has been defined in a variety of ways. For instance, Fairclough (1993) says, "by critical discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. In referring to opacity, I am suggesting that such linkages between discourse, ideology and power may well be unclear to those involved, and more

generally that our social practice is bound up with causes and effects which may not be at all apparent."

Drawing on Foucault's work, Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy (2004) argue, "the social world and the relations of power that characterize it are determined by the discursive formations that exist at a moment in time". A discourse is always the subject of some degree of struggle and therefore it never defines social reality totally. Instead a substantial space exists within which agents can act self-interestedly and work towards discursive change in ways that privilege their interests and goals. As a result, there is always an opportunity for the subjects to engage in and influence the discourse by the production and dissemination of texts.

In general, CDA's main focus and concerns differentiate it from other discourse analysis techniques or discourse studies. Although there are many varieties of CDA, most of them aim to make explicit and visible the masked ways that discourse functions ideologically. According to Deetz and Anderson (2004: 7), "to make these claims, most critical discourse analyses presume that individual instances of discourse tend to function as the by-product of social relations, while those relations themselves are constituted by, in part, the collective instances of discourses that serve them. In critical discourse analytic work, dominant discursive forms relate to broader social and cultural processes and practices, and it is the naturalized ideologies inherent in these forms that legitimate their serving as agents of power relations." Since how discourse functions in this context is not very clear, CDA's basic agenda is making them explicit for us. CDA's concern is the relation between a given situated text and societal problems.

Although there are many approaches and directions for a study of social inequalities, van Dijk (1993: 249-250) states that these questions and dimensions are approached from the perspective of CDA "by focusing on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance. Dominance is defined here as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality. This reproduction process may involve such different 'modes' of discourse-power relations as the more or less direct or covert support, enactment, representation, legitimation, denial, mitigation or concealment of dominance, among others. More specifically, critical discourse analysts want to know what structures,

strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communication events play a role in these modes of reproduction".

In general, it can be argued that CDA's main focus/concern is the relationship between language and power. CDA aims to reveal the role of language as it relates to ideology, power and socio-cultural change (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

Different authors have summarized CDA's general characteristics (van Dijk, 2005; Vaara, Tienari and Laurila, 2006). van Dijk (2005) identified the following general characteristics of CDA: Critical research on discourse has the following general properties, among others: It focuses primarily on *social problems* and *political issues* rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside their social and political contexts. This critical analysis of social problems is usually *multidisciplinary*. Rather than merely *describing* the discourse structures, it tries to *explain* it in terms of its properties of social interaction and especially social structure. More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power abuse* (*dominance*) in society. By the same token and based on Fairclough's work, Vaara, Tienari and Laurila (2006), emphasized that in addition to revealing taken-for-granted assumptions on social, political and economic spheres and examining power relationships between various kinds of discourses and actors, CDA's other important features are contextuality, intertextuality and interdiscursivity. In relation to interdiscursivity, Fairclough states that a text can be viewed as a composition of genres, discourses, and styles which lead to an understanding of the 'order of the discourse', that is, the relationship between genres, discourses and styles in particular social contexts. All these important features are discussed in detail in the following sections. However, before that, I clarify some misconceptions and misunderstandings about a critical discourse analysis.

The first common misconception regarding CDA analysis is that it is a special method of doing a discourse analysis. Van Dijk (2005) contends that CDA is not a specific method, rather, "all methods of the cross-discipline of discourse studies, as well as other relevant methods in the humanities and social sciences, may be used." He goes as far as saying that if it was not for the popularity and the well-known abbreviation of CDA, he would prefer to use the term *critical discourse studies* (CDS) to avoid misunderstandings and to emphasize that many methods and approaches may be used to study a text and a talk critically. In other words, for van Dijk (2005) CDA is synonymous with critical discourse

studies in which many methods and approaches can be used to critically study talk and text. On the other hand, Wodak (2002) emphasizes that CDA has never been or attempted to provide or to be one single or specific theory; nor is one specific methodology a characteristic of CDA study. On the contrary, "studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards very different data and methodologies. Researchers in CDA also rely on a variety of grammatical approaches. The definitions of the terms 'discourse', 'critical', 'ideology', 'power' and so on are also manifold" (Wodak, 2002: 7). Fairclough (2001) views CDA as much a theory as a method, in that, it is "a theoretical perspective on language and more generally semiosis (including `visual language', `body language', and so on) as one element or `moment' of the material social process (Williams, 1977), which gives rise to ways of analyzing language or semiosis within broader analyses of the social process" (Fairclough, 2001: 121).

In my view, all the three views are not necessarily contradictory to each other because all views agree that CDA is not a specific method and that many approaches and methods can be applied to study text and talk critically; it is not a specific theory because CDA is derived from many theoretical perspectives which enable researchers to get different insights as a theoretical lens. Accepting this view, I specifically accept Fairclough's (2001) formulation of CDA, 'as much theory as method' and apply it to my study. In other words, I use CDA as a theoretical lens which views language as a social practice and informs the relation between language and power and the ensuing discursive struggle in a way that advances one's own interests and marginalizes the others. Following Fairclough, I also view CDA as a method by which texts can be studied at three levels: text, discourse practice and social practice.

The other misconception about discourse that needs to be clarified is the view that it is 'critical' in CDA. According to Wodak (2002), a frequently misunderstood aspect of CDA and the term 'critical' is the view that the objects of the study are negative (as is the commonsense usage of critical) or exceptionally 'serious' social or political events or experiences. Rather, any social phenomenon is amenable to a critical investigation as it can be challenged or not taken for granted. Under CDA (given the term 'critical'), nothing is 'taken-for-granted' and no social phenomenon occurs naturally. Rather, those taken-for-granted phenomena appear so because of language use because the use of language could lead to the mystification of social events which systematic analyses of texts and talks could uncover/elucidate.

In general, according to Wodak (2014), the terms 'critical', 'criticism', and 'critique' in CDA are variously understood. However, she outlines that those terms mean three things in CDA:

> *"First, critical analysis of discourse can attempt to 'make the implicit explicit.' More specifically, it means making explicit the implicit relationship between discourse, power, and ideology, challenging surface meanings, and not taking anything for granted. Moreover, critical discourse analysts do not stop after having deconstructed textual meanings: the practical application of research results is also aimed at. Second, 'being critical' in CDA includes being self-reflective and self-critical. In this sense, CDA does not only mean to criticize others. It also means to criticize the 'critical' itself. Third, critical analysis itself is a practice that may contribute to social change" (Wodak, 2014: 304-305).*

2.4.1 Language and Social Practice: A Dialectical Relationship

Fairclough (2001) set out a CDA framework that views language as an integral element of the material and social processes and this version is "based upon a view of semiosis as an irreducible part of material social process. Semiosis includes all forms of meaning making - visual images, body language, as well as language. We can see social life as interconnected networks of social practices of diverse sorts (economic, political, cultural, and so on). And every practice has a semiotic element" (Fairclough, 2001: 122). The emphasis on social practices helps one combine the perspectives of structure and the perspective of action and interaction. Social practice can be considered as a relatively permanent way of acting socially and also a domain of social action and interaction which reproduces structures and the potential to transform them.

According to Fairclough (2001) every practice includes the following elements: 'productive activity'; 'means of production'; 'social relations'; 'social identities'; 'cultural values'; 'consciousness'; and 'semiosis.' Therefore, semiosis which is the object of a study of CDA is highly interrelated with those practices but as indicated earlier, it cannot be reduced to them. Rather, according to Fairclough (2001), the relation among those elements of practice is dialectical. That is to say, "they are different elements but not discrete, fully separate, elements. There is a sense in which each `internalizes' the others without being reducible to them. So, for instance social relations, social identities, cultural values and consciousness are in part semiotic, but that does not mean that we theorize and research social relations for instance in the same way that we theorize and research

language--they have distinct properties, and researching them gives rise to distinct disciplines" (Fairclough, 2001: 122-123).

Therefore, CDA examines the relationships between semiosis and other elements of social practice that are outlined earlier by emphasizing on the radical change that are occurring in contemporary social life and, "how semiosis figures within processes of change and with shifts in the relationship between semiosis and other social elements within networks of practices" (Fairclough, 2001: 122). As indicated earlier, while discussing 'critical' in CDA (Wodak, 2002), the role of language (or semiosis) cannot be taken for granted, rather it must be challenged and thus be a point of investigation because semiosis could be salient in one practice or in a set of practices than in others and may change in importance over time.

In general, (Fairclough, 2001: 123) argues that semiosis figures in three ways in social practice. First, "it figures as a part of the social activity within a practice." In this case, semiosis is a part of doing a job, for example, a shop assistant or a teacher using language or semiosis as part of his/her activity in doing the job. Second, "semiosis figures in representations." This means that social actors in any social practice represent their own practice reflectively ('reflexive') and produce a representation of other practices. They also 're-contextualize' other practices in their own practice which leads to a different representation of social practices by different social actors based on the position that they occupy in the practice. "Representation is a process of social construction of practices, including reflexive self-construction - representations enter and shape social processes and practices" (Fairclough, 2001: 123). Thirdly, semiosis figures in the `performances' of particular positions within social practices (Fairclough, 2001). "The identities of people who operate in positions in a practice are only partly specified by the practice itself. People who differ in social class, in gender, in nationality, in ethnic or cultural membership, and in life experience, produce different `performances' of a particular position" (Fairclough, 2001: 123). For example, in an organization, the position, the background, and level of employees in the hierarchy determine the performance of a particular position in a social practice. In other words, the top management and the other members of the organization may produce different performances in a particular position.

Fairclough (2001, 2005) also outlines that semiosis as a form of social practice constitutes discourses, genres and styles. Genres are different modes of action/interaction in social

practice. According to Fairclough (2001: 123), "Genres are diverse ways of acting, of producing social life, in the semiotic mode. Examples are: everyday conversation, meetings in various types of organization, political and other forms of interview, and book reviews." Therefore, it can be argued that different actors may have different genres depending upon their position in the social practice. For instance, in my study, the different groups of middle managers who represent protagonists and antagonists of the restructuring process and the new structure may have access to different genres in their actions and interactions in social practice.

In the representation and self-representation of social practices, semiosis constitutes discourses or particular and diverse ways of representing aspects of the world can be referred to as a discourse (Fairclough, 2005).

> *"Semiosis in the representation and self-representation of social practices constitutes discourses. Discourses are diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned - differently positioned social actors `see' and represent social life in different ways, different discourses. For instance, the lives of poor and disadvantaged people are represented through different discourses in the social practices of government, politics, medicine, and social science, and through different discourses within each of these practices corresponding to different positions of social actors" (Fairclough, 2001: 123-124).*

Different economic and political discourses can be examples of representation and self-representation of social practices based on the positions of the social actors (Fairclough, 2005). For example, it can be suggested that in an organization, different groups of middle managers and employees may mobilize different discourses of the same phenomenon based on their positions. Therefore, the particular discourses which different groups of middle managers mobilize are partly a result of their position in the organizational hierarchy.

Semiosis in the performance of positions constitutes styles (Fairclough, 2001). Styles is referred to as different ways of being or identity in their communicative/semiotic aspect (Fairclough, 2005). Different actors (such as teachers, business leaders, or government employees) do not have styles as a function of their positions; rather, styles are played out/performed differently based on the aspects of the identity or being that exceeds the social position (Fairclough, 2001).

Finally, Fairclough (2001; 2005) outlines that 'social practices networked in a particular way constitute a 'social order'.

> *"For instance, the currently emergent neo-liberal global order of the new capitalism, or at a more local level, the social order of education in a particular society at a particular time. The semiotic aspect of a social order is what we can call an order of discourse. It is the way in which diverse genres and discourses are networked together. An order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference - a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning, that is different discourses and genres. One aspect of this ordering is dominance: some ways of making meaning are dominant or mainstream in a particular order of discourse; others are marginal, or oppositional, or `alternative'" (Fairclough, 2001: 124).*

Therefore, Fairclough (2001) mentions that the order of the discourse is an open system and flexible which is put at risk by what happens in the actual interactions. In other words, a given order of discourse is indeterminate and is always subject to challenges and thus, according to Fairclough (2001), the political concept of hegemony and power can be usefully applied to investigate different 'orders of the discourse', the dominant, and the alternative and competing ones.

The general point of Fairclough's (2001; 2005) conceptualization of discourse, genres, styles and thus the 'order of discourse' is that the operationalization of a given discourse and its enactment and inculcation are in part processes within a discourse. In other words, "neo-liberal discourses are in part enacted as changes in genres, and in part inculcated changes in styles" (Fairclough, 2005:). Hence, he recommends that the discourse-analytical research on neo-liberalism will includes the following three concerns: neo-liberal discourses and narratives; dialectical relations between discourses, genres, and styles; and dialectical relations between the discourse and other elements of social life. Moreover, in line with the critical realism perspective, CDA oscillates between agency and structure. it deals with a focus on shifts in the social structuring of semiotic diversity or 'orders of discourse' and a focus on the productive or performative semiotic work which goes on in particular texts and interactions. According to Fairclough (2001), in both the cases, the central concern is shifting relationships between genres, discourses, and styles— the shifting structure of relationships between them which achieve relative stability and permanency in the order of the discourse and the working of relationships between them in texts and interactions. Here the term 'interdiscursivity' comes into the picture. This is a question of which genres, discourses and styles it draws upon and how it works them into

particular articulations (Fairclough, 2001). I discuss interdiscursivity and intertextuality in more detail in later sections.

Although Fairclough (2001; 2005) developed the semiotic aspects of the order of discourse and discourses, genres and styles to analyze discourses such as the discourse of globalization (global economy) and neo-liberalism and showed these with illustrative examples, I believe that his conceptualization can be applied for investigating different phenomena in an organizational context, i.e. the discursive struggle among different groups of employees around a restructuring. In the following section, I explain in detail Fairclough's (1993) three-dimensions of discourse which frame the analysis of this study.

2.4.2 Three Dimensions of CDA

To link the micro and macro-perspectives of social practice (which is always a challenge), or to systematically examine the opaque relationships of "causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes" in a given discursive event, Fairclough (1993: 135) developed a three-dimensional framework of analysis. According to Fairclough (1993), each discursive event has three dimensions: it is spoken or written language text; it is an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of text; and it is a piece of social practice. These three complementary ways are important for understanding a complex social event. The discursive practice mediates the relationship between the text and the social practice. In other words, the processes of text production and interpretation shape and are shaped by the social practice; and the production process also shapes the text or 'leaves traces in the text'; and the interpretive process in the discourse practice is based on 'cues' or signals in the text. In such a way, the opaque relationships of power between the social structure and the text at the micro-level are linked and investigated systematically and masked ideologies and power relationships can be uncovered.

An analysis of text involves an examination of the actual content, structure and meaning of the text under scrutiny (Grant et al., 2004). According to Fairclough (1993), this analysis involves form-and-meaning and he stresses that the text and its associated meaning are interdependent. He explains that any text can be regarded as interweaving 'ideational', 'interpersonal', and 'textual' meanings. Text as ideational constitutes the representation and signification of the world and experience: the text as interpersonal constitutes

(establishment, reproduction, and negotiation) of actors' identities and the social personal relationships between them; and text in its textual meaning involves the distribution of given versus new foreground or background information. Fairclough (1993) further distinguishes two sub-functions of the interpersonal functions of text: "the 'the 'identity' function-text in the constitution of personal and social identities—and the 'relational' function—text in the constitution of relationships" (Fairclough, 1993: 136). Therefore, according to Fairclough (1993) an analysis of the interwoven meanings comes in the form of an analysis of the text and involves: the generic forms of the texts such as narrative; their dialogic nature such as turn taking; grammar and vocabulary; and the relations between clauses in complex sentences and relocations between sentences. According to Richardson (2006), a content analysis is one form of a textual analysis. However, he stresses that vocabulary, grammar, and semantics should not be profound and significant at their own end; rather, the functions that such elements serve is of particular interest. Therefore, according to Richardson (2007:38) an analysis of the texts in the form of vocabulary, semantics, grammar and so on must be made "*in relation to* their direct or indirect involvement in reproducing or resisting the systems of ideology and social power" (Richardson, 2007). However, it is very difficult to easily examine the power effects of a textual analysis unless they are put in context. This is why the three-dimensional framework of analysis was developed to link the texts with the discourse practice and the social practice.

In line with Fairclough's (1993) argument, I too argue that in any complex discursive event, a textual analysis must be complemented and contextualized by the discourse practice and social practice to read the opaque relationships in social and cultural structure, practices, and processes. In their application of a critical discourse analysis in a recently completed strategic change program, Phillips et al. (2008) identified 'authoritative narratives', 'ironical narratives' and 'counter narratives' as textual dimensions of Fairclough's (1993) three-dimension analytical framework. Similarly, in their work which examined Volvo's decision to shutdown a bus-body building unit in Finland, Erkama and Vaara (2010) identified rhetorical appeals that were used by the actors who resisted or legitimized the shutdown decision: ethos, pathos, logos, autopoiesis, and cosmos. In line with Erkama and Vaara's (2010) argument, these persuasive appeals can be considered as micro textual practices (see Rhetorical Appeals in this thesis).

The discursive practice dimension involves an examination of the form of the discursive interaction that is used for communicating meaning and beliefs (Grant et al., 2004). According to Fairclough (1993), an analysis of discourse practices is concerned with socio-cognitive aspects of text production and interpretation, rather than its socio-institutional aspects. "Analysis involves both the detailed moment-by-moment explication of how participants produce and interpret texts, which conversation analysis and pragmatics excel at, and analysis which focuses upon the relationship of the discursive event to the order of discourse, and upon the question of which discursive practices are being drawn upon and in what combination. The concept of interdiscursivity highlights the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses. The concept of interdiscursivity is modelled upon and closely related to intertextuality and like intertextuality it highlights a historical view of texts as transforming the past-existing conventions, or prior texts-into the present" (Fairclough, 1993: 137). It is at this level that this is a discourse analysis rather than a textual analysis (Richardson, 2007).

In their application of a discourse analysis in a strategic change program, Phillips et al. (2008: 781) found the following internal discourse practices that were developed by actors: "frame the possibilities for "being" and acting in the organization; construct new or modified subject positions with idealized identities; bring these subject positions to bear on actors in the organization by setting out and enforcing the criteria by which appropriate or 'right' conduct is judged." In addition, actors play with the following subject positions in their discourse practices: acceptance; appropriation or covert resistance; or overt resistance (Phillips et al., 2008). To state it differently, when actors produce and interpret different texts (mobilize particular discourses that advance their own interests and undermine others' interests), they assume different subject positions (see concepts, objects and subject positions). If there is different competing and alternative text production and text interpretation, this marks a discursive struggle to 'fix' meaning.

The social practice dimension involves considering the social context in which the discursive practice is taking place (Grant et al., 2004). Fairclough (1993) notes that an analysis of a discursive event as a social practice may involve different levels of social organization such as the context of the situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context or the context of culture. Richardson (2007: 42) highlights that at this level of analysis, it is possible to ask the following questions: "what does this text say about the society in which it was produced and the society that it was produced for? What influence

or impact do we think that the text may have on social relations? Will it help to continue inequalities and other undesirable social practices, or will it help to break them down?" It is at this point that a discourse analysis becomes a *critical* discourse analysis.

Phillips et al. (2008: 781) mention that a discursive event as a social practice includes: "Discourses that exist outside the organization (i.e., in the 'expressive sphere of culture') but can be invoked to support the production of bodies of knowledge and systems of "Truth" inside the organization." The first such societal discourses in a radical change context in a company is 'Business'. Elements under this 'Grand Discourse' are 'changing environment', 'bureaucracy' and 'culture'. The second and perhaps unexpected Grand Discourse according to Phillips (2008), is 'Science'. In their investigation of the discursive struggle in the Canadian refugee system, Hardy and Phillips (1999) analyzed 127 cartoons to analyze text as a social practice. They identified four objects to be represented: the refugees, the government, the immigration system and the public. The refugees were constituted as frauds, victims, both victims and frauds and as privileged as compared to other immigrants. The government was constituted as cruel, corrupt, incompetent and subject to conflicting tensions. The immigration system was constituted as inconsistent, inadequate, too tough, too lenient, too slow, gullible, and honorable. The public was portrayed as requiring protection and being opposed to refugees. Their basic argument is that different subject positions draw on these societal level discourses about the refugee system in Canada in their discursive practices, that is, in the production and interpretation of texts to their advantage.

Finally, Fairclough (1993) argues that power and ideology may arise at each of the three levels of analysis and he states that it is useful to think of power and discourse in terms of hegemony because "control over discursive practices can helpfully be seen in terms of hegemonic struggle over orders of discourse, and because hegemony and hegemonic struggle in a broader sense may involve discourse to a substantial degree. For instance, the bid by Thatcher(ism) for political hegemony in Britain was conducted to a significant extent in discourse and over discursive practices" (Fairclough, 1993: 137). The next section discusses interdiscursivity and intertextuality.

2.4.3 Interdiscursivity and Intertextuality

As explained earlier, discourse is composed of texts and a discourse analysis involves a systematic study of these texts including their production, dissemination and

interpretation/consumption to understand the relation between discourse and social reality. This implies that discourses cannot be studied directly, and instead have to be studied through texts. However, this does not mean that a discourse analysis focuses on individual or isolated texts, "because social reality does not depend on individual texts but, rather, on bodies of texts. Discourse analysis therefore involves analysis of collections of texts, the ways they are made meaningful through their links to other texts, the ways in which they draw on different discourses, how and to whom they are disseminated, the methods of their production, and the manner in which they are received and consumed" (Phillips et al., 2004: 636).

Deetz and Anderson (2004) explain that although CDA investigates the link between discourse in terms of the particular aspects of a text, it may not fully explore how actors and institutions as discursive actors appropriate a discourse from one situation to another. "This passage of discourses across situations, sites and interpretations highlights the fragmentation, development, evolution and change of meaning as it happens through interaction. This passage of discourses is the concern of intertextual analysis" (Broadfoot, Deetz and Anderson, 2004: 200).

This conceptualization indicates that intertextuality and interdiscursivity are two of the central and distinctive features of CDA (Fairclough, 2012). Although intertextuality and interdiscursivity are used interchangeably in most CDA studies, Hardy (2001) tries to make a clear distinction between the two, in which the former focuses "on how an individual text is constituted from diverse discourses" whereas the later indicates that "any text is a link in a chain of texts, reacting to, drawing in and transforming other texts" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 262 as cited by Hardy, 2001). Although I believe that using the two concepts interchangeably is not problematic, I continue along that path and therefore in my thesis interdiscursivity implies the relation between a text and the other discourses whereas intertextuality implies the relation between a text and other texts. According to Broadfoot, Deetz and Anderson (2004) it is Julia Kristeva who coined the term intertextuality in the 1960s. The basic notion of intertextuality as used by Kristeva is "a text does not exist only on its own but exists in an interconnected dialogue with other texts. The text itself is a manifestation of this interconnection, as it borrows words, quotations and meanings from other situations, genres and speakers" (Broadfoot, Deetz and Anderson, 2004: 201).

Therefore, for an intertextual analyst, what is of interest is the interplay of the current conversation with a past conversation. For example, in a discussion or a debate in a task force meeting, one can report his/her conversation with the manager by using reported quotes from the manager and herself/himself; or she might use the words of her manager or a popular figure to strengthen her point. Similarly, in relation to interdiscursivity, discourses always draw on other discourses which become part of the new discourse. For example, the discourse on AIDS brings different texts together from political, medical, scientific, moral and economic discourses and these constitute the discursive structure of the discourse of AIDS (Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Another example is a discourses about refugees which draws on other discourses for example, the UN's Universal Declaration for Human Rights, and includes a wide range of texts including government reports and statements, news, reports, cartoons, editorials and demonstrations.

One of the major benefits of intertextuality is that it contextualizes a specific instance of the discourse. Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 277 as cited by Grant and Hardy, 2003) include intertextuality as well as sociocultural knowledge in their concept of the context in discourse because *"Discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently."* Through an interdiscursive analysis in CDA, Fairclough (2012) underscored that the following things can be achieved: elements of context can be incorporated into an analysis of the texts; the relationship between concrete occasional events and more durable social practices can be analyzed and shown; innovations and changes in texts can be shown; and it is possible to connect the detailed linguistic and semiotic features of texts with processes of social change on a broader scale via the mediating role of interdiscursivity or intertextuality. This reinforces Broadfoot et al.'s (2004: 202) view that "discourses produce and transform, borrow and contribute to the ongoing and never completed process of organization. Discourses and organization are mutually constitutive." This implies that the view that discourses exist 'inside' the organization is problematic. Phillips et al. (2004) theorized the relation between the institutional field and other fields. Discourses in one particular field can draw on discourses in other fields as well as discourses that span multiple fields: "institutional change at the field level thus becomes a complex process where changes in discourses outside the field, or tangential to it, affect discourses more central to the field in unexpected ways. Such interdiscursivity means that the institutional

field is susceptible to the influence of changes in broader discourses. Hence, change in institutional fields may be unpredictable and wide ranging" (Phillips et al., 2004: 647).

Similarly, discourses at the institutional and societal level can influence each other in many ways. For instance, societal discourses might enable or constrain, constitute or be constituted by discursive practices in a particular institutional field and vice versa (Hardy and Phillips, 1999). Following these above arguments, changes in societal discourses or other institutional fields might affect change in a particular field or institution positively or negatively. In other words, the infiltration of discourse to the case organization in my study might render change (in discourse) not only urgent but also unpredictable.

However, societal level discourse may in turn be affected by a change in discourse in a particular field. Discourse at the societal level occurs through a broad range of mass media, including television, movies, radio, newspapers, and the internet, which provide channels for the production and distribution of texts to a wide and diverse audience (Hardy and Phillips, 1999).

Hardy and Phillips (2004) argue that the influence of texts on a discourse depends on some important components: their connection to other texts and discourses; the genre of the text; the linguistic devices that they employ and the degree to which texts become distanced from the circumstances of their original production. The first one, which is my focus in this section, is concerned with intertextuality and interdiscursivity. According to Hardy and Phillips (2004), intertextuality is important because it underscores the fact that it is not only the 'the text' that shapes the interpretation, but also other texts that the interpreter brings to the interpretation process. "A text is more likely to influence discourse if it evokes other texts, either explicitly or implicitly, because it will draw on understandings and meanings that are more broadly grounded" Hardy and Phillips (2004: 309).

Interdiscursivity is drawing from other discourse and it was explained by Hardy and Phillips (2004) as a conscious strategy in textual production. Fairclough (1992) examined British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher's speech which brings together authoritarian, democratic, egalitarian, patriarchal and feminist elements, helping a woman leader to wield political power under changed political and economic conditions.

As discussed earlier, an interdiscursive analysis also involves how genres, discourses and styles are configured together. "These are categories which are distinguished and related at the level of social practices (as elements of orders of discourse). At the level of social

events – texts – they are drawn upon in ways which give rise to hybridity or 'mixing' of categories, i.e. a text may be hybrid with respect to genres, discourses and/or styles" (Fairclough, 2012). Fairclough (1993) argues that the marketization of higher education is a systematic configuration of texts which 'mix' the discourse, genres and styles of education and the market. In their theorization of the relationship between discourse and institutions, Phillips et al. (2004) explain that public accounting and environmental accounting are supported and draw on broader discourses. The discourse of environmental accounting is highly dependent on the existence of a broader discourse of environmentalism. Therefore, it is easier to conclude that the texts of environmental accounting involve a systematic configuration of texts that bring together and mix the discourse, genres, and styles of environment and accounting.

Implicit in these conceptualizations of interdiscursivity and intertextuality is the fact that discourses in other fields or at the societal level are resources that one can use to achieve a given end. For instance, Hardy and Phillips (1999) showed how the discourse of immigration at the societal level (as analyzed via the cartoons) provided a resource for actors' discursive activities in the Canadian refugee system. Similarly, Fairclough and Thomas (2004: 388) highlighted that the emergence of the discourse of globalization is an ideological resource which managers can re-contextualize and use to initiate and implement change, and to overcome resistance because resistance "can be marginalized as out of step with a changing world and perverse in the face of the 'golden opportunity' that waits to be taken or the threat that cannot be ignored." However, Fairclough and Thomas (2004) also argue that managers, by the virtue of their position, have privileged access to the discursive practice of globalization which reinforces their managerial prerogative.

In this study, I am interested in the discursive struggle or in the negotiation of meaning given that there are alternative and competing discourses. According to Phillips et al. (2004: 645), competing discourse or alternative discourse refers to "another structured set of interrelated texts offering alternative social constructions of the same aspect of social reality." Therefore, when there is struggle for meaning (that is, there are competing and alternative discourses), intertextuality and interdiscursivity become even more important. In relation to this, Phillips et al. (2004) also suggests that societal discourses could influence discursive struggles through their impact in constraining or facilitating the discursive practices of actors in the discursive struggle. This implies that an effective and efficient use of other institutional and societal discourses has paramount importance in

'fixing' meaning and constructing preferential social relations. For Phillips et al. (2004) texts that either explicitly or implicitly refer to other established and legitimate discourses (since they evoke meanings and understandings) are more likely to be successful than the texts in alterative and competing discourses.

2.4.4. Concepts, Objects, and Subjects

As discussed earlier, a discourse can be defined as a collection of texts that bring an object or a set of objects into being. In other words, discourse has an active role in the creation of reality. A discourse does not mirror reality, rather it constitutes reality and creates "ways of understanding the world. Discourses do not reveal some hidden, pre-constituted reality, but rather provide concepts, objects and subject positions that actors use to fashion a social world" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 6). For example, the discourse of psychology brought into being a whole different understanding of madness, its causes and its treatment. The discourse around AIDS brought a new social object that made sense of a set of symptoms and diseases previously thought to be unconnected. "The medical and social discourse surrounding AIDS continues to encompass a massive struggle over the nature and appropriate response to this new object" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 6).

Given this discussion, what are the things that a discourse brings into being or that it constitutes? According to Phillips and Hardy (1997), those things that discourse constitute can be generally categorized as concepts, objects and subject positions. I now briefly explain each of them.

Concepts

The first entity that discourse constitutes is concepts. Concepts are "the categories, relationships and theories through which we understand the world and relate one another" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 7). According to Phillips and Hardy (1997), concepts exist in the 'realm of ideas', but they have material effects as they provide the meaning and understanding that underline a social action and therefore influence practices (Hardy and Phillips, 2004). For instance, the scientific discipline of Economic Entomology is instrumental in defining and elaborating on the concept of 'insecticides.' The concept of 'insecticides' exists in our minds and therefore exists in the realm of ideas, but this concept also has material effects such as the powdery substances sold to farmers which are made sensible and given meaning by the concept of 'insecticides' (Maguire, 2003). Further,

concepts emerge historically and culturally through the discourse of a set of actors' which includes production, dissemination and consumption of texts in a social situation. According to Phillips and Hardy (1999), discourses depend on the ongoing construction of texts for meaning and therefore they may change dramatically over time and from one situation to another or from social group to social group as texts are produced, disseminated and interpreted by the actors in a social situation. Although concepts in a discourse can be originally defined by some institutions or interested parties (for example, as refugee originally defined by the United Nations), they will be subject to continuous negotiations and changes as new texts are produced and added. According to Phillips and Hardy (1997: 167) "discursive acts that are intended to redefine concepts are attempts to fashion preferable social relations, which depend for their success on the resources available to the actor producing the text".

Therefore, a discursive practice is basically a political act for the following reasons: a meaning attached to the concept is dependent on the discourse; the way people understand the world depends upon these concepts, and finally, those who are able to transform the concepts through their participation in the discourse are acting politically and change the way the world is understood (Phillips and Hardy, 1997). The ideas of 'rightness' or 'accent' are important because concepts carry with them a moral evaluation. "This accent is part of the ongoing discursive accomplishment of the concept. Accent is open to conflict and ambiguity and is an important part of the political struggle over the concept. Accent is also unstable and open to inversion by groups as they struggle to redefine concepts in ways which change the patterns of social privilege that exist at any point in time" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 167).

In line with this conceptualization, it is possible to argue that 'restructuring' (as a focus in this study) is a 'concept' that is defined and given meaning by literature on change and strategy. Although the concept of restructuring as a field is being negotiated and debated (Hirsch and De Soucey, 2006), it is also negotiated and contested by different actors in the organization during the restructuring program (during change) to fashion preferable social relations. In other words, the way restructuring is conceptualized and understood in an organization affects how the restructuring is undertaken and the resulting social relations.

Objects

Objects are the second component that a discourse constitutes. "When concepts are brought into play to make sense of social relations or physical objects, the discourse constitutes an object' (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 168). This implies that objects to be constituted in a discourse practice can be 'material objects' or 'social relations.' Stated differently, contrary to concepts which exist in the realm of ideas, objects exist in the practical order. However, this does not mean that "that they pre-exist *as objects* in some way that is *revealed* by the discourse. Rather, it means that some concepts are discursively attached to particular parts of an ambiguous material world; a world that has an ontological status and a physical existence apart from our experience of them" (Hardy and Phillips, 1999: 3). However, it is impossible to understand the objects without reference to the prevailing discourses which constitute them (Hardy and Phillips, 2004). For example, "The concept of a refugee exists in our minds, but the refugee who appears before an immigration office is an object, made sensible, given meaning, by the concept 'refugee'" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 168). The individual has a certain existence outside the discourse that reveals it; the person has an ontological reality beyond the discourse and would continue to exist in a physical sense apart from others' experience of it. The person still exists whether she is a refugee, a tourist or an illegal immigrant (Phillips and Hardy, 1997).

The interest in discourse in constituting objects is due to the fact that different concepts produce different objects. In other words, when the meaning and understanding of concepts changes over time or from situation to situation as a result of a discursive practice, new objects are produced and therefore, new social relations are established. Hardy and Phillips (1999: 4) maintain that "if the concept of a 'political' refugee is applied to a particular individual, his or her rights to asylum are placed center-stage. The concept of an 'economic' refugee, on the other hand, highlights the importance of measures to limit access and to deter or detain the individual. In other words, as concepts change, new objects are produced and, equally importantly, very different practices are invoked to deal with the individual". Therefore, when the concept of a refugee is applied by different actors in the discourse practice such as the immigration officer, the civil servant in the asylum division, by members of a NGO or by the public, the way the refugee is viewed as well as the material practices that are invoked change.

In their review of literature on the discourse of restructuring, Hirsch and De Soucey (2006) found that the advent of a discourse of restructuring generally brought about the following material and social relationships: extended use of subcontracting and outsourcing; the

flattening of organizational hierarchies; growing use of consultants and contingent workers; downsizing of the permanent workforce; and virtual communication across boundaries and borders through technological advances. Although their findings are about the general concept of restructuring in the global economy, some of the social relationships that are constituted due to the production, dissemination, and interpretation of the discourse of restructuring might be relevant to any context. When the concept of restructuring and the way it must be undertaken changes, the following social and material relationships might change: the flatness of the hierarchy; the reporting relationships; number of positions and levels; the slimness/flatness of the structure; job configurations and arrangements; employment conditions; performance appraisal mechanisms; locations and work places; and salary scale.

Phillips and Hardy (1997) argue that concepts and objects are highly interrelated: changing the concept and the understanding through a discursive struggle fundamentally changes the way the object is socially accomplished. Therefore, "the determination procedures, the protections accorded to the individual object and the services that will be provided depend on the concept of what a refugee is. If our idea of what a refugee is changes, so too do the processes, practices and structures on which it is based and, ultimately, so does the subject, the individual" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 168). They also argue that it is at this stage that a discourse has the greatest impact on the social world and the greatest interest for organizational researchers. Although concepts and objects are interrelated, their theorization implies that changing the concept results in a change in the object. However, in a different setting such as in this research, it can be argued that the influence could be vice versa. During change, both concepts and objects (material and social relations) could be simultaneously negotiated and contested.

Subject Positions

In addition to concepts and objects, discourse also constitutes subject positions. According to Hardy and Phillips (2004: 302), "subject positions are locations in social space from which certain delimited agents can act." In their discussion of strategy discourse, (Knights and Morgan, 1991) state that subjects are constituted via a discourse as certain categories of individuals or actors. Phillips and Hardy (1997) highlighte that it is not only refugees who are produced by a discourse about refugees, but also different subject positions such as immigration officers, asylum officers, lawyers, politicians, illegal aliens and economic

migrants. Similarly, the emergence and reproduction of a strategy as an essential element in a managerial discourse transforms individuals as particular kinds of subjects as managers and employees who secure their sense of purpose and reality by formulating, evaluating, and conducting a strategy (Knights and Morgan, 1991).

Implicit in these definitions of subject positions are the notion of agency (Phillips et al., 2008). As subject positions within a given discourse, actors have some agency to produce concepts and objects. In line with this, Phillips and Hardy (1997) argue that it is not only a subject or self that is created through a discourse but also their associated rights which is called 'warranting voice'. According to Phillips and Hardy (1997), there are not many subject positions in a given discourse from which individuals speak and act, and individuals should be able to assume one of the available subject positions to speak within a discourse. In other words, statements within a discourse are not the result of independent accounts or independently acting subjects; rather they are voices expressed by individuals who assume a given subject position. In addition, although there are very limited subject positions within a discourse, each subject position has a different right to speak. This means that some, by the virtue of their subject position, have the right to speak louder than the others; some are at the center stage of the discourse while the others are marginalized. For instance, the discourse of psychiatry has the subject position of a psychiatrist who has the right to produce texts that determine individuals' sanity. Similarly, the emergence and reconstitution of a strategy in a managerial discourse not only creates management and employees as subject positions but also accords different rights and obligations to the subject positions. Hence, executives determine the direction of an organization and formulate strategies, that is, they are responsible for the thinking part of the organization whereas employees are implementers of the strategies developed by the executives; therefore, they do not have any say in the future direction of the organization as they are responsible for the doing part (Knights and Morgan, 1991).

The emergence of a discourse of restructuring (and the emergence of 'a shareholder value' society) not only constituted executives and employees as different subject positions but also afforded them different rights and voices. Executives were highly rewarded through salaries and benefits or generous exit packages, whereas employees (especially, less skilled employees and the more vulnerable workers) received reduced salaries, benefits, and job security (Hirsch and De Soucey, 2006).

Discourse does not only constitute the subject positions of central actors within discourse, but the interpreter of the text is also dependent on the discourse (that is, on the texts that are produced by the central actors from a given subject position) (Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Discourse shapes the position from which the interpreter interprets the texts. "The discourse creates a social world of a particular kind by making assumptions about the interpreter that become taken-for-granted in the act of interpretation" (Phillips and Hardy, 1997: 169). For example, an advertisement positions the interpreters as consumers in the world of production and consumption of goods and services. Hence, the discursive actors try to shape the experiences and actions of the interpreters by limiting and circumscribing their roles (Phillips and Hardy, 1997).

In addition to the interpreters, a discourse has consequences for the speaker as well as for the various receivers of the texts. Phillips and Hardy (1997: 169) state, "in defining and circumscribing positions from which subjects can speak, act and interpret as well as the resources available to do so, discourse captures producer as effectively as participants and audiences. In fact, there is no clear delineation between producer, participant and audience: in promoting a particular discourse, producers become written into it; in acting out of their scripts, participants change them; in receiving and interpreting discursive communication, audiences contribute to them." For instance, in relation to the discourse of refugees, it is not only refugees who are produced, but also immigration officers who admit them; the decision-makers who determine their status; NGOs who provide different services to the refugees; the media which reports about them; and the public who reads about them. According to Phillips and Hardy (1997) in this process, organizations also construct their own organizational subjectivities or 'identities' through their discourses.

In the discourse of and recontextualization of management, Thomas (2003) identified, what he calls 'three conjunctures of management discourse' such as management academia; management consultancy and the 'guru' industry; and management practice. Therefore, academicians, consultants and gurus, and practitioners have differing interests, and therefore, the discourse of management will be interpreted differently and will be re-contextualized accordingly.

At this point it is important to explain that discursive subjects and discursive objects are interrelated and can overlap. For example, Oswick et al. (2000) explain the relationship between objects and subject positions as follows: the notion that a refugee can be an object

but also that several organizational stakeholders such as citizens, the local community, the state, large corporate clients, and the accounting profession all are objects. Therefore, the relation is that organizational stakeholders as objects construct practices, structures, and various organizational subjectivities (that is, subjects). By basing their argument on the concept of 'false memory' which is recognized as a psychiatric syndrome, Phillips et al. (2008) explain that those who see themselves as having false memories take up subject positions and become objects when they are seen so because they satisfy the diagnostic criteria of false memory, that is, an application of the concept. Therefore, those who have a false memory are both objects and subjects based on how they see themselves and how they are seen by others. On the contrary, Phillips and Hardy (1997) see refugees as objects (that is, they do not take subject positions) and instead those who produce texts about refugees assume subject positions.

In my study, the concept is used in accordance with Phillips and Hardy's (1997) theory and understanding about restructuring. The object is the material and social relations that are constructed through a discourse of restructuring. The 'subject positions' are those groups of middle managers who produce, disseminate and interpret texts about restructuring to shape, define and redefine the concept of restructuring to create preferable social relations. Phillips et al. (2008: 782) argue that the most challenging thing for researchers at Fairclough's analytical level of discourse practice (contrary to texts and social practice) is identifying subject positions "that are authorized by the internal discourse and show how these define the limits of right conduct in the organization". However, in their illustrative work of applying CDA to strategic management research, Phillips et al. (2008) identified Transform Champion, who were agents of strategic change, as subject positions. Although implicitly, trainees who build a different narrative about the change (that is, the training) are another subject position. Likewise, the restructuring team (which is also middle managers) in my study can be considered as one subject position, and the other groups of middle managers who provide alternative and competing discourses about the concept of restructuring and other related issues can be considered as another subject position. Although they do not produce many texts, the top management and the board may also be considered as another subject position.

2.5 Discourse and Power

Though power is one of the most widely discussed and investigated concepts in social science, it still remains unclear (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). The Weberian definition provides the least common denominator: "power as the chance that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own will even against the resistance of others" (Weber, 1980: 28 as cited by Wodak and Meyer, 2001).

However, the emergence and popularity of the discourse theory and a discourse analysis provide new insights about the notion of power which challenges classical or 'one-dimensional' conceptions of power. According to Phillips and Hardy (1997), the traditional view of power which tends to be conceptualized in terms of formal authority and dependency, is challenged by the discursive view of power in three ways. First, the discursive view rejects the concept of 'sovereign power' where an isolated agent mobilizes resources to produce a certain outcome. Rather, power is embedded in a network of discursive relations which embrace the advantaged and disadvantaged alike in its web. Second, it draws attention to how the subject is socially constituted by the system of power which surrounds it. Identities are important here as long as they are socially constituted. Third, it challenges claims to 'truth.' Instead, each society has its own regimes of truth—the discourses it accepts as truth; the mechanisms that differentiate truth and falsehood and finally, the sanctions that are applied to each.

This conceptualization of power in a discourse that challenges and undermines the traditional view of power has been based a great deal on the Foucauldian view of power. The Foucauldian view was the earliest view which challenged the traditional view of power and provided a new insight by associating power with discourse. The Foucauldian view argues that power relations are produced through discursive formations (Murphy, 1999). "Power is not the tool of any particular agent; it is produced in everyday practices of gestures, actions, and discourse. It is reproduced due to historical context, thereby creating discursive power structures within which individuals operate. From this view, it is not helpful to define the powerful and the powerless" (Murphy, 1999: 503). Therefore, in the Foucauldian view of power, identifying the powerful and the powerless is not important or "it does not matter who exercises power" (Foucault, 1977: 202 as cited in Murphy, 1999) because "power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and that it only exists in action" (Foucault, 1980: 89, as cited by Knights and Morgan, 1991). According to Foucauldian view, power is relational since power is not the property of individuals or groups and is a property of relations. Moreover, for Foucauldians, power is

not basically about repression and constraint but it is positive and productive of subjective well-being. According to Knights and Morgan (1991: 269), "Power is positive in the sense that it can transform individuals into subjects who secure their sense of what is to be 'worthy' and 'competent' human beings through the social practices that it creates or sustains."

Although the Foucauldian view paved the way for a tremendous shift from the traditional view of power, it has been criticized by critical discourse analysts. While sharing Foucault's theoretical perspective, they hold the view that it is difficult to investigate the role of the dominant group in producing and sustaining differential relations of or systems of advantage and disadvantage in society, let alone introducing emancipatory interests (Fairclough, 1992; Hardy and Phillips, 2004). Power relations are not only inescapable, but they are also difficult for those victims of power or the disadvantaged to challenge and change them to emancipate themselves. In other words, a Foucauldian view largely dismisses agency by self-interested actors. Therefore, according to Hardy and Phillips (2004), a critical discourse analysis changes Foucauldians' deterministic view of power and discourse in two ways: First, CDA argues that "discourses are never completely cohesive and devoid of internal tensions and are therefore never able to totally determine social reality. This means that discourse closure is never complete.They are always partial, often cross-cut by inconsistencies and contradiction, and almost always contested to some degree" (Hardy and Phillips, 2004: 304). Second, CDA argues that actors are always embedded in multiple and alternative (contradictory) discourses. Therefore, the inherent tension among these discourses "produces a discursive space in which an agent can play one discourse off against each other, draw on multiple discourses to create new forms of interdiscursivity and otherwise move between and across multiple discourses" (Hardy and Phillips, 2004: 304). In addition, contrary to a Foucauldian view of a discourse that denies agency to the interested actors, CDA suggests that there is space for the use of power, albeit within a particular discursive context. The room for the exercise of power via alternative discourses provides the potential for possible changes in discourses over time. A change in a discourse changes the power relationship in a way that constitutes a preferable social relation. Although CDA tempers the Foucauldian view of power (while sharing the unique theoretical perspective of Foucault) and totally rejects the traditional view of power which is dependency based and claims sovereign power, CDA's views on power itself are diverse based on the perspectives and different approaches that are taken. For example, in line with

the socio-cognitive approach to CDA (van Dijk, 1993), van Dijk (2005) introduced a socio-cognitive view of power which argues that power play involves cognition and mind-control.

However, I believe that all diverse approaches and conceptualizations of power related to different CDA frameworks can be applied in my thesis. In other words, the view of power in line with a socio-cognitive approach that power-play includes mind control via manipulations of ideologies, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions is rather uncontroversial to be considered in my thesis paper. In the following section, I elaborate on the relation between discourse and power more broadly.

Given the Weberian view as a common denominator, the concept of power from a critical perspective has also been rejuvenated and reframed to examine the production and reproduction of the relations of domination in anorganization (Mumby and Stohl, 1991). In critical studies, "power is a 'deep structure' phenomenon, shaping the way in which organization members develop their sense of identity and structuring fragmented interests into a coherent whole which maintains certain relations of autonomy and dependence" (Mumby and Stohl, 1991: 315). Similar to this definition, Wodak (2002: 11) outlined what power is and its relation with language or discourse as:

> *Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures. The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over power and where power is challenged. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power both in the short and the long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power within hierarchical social structures.*

The relation between discourse and power is evident as the former constitutes concepts, objects (the meaning attached to a given object), and subject positions (the privileges associated with subject positions) and all these have political consequences in terms of who is allowed to speak, from what position, and the procedures and practices that are invoked (Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Therefore, power is exercised when social actors (who occupy a given subject position) try to modify the concepts and objects that are discursively produced.

In critical studies, the relation between discourse and power has been beautifully captured by Holzscheiter (2005, as cited in Wodak, 2014) in the field of politics as power in a discourse and power over a discourse. *Power in discourse* means "as actors' struggles over different interpretations of meaning" (Holzscheiter, 2005: 69). This struggle for "semiotic hegemony" relates to the selection of "specific linguistic codes, rules for interaction, rules for access to the meaning-making forum, rules for decision-making, turn-taking, opening of sessions, making contributions and interventions" (Holzscheiter, 2005: 69). While *power over discourse* is defined "as the general 'access to the stage' in macro and micro contexts" and that is related to the processes of inclusion and exclusion (Holzscheiter, 2005: 57), *power of discourse* relates to "the influence of historically grown macro-structures of meaning, of the conventions of the language game in which actors find themselves" (Holzscheiter, 2005: 61) and individual's influence over the actors via their agency might contribute to changing or transforming those macro-structures.

Wodak (2002) underscores that CDA as a language theory that incorporates power as one central element is fundamentally interested in not only analyzing opaque but also transparent structural relationships of 'dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language'. Stated differently, CDA is interested in critically examining social inequalities as they are expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse). Therefore, Habermas (1989) clams that language serves the following purposes: as a medium of domination and social force; as an ideological element, and as a legitimizing tool of relations of organized power, and this claim is well accepted by CDA's proponents.

As CDA is concerned with opaque social structures and relationships, hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs (which are often disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies), and the concepts of hegemony and ideology, which is very much related to power are important to note. Ideology can be defined as the 'worldviews' that constitute 'social cognition': "schematically organized complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world, e.g. the schema […] whites have about blacks' (van Dijk, 1993: 258). Ideology is therefore inextricably linked with hegemony in that the former is an important tool for the latter. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), when people with diverse backgrounds and interests start thinking alike or when most people in a society think alike about certain matters, or even forget that there are alternatives to the status quo, we arrive at the concept of hegemony. This means that

dominant ideologies appear as 'neutral', holding on to assumptions that stay largely unchallenged.

According to Hercleous (2004) mentioned that ideological hegemony happens when the dominant classes attempt to construct and perpetuate belief systems that support their own interests, and the status quo appears commonsensical and natural so that the victims or disadvantaged believe that the social structure or the situation they are in is natural or it is taken-for-granted. This is a systematic and effective use of power. Therefore, discourse is central in managing the minds of others (van Dijk, 1993) in such a way that the status quo appears neutral or natural. Van Dijk (2005) also notes that when it comes to power and hegemony, not all members of a powerful group are more powerful than all members of the dominated groups: rather, power is defined for groups as a whole.

Similarly, Mumby and Stohl (1991) states that power is instantiated in the routine discursive practice of everyday organizational life, which also orms Gramsci's notion of hegemony. They argue that although hegemony implies domination in everyday communication and interaction, Gramsci uses the concept of hegemony to frame a more complex relationship between the social groups. Therefore, hegemony "involves a *dialectical* relation between group forces which result in the 'spontaneous' consent of subordinate groups to the world view of the ruling groups(s). In this sense, hegemony embodies a 'collective will' which is subject to an ongoing process of disarticulation and re-articulation by various systems of signification in a social formation" (Mumby and Stohl, 1991: 315). In other words, the hegemonic relationships between different groups are not fixed or given but are subject to negotiations through alternative and competing formations of meaning and discursive practices. Although a hegemonic relationship that exists between different social groups is 'fixed' in a certain time (Hardy and Phillips, 2004), 'discourse closure' is never complete and there is always room for struggle to 'fix' meaning in a particular way. In the section below, I elaborate on how power is exercised (sources of power).

2.5.1 Sources of power

This section discusses the sources of power or who is powerful and how this power is manifested. This section is based on van Dijk's work (1993, 2005, 2015). van Dijk (2005) defined power, and specifically social power, in terms of control. "Thus, groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of

(members of) other groups. This ability presupposes a *power base* of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, "culture," or indeed various forms of public discourse and communication" (Van Dijk, 2010).

Therefore, in line with the socio-cognitive view of power (emanating from a socio-cognitive view of CDA), van Dijk (2005) underscores that *access* to specific forms of discourse such as that on politics, the media, education, or science itself is a power resource. Second, action is controlled by our minds and therefore if we are able to influence people's minds – for example, their knowledge, attitudes, or ideologies – we may indirectly control (some of) their actions as we know from persuasion and manipulation. Finally, closing the discourse-power circle, groups which control the most influential discourses (or those which have access to different genres of discourses) or have chance to indirectly control the minds and actions of others more.

Control of the Text and Context of a Discourse

As indicated earlier, access to or control over public discourses and communication, knowledge and information is the most important 'symbolic' resource that define the power base of a group or institution (Van Dijk, 2005). Access means that language users or communicators have more or less freedom in using special discourse genres or styles, or in participating in specific communicative events and contexts (van Dijk, 1993). For instance, Van Dijk (2005) explains that most people may have active control only over every day talk with family, friends, and colleagues whereas they may be passive targets of public text or talk, for example, of the mass media, teachers, bosses, police officers, judges, or welfare bureaucrats among other authorities, who may simply tell them what (not) to believe or what (not) to do. On the other hand, members of more powerful social groups and institutions and their leaders, or what van Dijk (1993) calls 'powerful elites' (dominant groups who have a special role in planning and decision making and control over the process and relations in the enactment of power), "have more or less exclusive access to, and control over, one or more types of public discourse. Thus, professors control scholarly discourse, teachers educational discourse, journalists' media discourse, lawyers legal discourse, and politicians policy and other public political discourse. Those who have more control over more – and more influential – genres of discourse (and more discourse properties) are by that definition also more powerful. *In other words, we here have a*

discursive definition (as well as a practical diagnostic) of one of the crucial constituents of social power" (van Dijk, 2015: 470).

Van Dijk (1993) further explains that managers have access to business reports and documents or can afford to have those written for them; they have preferential access to the news media, as well as to negotiations with top politicians and other top managers (van Dijk, 1993).

Access can be the context (that is, communicative situations) and the structure of text and talk. A communicative situation involves the following categories: setting (time, place); ongoing actions (including discourses and discourse genres); and the participants in various communicative, social, or institutional roles and identities, as well as their goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies (van Dijk, 2015). Therefore, controlling the communicative situation involves controlling one of these categories, for example, "deciding on the time and place of a communicative event, or on which participants may or must be present, and in which roles or identities, or what knowledge or opinions they should (not) have, and which social actions may or must be accomplished by discourse" (van Dijk, 2015: 471). More specifically, these control mechanisms are related to the subjective definition of communicative situations (i.e. the *context models* of the participants) and that in turn controls the pragmatic *appropriateness* of the discourse. For example, professors, not students, control the setting of an exam (place and date) and who can qualify to sit for the exam. Similarly, not only does the top management have exclusive access to board meetings but also the fact that the most powerful one among them (the chair) controls the context in which the meeting takes place such as the agenda (or the sequence of the agendas), speech acts (i.e. who may command whom), turn allocation (who is allowed to speak), decision making, topics, and so on.

In addition to controlling the context or the communicative situation such as speech acts or genres, powerful groups may have control over different aspects of the structure of text and talk. Therefore, who controls the *topic* (that is, the semantic macrostructures) and *topic change* are of paramount importance in any discourse and communicative act. For example, editors of newspapers decide which topics are covered and teachers set what topics are covered in class. "Although much discourse control is contextual or topical, the local details of lexical or syntactic style, propositional meaning, turn-taking in conversation, rhetorical devices, and narrative structures (among many other discourse

structures) may be controlled by powerful group members, professionals, groups, organization, or institutions" (van Dijk, 2015: 471). For example, powerless speakers may be ordered to 'keep quite' or to 'keep their voices down' and powerful speakers might take as much time as they wish while the less powerful speakers might be told to stop or to finish within a specified time. Plus, powerful actors might be allowed to cover as wide an area as possible while less powerful actors might to be told to focus only on the topic and not to raise 'irrelevant' and 'unrelated' issues.

Hardy and Phillips (2004) argue that not only do actors influence the discourse by using texts as 'weapons' to create meaning compatible with their interests (or to transform the power relations) but also that formal power or organized, institutionalized power (cf. van Dijk, 2015) is important to produce and disseminate texts. The use of 'episodic power' involves "the use of the formal power and authority, the manipulation of scarce resources, coalition, co-optation, and even physical coercion that are part and parcel of everyday life" (Hardy and Phillips, 2004, 309). In general, Hardy and Phillips (2004) underscores that for a group to have the ability to produce and disseminate a discourse and create particular effects, the following power elements are important: *formal power* (the right to make a decision and privileged access to the process of decision making and thus having a 'warranted voice'); *critical resources* (which may include money, rewards, sanctions, information, credibility, expertise, contacts with members of higher echelons and the control of money); *network links* (a social capital and the ability to constitute alliances that could integrate, rather than dominate, subordinate groups); and *discursive legitimacy* (being recognized as the voice of an organization, or having a right or privilege to produce and disseminate texts on behalf of the organization). However, these forms of power (that is, institutionalized power) are distributed among different subject positions and therefore, it is impossible for a single actor or group to be able to completely determine a dominant set of meanings (Hardy and Phillips, 2004). Instead, multiple actors are involved in determining the dominant meanings in place. Therefore, discursive closure is never complete, leaving room for resistance through the production of counter-texts (Hardy and Phillips, 2004).

Wodak (2002) stresses that one of the most important perspectives in CDA in relation to power is that "it is very rare that a text is the work of any one person. In texts, discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power which are in part encoded in and determined by discourse and by genre. Therefore, texts are often sites of

struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies all contending and struggling for dominance" (Wodak, 2002: 11).

As indicated earlier, discourse closure is never achieved completely, and that discourse is not only the work of any one person. Therefore, these limits allow different actors the space to act self-interestedly and work towards discursive change that promotes their interests while undermining others' interests. According to Phillips and Hardy (2004), as new texts are added to the discourse, the discourse evolves, leading to changes in the concepts, objects and subject positions and also the power relations that characterize the social context of action. Similarly, as individuals are locked into certain positions by way of the linguistic practices available to them, in using a particular discourse which embraces a particular self, actors are not only warranting voice (or the right to speak) but they are also maintaining or challenging power relations. In their investigation of the UK refugee system, Phillips and Hardy (1997: 182) emphasized that the discursive struggle was linked to power in a variety of ways: "First, different activities create or deny opportunities for voice which empowers or disempowers, for example, refugees. Second, discursive power may reinforce resource-based power (as in the case of the government's representation of the economic migrant which reinforces its control of the determination system). Third, discursive power may compensate for a lack of traditional power sources (as with Refugee Forum's ability to secure voice and influence despite minimal resources)."

From the discussion so far, it is possible to highlight that power and discourse are mutually constitutive. Discourse shapes the relations of power and power dynamics in turn shape who influences the production, dissemination and interpretation of texts over time and in what way:

> *"At any particular moment in time, discourses–structured collections of texts and associated practices of textual production, transmission and consumption shape the system of power that exists in a particular context by holding in place the categories and identities upon which it rests. In other words, the distribution of power among actors, the forms of power on which actors can draw, and the types of actor that may exercise power in a given situation are constituted by discourse and are, at a particular moment, fixed. Over time, however, discourses evolve as this system of power privileges certain actors, enabling them to construct and disseminate texts. Depending on the dynamics of transmission and consumption, these texts may influence the broader discourse and shape the discursive context"* *(Hardy and Phillips, 2004: 300).*

In sum, although power is an old concept, discourse studies have shed light on power which results in shifts in the perspective of the classical/traditional conceptualization of power (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). In line with this, Phillips and Hardy (2004) underscore that a discursive perspective provides an important alternative to the mainstream study of power and politics in organizations. The discourse theory not only provides an insight into how power relations are constituted or formed but also how power relations affect the discourse in an organization that constitutes social reality over time. However, the relation between power and discourse is an undertheorized area which requires a great deal of scholarly work. According to Phillips and Hardy (2004: 314), "the interrelationship between discourse and power is a complex and relatively under-theorized area of research, but one that holds a great deal of potential for extending our understanding of discourse dynamics". Therefore, this study sheds some light on the relationship between power and discourse.

2.6 Rhetorical Appeals

Closely related to a discourse analysis is a rhetorical analysis which focuses on persuasion. Although a rhetorical analysis and a discourse analysis are related, it is very difficult to find scholarly works that clearly differentiate the two concepts and there is no consensus on the interrelationships and differences between the two methodological and philosophical traditions (Cheney, Christensen, Conrad, and Lair, 2004). For Green Jr. (2004) discourse and rhetoric can be used interchangeably and this is evident when he refers to the 'rhetoric of TQM' in a vain that is contrary to others (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Grant and Marshak, 2011) who view TQM as a grand or Meta discourse. For Cheney et al. (2004), a rhetorical analysis, especially rhetorical criticism and a critical discourse analysis offer complementary and overlapping schemes for analyzing language in organizations. Gauthier and Kappen (2017) hint that rhetoric is a sub-set of discourse when they claim that, "rhetorical analysis is notable for its focus on persuasive texts to shed light on how discourse is used to have an intended impact on an audience" (Gauthier and Kappen, 2017: 221). For Mueller et al. (2003: 77) rhetoric is treated like a device "in order to understand the way members of organizations deal with discursive ambiguity and inconsistency" and rhetorical strategies are patterns that appear in conversations and arguments. They argue that to understand the reality of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, the rhetorical strategies of the protagonists involved in the negotiation of the NPM agenda must be studied. They identified three rhetorical strategies that NPM's

protagonists used for justifying why and what kind of 'rounded picture' is required: "widening the argument to include national productivity comparisons with other hospitals; widening the argument away from a narrow focus on finance toward a strategic and political perspective; and, lastly, widening the argument to look at innovation in the whole clinical process" (Mueller et al., 2003: 75). However, Higgins and Walker (2012) note that rhetoric is sometimes seen as synonymous with discourse but, they argue that they are different as rhetoric focuses on persuasion and "implicit in any definition of rhetoric is the notion of power" (Higgins and Walker, 2012: 197). However, power is also a central element of CDA (Van Djik, 2005; Fairclough, 2012). Higgins and Walker (2012: 197) explain that "Rhetoric sits in harmony with discourse, but is not necessarily a 'subset' of discourse analysis [and] Rhetorical analysis can assist to understand some of the reasons for the underlying social effects of discourse." Bitektine and Haack (2015) argue that rhetorical strategies can be used at different levels of legitimacy. For instance, 'property' is a microlevel construct and constitutes an individual's assessment of the social acceptability of an organization. On the other hand, 'validity' (as a macro-level construct) constitutes an organization's social acceptability at a group or societal level.

My study concurs with the views of Mueller et al.'s (2003) views that rhetorical strategies are patterns that appear in conversations and arguments, and with Higgins and Walker (2012) that rhetoric can be used to understand some of the social effects of a discourse. In other words, rhetorical appeals in my study are viewed as micro level texts (used by individuals) that appear in the discourse practice of different groups of middle managers (antagonists and protagonists). This is in line with Erkama and Vaara (2010) who indicate that rhetoric can be linked to broader discourses. They claim that a rhetoric analysis allows them "to connect specific rhetorical strategies with the overall discourse of global organizational restructuring and to focus on how exactly this discourse affects rhetorical strategizing" (Erkama and Vaara, 2010: 818). They also maintain that only a few studies examine the dynamic relationship between rhetorical strategies and broader discourses at different levels.

Another important point is that scholars have identified different rhetorical appeals. The most common classical rhetoric appeal is characterized by three distinct, but not separable, Aristotelian elements of ethos (credibility), logos (reason), and pathos (emotion). Gauthier and Kappen (2017: 222) provided the following definitions of the three classical rhetorical appeals: Ethos (appeals based on the authority, character, and credibility of the source of

the message, typically reflecting moral and ethical concerns within socially accepted or cultural norms, tending towards social and collective interests). Logos (appeals based on reasonable, logical arguments offering the proof of plausible truth that may induce methodical calculations, including practice sense rules of inference, to achieve effective and efficient decision-making which may be framed to align with audience's self-interest). Pathos (appeals that connect to and impact the emotions of the audience, tending towards individual concerns and interests). In line with these definitions, Higgins and Walker (2012) identified some examples of the following persuasive techniques (Table 2.2):

Table 2. 2 Elements of Rhetorical Appeals

Appeals	Examples of persuasive techniques
Ethos (credibility: perceived character of the speaker)	Similitude Ingratiation Deference Expertise Self-criticism Inclination to succeed Consistency
Pathos (emotion)	Metaphors Identification, especially through cultural references such as: • Sports • Under-privileged • Health, well-being • Hope, aspiration • Loyalty • Friendship • Sympathy
Legos (reason: the appearance of rationality)	Argumentation Logic Warrants/justifications Claims Data Evidence/examples (e.g. historical)

Source: Adopted from Higgins and Walker (2012: 198)

However, in any discourse, different patterns of rhetorical appeals could be observed or based on the situation, the emphasis given to each rhetorical appeal could differ. For instance, in their study of the social/environment reports produced by three New Zealand companies during a wider discursive struggle over the proper 'role' of business in society, Higgins and Walker (2012) found that all reports tends to be dominated by one or the other. Norreklit (2003: 591) wonders how the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1996) receives so much attention: "Is it the result of a new and convincing theory, or is it merely

the result of persuasive rhetoric, where convincing theory differs from solely persuasive rhetoric in that concepts and claims are based on sound argumentation?" He concludes that the text is not so convincing as persuasive—a feature characteristic of the genre of management gurus' texts; and it is not based on sound argumentation because it is dominated by too much ethos and pathos, whereas the appeal to logos is blurred by the use of 'untenable arguments' and 'ambiguous metaphors' and concepts.

In their investigation of leading producers' rhetorical strategies for genetically engineered seeds to address stakeholders' sustainability concerns, Gauthier and Kappen (2017) found that though the seed producers employed a multifaceted approach to legitimation, the use of ethos and pathos was more narrowly focused than that of logos. While logos was used for advancing both propriety and validity (discursive intent), ethos was used for advancing only validity, and pathos was used only for advancing propriety.

In addition to the classical rhetorical strategies, Erkama and Vaara (2010) identified two more rhetorical appeals— autopoiesis and cosmos. The former deals with narratives of purpose and identity and is linked with historical construction and encompasses other aspects of organizational auto-communication which is often linked to 'strategy.' Cosmos, on the other hand, deals with arguments of inevitability and a must-to-have kind of argument. Erkama and Vaara (2010) mention that the inevitability of globalization can be appropriated by organizations to justify the organizational discourse. Thus, in their investigation of struggles over legitimacy in the case of a shutdown, they found all rhetorical dynamics (logos, pathos, ethos, autopoiesis, and cosmos) to be important and used by both antagonists and protagonists of the shutdown decision. Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) found five rhetorical strategies that were used for justifying profound organizational change: ontological (based on the premises about what can or cannot exist or coexist); historical (appealing to history and tradition); teleological (focused on a divine purpose or final cause); cosmological (emphasizing inevitability); and value-based theorizations (drawn from wider belief systems). In the negotiation of change (that is, introduction of NPM) in a UK hospital, Mueller et al. (2003) found that the protagonists of the change used the following rhetorical strategies: widening the argument to include national productivity comparisons with other hospitals; widening the argument away from a narrow focus on finance towards a strategic and political perspective; and, lastly, widening the argument to look at innovations in the whole clinical process.

These scholarly works have increased our understanding of legitimation of change in different conditions. However, we know little about how rhetorical strategies are explicitly linked to broader discourses at different levels (Erkama and Vaara, 2010). My study fills this gap by investigating how discourses at different levels influence each other (Grant and Marshak, 2011; Phillips et al., 2008). To do so, I adopt classical rhetorical strategies (logos, ethos, and pathos) along with the two other rhetorical strategies identified by Erkama and Vaara (2010). In addition to the classical rhetorical strategies, autopoiesis and cosmos are powerful tools for legitimizing change initiatives. In the case of autopoiesis, managers can refer to continuity in their strategic planning to justify change and this leads to "self-fulfilling prophecy, the repetition of which itself forms a major legitimation device" (Erkama and Vaara, 2010: 833). On the other hand, cosmos can be used to draw on different discourses such as globalization to justify why change is inevitable and is a must to have. However, Erkama and Vaara (2010: 833) highlight that "What is crucial—and perhaps counter-intuitive—is that this rhetoric is ultimately mythical, resting on the ever-present myth of the necessity of change, this time translated into the language of organizational restructuring." Therefore, by examining classical rhetorical appeals along with autopoiesis and cosmos, this study answers calls by Erkama and Vaara (2010) for a study with the same theoretical framework but in a different context.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1 Philosophical Foundations

All research endeavors implicitly or explicitly assume certain philosophical foundations that guide the research. Before trying to unearth reality (as every research is geared towards explaining or understanding reality), a clear understanding of 'what is reality?' and 'how do we derive knowledge from the reality?' are fundamental questions. These points are related to ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research. Ontology deals with the question of what reality is and epistemology deals with the question of how we know about reality (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Fleetwood, 2005; Van De Ven, 2007). The overall purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive and an integrated account of organizational change from the middle management perspective by examining the discursive struggles of different groups of middle managers as well as the rhetorical strategies and societal discourses that they used for mobilizing their own discourses and undermine their adversaries' discourses. My ontology is critical realism and epistemology is subjectivism (an interpretivist and abduction approach). I now briefly explain these.

The basic tenet of critical realism is an objective ontology and a subjective epistemology (Danermark et al., 2001). Critical realism contends that reality, including a real social world (Fairclough, 2005), is 'out there' independent of human beings (or our knowledge about it), but our ability to understand the reality is very limited (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Fleetwood, 2005). Although critical realism assumes an objective ontology, reality is understood a little differently from other philosophies such as positivism, social constructionism, or postmodernism. Fleetwood (2005: 199) states, "an entity is said to be real if it *has causal efficacy*; *has an effect on behavior*; *makes a difference" (emphasis original).* This indicates that reality is much more than what can be observed (unlike positivists who assume that real entities are only those which can be observed). Thus, critical realists identify different modes of reality such as materially real, ideally real, artefactually real and socially real (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Fleetwood, 2005).

Materially real refers to those which are physically observable and have material substance such as an ocean or a mountain. Ideally real are discursive entities. "The term 'ideally real' refers to conceptual entities such as discourse, language, genres, tropes, styles, signs,

symbols and semiotized entities, ideas, beliefs, meanings, understandings, explanations, opinions, concepts, representations, models, theories and so on" (Fleetwood, 2005: 200). 'Artefactually real' are entities such as cosmetics and computers. Finally, 'socially real' are practices, states of affair or entities for short, such as caring for children, becoming unemployed, the market mechanism, or social structures in general, especially the social structures that constitute organizations (Fleetwood, 2005: 201). This research is mainly concerned with socially and ideally real entities. Fleetwood (2005: 2000) defines ideally real as "conceptual entities such as discourse, language, genres, tropes, styles, signs, symbols and semiotized entities, ideas, beliefs, meanings, understandings, explanations, opinions, concepts, representations, models and theories." This is appropriate for highlighting some of their basic characteristics. First, socially real entities do not have an iota of materiality, physicality and, or solidity and hence we cannot touch or observe them with our eyes or other senses. Second, they depend on human activity for their existence; however, this does not mean that social entities cannot exist independent of human beings or our identification. The major difference between the natural and social worlds is that the latter but is dependent on human action for its existence — it is socially constructed (Fairclough, 2005).

Third, depending upon the type of social entities, they may or may not be conceptually mediated. In general, different modes of reality indicate that reality in critical realism includes those entities that are both observable and unobservable. Hence, scientific enquiries within this philosophical framework should be able to try to unearth underlying mechanisms and causalities that are hidden below the surface.

Although critical realism assumes that there is reality out there independent of human beings, our understanding of it is very limited and conceptually mediated. In other words, data and language do not mirror reality. Fleetwood (2005: 199) writes:

> *Critical realists accept that there is no (defensible) theory-neutral observation, description, interpretation, theorization, explanation or whatever. There is, in other words, no unmediated access to the world: access is always mediated. Whenever we reflect upon an entity (or a state of affairs), our sense data are always mediated by a pre-existing stock of conceptual resources (which often includes discursive resources), which we use to interpret, make sense of, understand what it is and take appropriate action.*

Critical realists' assertion that facts are theory-dependent and concept-mediated indicates that an interpretation of reality by a researcher is one of many possible interpretations of the same reality. Further, knowledge is fallible, but it can be stated that every investigation is closer to the reality than the preceding ones. In other words, current theories are truer than previous ones. Danermark et al. (2001: 15) state, "facts are theory-*dependent* but they are not theory-*determined*. This in turn means that all knowledge in fact is fallible and open to adjustment. But – not all knowledge by far is *equally* fallible". Similarly, Fairclough (2005: 922) argues, "the social world is pre-constructed for any human being, and its socially constructed nature does not preclude there being aspects of it which human beings have no or limited or mistaken knowledge of. So, for critical realists' ontology must be distinguished from epistemology, and we must avoid the 'epistemic fallacy' of confusing the nature of reality with our knowledge of reality."

I follow the principles of critical realism as highlighted by Van de Ven (2007: 37): 1) There is a real world out there (consisting of material, mental, and emergent products), but our individual understanding of it is limited. 2) All facts, observations and data are theory-laden implicitly or explicitly. Social sciences have no absolute, universal, error-free truths, or laws as any scientific knowledge. 3) No form of inquiry can be value-free and impartial; each is value-full. Some methods are better warranted than others depending on the phenomenon. 4) Knowing a complex reality demands use of multiple perspectives. 5) Robust knowledge is a product of theoretical and methodological triangulation where evidence is not necessarily convergent but it may also be inconsistent or even contradictory. 6) Models that better fit the problems they are intended to solve are selected allowing for an evolutionary growth of knowledge.

3.2 A Critical Realist Approach and Discourse Analysis

Research on the discourse analysis has been dominated by the extreme social constructivism philosophy and a Foucauldian perspective. These perspectives argue that discourses have a constitutive effect of objects and subjects (Fairclough, 2005; Reed, 2004). Reed (2000: 527) explains, "Foucauldian discourse analysis, particularly as it has been practiced in organizational analysis, is grounded in a radical ontological constructivism in which reality is literally 'talked and texted' into existence. It asserts that there is nothing outside discourse but more discourse; all reality, natural or social alike, is discursively contingent and fabricated." Critical realists criticize this approach that it is

problematic for a discourse analysis since it will be difficult to make the connections among everyday discourses, sensemaking practices, large social structures and the enactment of power relations explicit. In other words, extreme social constructivists' approach on discourse underestimates the "structural realities of more hierarchical and permanent power relations" or "institutional stabilities and continuities in power relations" remain unexplored (Reed, 2000: 526). Reed (2004) contends that such an approach undermines the view that organizations (and societies) consist of social structures that impose 'authoritative and allocative orders' and thus constrain their ability to act in pursuit of collective goals and interests.

Recently, a critical realism approach to a discourse analysis has become very popular (Fairclough, 2005; Reed, 2000). According to critical realism, organizations should be studied under a dual epistemology in which no primacy is given to either agency or structure because although social realities are socially constructed via human action and interactions, they have 'permanency' characteristics, unlike the extreme social constructivist view or the Foucauldian approach to discourse: "Realist discourse analysis on this view is based in a dialectical-relational social ontology which sees objects, entities, persons, discourses, organizations and so on as socially produced 'permanencies' which arise out of processes and relations and which constitute a pre-structured reality with which we are confronted, and sets of affordances and limitations on processes" (Fairclough, 2005: 923).

Fairclough (2005) mentions that a critical realist perspective of a discourse analysis of institutions and organizations has the following defining features that distinguish it from the extreme social constructionism and the Foucauldian view on discourse: First, the social world comes previously structured and this pre-structuring process and the material conditions cannot be reduced into language or discourse. In other words, discourse cannot be assigned ontological primacy over the social reality and structure in which it is generated, elaborated and transformed. Second, the concept of what a discourse is and its performative characteristics are different from extreme constructionism. Discourse is constrained by a pre-constituted material reality, objects and social objectives. In light of these features, "institutional fields and organizational forms will be shaped and reshaped as a result of the complex dialectical interplay between pre-existing structural constraints and the combined collective efforts of corporate agents to engage in new modes of discursive practice that will inevitably change them, to some degree or another"

(Fairclough, 2005: 925). Therefore, Fairclough argues that any research based on a reality-based approach should adopt 'analytical dualism,' that is, structures and processes (and agency) have different properties including those of continuity and change and a theory of organizational change needs to clarify these differences, and in so doing also clarify the relationship between change as an inherent feature of organizational processes and change in organizational structures.

Based on these arguments, Fairclough (2005) argues that two central principles are worth noting for research on a reality-based discourse. First, although a change in the discourse is part of an organizational change, organizational change is not simply a change in the discourse. Thus, relations between a change in the discourse and a change in other elements of an organizations must be investigated. This entails a clear distinction between discourse and other social elements. Second, the relations between a change in social interaction and a change in organizational structures is complex and must be a point of investigation. This entails a clear and consistent distinction between social processes (including texts), social practices (including the order of a discourse) and social structures.

However, one cannot proceed without theoretical assumptions about organizational change. Therefore, by drawing on his own research practice, Fairclough (2005: 931) outlined the following theoretical assumptions about an organizational structure and organizational change from a discourse analytical perspective.

1) Organizational structures are hegemonic structures which are based in and reproduce particular power relations between groups of social agents which constitute 'fixes' with an enduring capacity to manage organizations' contradictions in ways which allow them to get on with their main business more or less successfully.

2) Organizational structures may come into crisis, generally as a result of a combination of both external and internal changes and pressures when a 'fix' is perceived as no longer being viable.

3) In situations of crisis, groups of social agents develop their own particular (and opposing) strategies for achieving a new 'fix', and through a process of hegemonic struggle a new hegemonic 'fix' may emerge.

4) Strategies have a partly discoursal character including particular discourses and narratives which represent what has happened and is happening in particular ways and

construct imaginaries for what could happen. Discourses and narratives may be 're-contextualized' from other organizations.

5) Changes in the social process including a change in texts, may have transformative effects on organizational structures in so far as they become incorporated in successful strategies.

6) The implementation of a successful strategy is a matter of operationalizing new representations and imaginaries (new discourses and narratives) in new ways of acting and being and new material arrangements.

Following reality-based discourse, this study assumes that discourses are socially constituted (conditioned) and socially constitutive (Vaara et al., 2004). "They are socially conditioned in that the discourses are (re)produced in specific settings by particular social actors. However, due to their key role in any social sensemaking activity, they are also socially constitutive. Discourses in very concrete terms (re)construct concepts, objects, subjects and identities by/with which specific social actors have to live" (Vaara et al., 2004: 4). On the one hand, different groups of employees in an organization may mobilize different discourses as resources to achieve their end. For instance, those who are against the new structure may mobilize discourses that undermine the official discourse and by doing so, they can create the possibility of a new structure that can advance their interests. Therefore, discourses are mobilized as a resource in a discursive struggle for meaning about the new structure. However, employees are also significantly situated because of the existing context-specific discourses. These discourses have some power over discursive actors (a group of employees) in certain ways. For example, organization specific contexts (the structure) impose certain discourses which discursive actors must draw on and thus behave in certain ways.

3.3 Case Study

As indicated earlier, this study investigates the discursive struggle of different groups of middle managers over the restructuring (and the new structure) and the rhetorical strategies (persuasive appeals) that they have applied in their discourses. For this, it is more appropriate to get in-depth insights from a single case. The assumption behind this research work is that organizations are sites of struggle for meaning (Mumby, 2004). Hence, it focuses on a single case where a clear struggle for meaning is apparent. According to Yin

(2014: 19), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident."

This study investigates the discursive struggle that unfolded in an organization over its new structure (and its process of restructuring) in-depth and within its real-world context, to define meaning and organizational reality. Case studies are done to either build new theories or to refresh an existing theory or literature by adding new insights (Stake, 1995). This research aims to extend the existing theory by adding new insights to middle management literature, discourse theory and change (through restructuring). Although literature related to the middle management is growing, it is still at an infant stage/adult stage. Previous work has produced insights and theories about the middle management in business organizations and its role during change. However, the role of a discourse during change and middle managers' struggle for meaning has not been investigated except for very few exceptions (Hope, 2010; Laine and Vaara, 2007). Therefore, I hope that by conducting an in-depth case study across different groups of middle managers in the same organization about their discursive struggles to define organizational reality, I will be able to provide new insights that extend the existing literature on middle management, change, and discourse theory.

If a case that offers an opportunity to learn is carefully selected, the view that a single case can be insightful is well justified and widely accepted (for example, Siggelkow, 2007; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2014). However, great care must be taken while selecting a case for a study to be insightful. For instance, Yin (2014) mentions that for a single case study to be insightful, the case selected must be either *revelatory, critical, unusual, common,* and/or *longitudinal*. The case selected for this study can be regarded as 'revelatory' and 'unusual' as it reveals discursive struggles among different and competing groups of middle managers in the case company over a recently implemented structure, where unusually the official discourse that was propagated by the restructuring team was later effectively undermined and reversed.

Another point that is raised in relation to single-case studies (and even multiple case studies), is about making generalizations about other similar cases (Sigglekow, 2007; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2014). Here, distinguishing between statistical generalizations and analytical or theoretical generalizations is important. Statistical generalizations refer to

making an inference about the population based on a representative sample and therefore this kind of generalization does not work in a single case study. However, analytical generalizations are quite possible and must be the objective of any case study implying that new insights should be gained from the case study beyond simply replicating what is known in the literature, and the results should have broader implications than the case of interest). According to Yin (2015: 41), "Analytic generalization may be based on either a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that you referenced in designing your case study b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study. The important point is that, regardless of whether the generalization was derived from the conditions you specified at the outset or uncovered at the conclusion of your case study, the generalization will be at a conceptual level higher than that of the specific case (or experiment)."

In other words, the generalizations from a case study are not about the population; rather, they are about the theory or concept. Insights from unique or critical cases or from replication logic of multiple-case studies should lead us to say something about the theory either in the form of extending or modifying it. Therefore, through an in-depth study of restructuring in the case company, this study aims at making analytical generalizations thereby deriving new insights on the theories of discourse and literature on change and middle management.

Finally, my case study is what Stake (1995) terms an *instrumental case study* type. Such a case study envisions broader learning about a given phenomenon as a result of an in-depth investigation. I conducted an instrumental case study to answer some a research questions, solve puzzles, and gain a general understanding of a phenomenon. These are instruments for accomplishing a larger understanding than an interest in the dynamics of a single case. In other words, the case itself is not the main interest; rather the roles, contributions and participation of middle managers in the case company during organizational restructuring are the focus of my interest. My case is an instrument for learning more about the discursive struggles among different groups of middle managers over the restructuring to fix meaning.

3.4 Case Selection

Case selection is a crucial step in a research design (Eisenhardt, 1989). As mentioned earlier, the case selected should be one that offers a better opportunity to learn. "That may

mean taking the one most accessible or the one we can spend the most time with" (Stake, 2005: 5). Therefore, the first criterion that was used to select the case was opportunity to learn or accessibility. Organizations that would grant me access for a long period of time were very crucial for my study. However, other criteria were also developed to shortlist the cases. Since the study was planned to focus on middle managers, organizational structure was another criterion that was considered while selecting the case. This means that the organization needed to have a significant number of middle managers with diverse backgrounds, positions (upper middle, middle-middle, and lower middle) and who led different units.

With these criteria, I contacted many organizations such as Dashen Bank, EthioTeleocm, Abyssinia Bank and Ethiopian Airlines; Dashen Bank was found to fulfill the criteria set and was retained for further investigation. Dashen Bank granted me full access to collect data for my dissertation. It allowed me to contact all the middle managers (and branch managers) that I wanted, and an official letter was sent to them from the top management notifying that a researcher would come to their office and branch for data collection and asking them to cooperate fully. In addition to access, Dashen Bank is also a large organization that has at least two levels of middle management. Therefore, based on these criteria, Dashen Bank was considered for the case-study.

After the data was collected from middle managers in Dashen Bank and its preliminary interpretations were done, the most important issue was found to be different from what I had assumed initially and thus, the research questions evolved from strategy to restructuring. This is in line with what is called 'progressive focusing' (Stake, 1995: 9):

> *Clearly, in designing our studies, we qualitative researchers do not confine interpretation for the identification of variables and the development of instruments before data gathering and to analysis and interpretation for the report. Rather, we emphasize placing an interpreter in the field to observe the workings of the case, one who records objectively what is happening but simultaneously examines its meaning and redirects observation to refine or substantiate those meanings. Initial research questions may be modified or even replaced in mid-study by the case researcher. The aim is to thoroughly understand the case. If early questions are not working, if new issues become apparent, the design is changed. Malcolm Parlett and David Hamilton (1976) called it progressive focusing.*

Data was collected a year after Dashen Bank had implemented the new structure. Therefore, although I decided to focus on company-wide changes that the organization had

implemented (since the interviewees mostly talked about the change both directly and indirectly), I was not clear how I could use the data. Therefore, after extensive re-reading of the data and back and forth movement between theory and data, I realized that different discursive struggles were apparent with regard to the restructuring (see analysis in Chapters 5 and 6). Hence, I decided to focus on these discursive struggles for meaning as my topic of study as it could be an interesting and revelatory case. Although this was not planned in advance, this change makes Dashen Bank an even more interesting case for an in-depth case study.

3.5 Identifying Middle Managers

One of the crucial issues in research on middle managers is identifying 'who middle managers are' because a variety of definitions of middle managers are used in studies on middle management. There are significant inconsistencies regarding issues: "who are middle managers?" "where are the middle managers located in an organizational hierarchy?" and "what are the special features that middle managers have?" (Dopson and Stewart, 1990, 1993; Pinsonneault and Kraemer, 1993). Wooldridge, Schmid and Floyd (2008: 1191) argue that unlike "upper echelons" (who can be easily defined as the most powerful coalition in an organization), "identifying the most strategically influential and relevant mid-level professionals in an organization is more problematic."

Although many and sometimes inconsistent definitions are provided in middle management literature, the following definitions were taken as the base for identifying relevant middle managers in Dashen Bank: First, that there could be many levels in the middle tier of an organizational hierarchy if the size of the organization was very big (Hornsby, Kuratko and Zahra, 2002).

Hornsby et al. (2002) used a three-layer classification of middle management as 'middle management', 'lower middle' and 'upper middle' to identify internal factors that affected middle managers' engagement in corporate entrepreneurship. Second, consistent with the definitions of Beck and Powman's (2009) definition, middle managers are supervisors of supervisors and are supervised by others. In their words, "middle managers as those who operate at the intermediate level of organizational hierarchy, two or three level below the CEO and they supervise supervisors and are supervised by others" (Beck and Powman, 2009: 912). This is also consistent with Huy's (2002: 38): "Middle managers are people who are two levels below the CEO and one level above first-line supervisor." Third, per

Floyd and Wooldridge's (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992, 1997: 472) definition, middle managers are not responsible for the work flow of the organization as a whole: "Middle managers are organization members who link the activities of vertically related groups and who are responsible for at least sub-functional work flow, but not the work flow of the organization as a whole." And finally, Wooldridge et al. (2008: 1192) stress "the distinguishing feature of middle management, however, is not where they sit in the organization chart. Rather, what makes middle managers unique is their access to top management coupled with their knowledge of operations. It is this combination that enables them to function as mediators between the organization's strategy and day-to-day activities".

Given the research's focus on discourse and thereby the assumption that middle managers are active agents in mobilizing a discourse (either official or critical), it can be taken that the middle managers identified in Dashen Bank fulfilled these definitions because it was assumed that the middle managers were not only aware of the day-to-day activities of the bank and its strategy but also the industry and they draw on this knowledge to mobilize their own discourses and deploy persuasive appeals.

In addition, I also asked directors of the Office of Strategic Management, Program Management Office, and the Human Resource Development Department who middle managers were for them and to identify middle managers. This is consistent with Currie and Procter (2005) who asked the executive management to identify middle managers in their study of the antecedents of middle managers' strategic contribution in a professional bureaucracy. The reason I asked these directors to identify the middle managers is that except for the director of the Office of Strategic Management, the rest had a very significant role during the restructuring (the director of the Program Management Office was the leader of the restructuring team and the director of the Human Resource Development Department was a member of the restructuring team), and both of them had a strong touch on the new structure and in delayering some levels.

As my letter for permission of access to Dashen Bank from Addis Ababa University was directed to the Office of Strategy for consideration from the vice president of operations, I had to explain the purpose of the study and how I would collect data to the director. When I told him that I would like to contact middle managers, we had a heated debate about who middle managers were in Dashen Bank before he could send all directors, managers, and

branch managers a memo notifying that I had got a permission from the top management to collect data from Dashen Bank and therefore demanding cooperation and asking them to cooperate.

Although I agreed with all the three directors on the lower limit of middle management, our views differed when it came to the upper limit of middle managers, as the people at the level immediately below the vice presidents are called senior managers (not middle managers) and they consider themselves 'senior managers,' and thus above middle managers. I asked them if senior managers had particular characteristics that were different from middle managers, and two directors replied that senior managers were dubbed to be strategic partners along with the top management. Stated differently, their roles were assumed to be strategic and routine nitty-gritties were to be taken care of by middle managers and below. Nevertheless, as indicated, when the focus of this research evolved from middle managers' strategic roles to the discourses mobilized by the middle managers over a new structure, I came to the conclusion that categorizing senior managers as middle managers in line with the definitions given earlier was not problematic and therefore, middle managers in this research are those managers who occupied positions that were one level below the vice presidents and one level above first line managers. This implies that middle managers were not responsible for the work flow of the entire organization, but they were supervisors of supervisors and were supervised by others. They also had access to the top management (the directors are accountable to the vice presidents and some to the president, and all middle managers have frequent forums with the top management) and had knowledge about the operations.

Branch managers were also identified by these two directors as middle managers, and this research adopts this classification. Also, O'Brien (2007) considered 'subsidiary general managers' as middle managers since they are accountable to the top management at the headquarters. In the old structure, branch managers were accountable to the vice presidents but now they are accountable to districts and therefore they are three levels below the president. However, they supervise supervisors such as assistant managers. However, not all branch managers are alike, and they are graded as Grade I, II, III, and IV based on their customer base, deposit amounts, and profits. Grade III branch managers are equivalent to managers in job grade and Grade IV branch managers are above managers but below directors. Therefore, Grade III and Grade IV managers are considered middle managers in this study (note: Dashen Bank's branches of are graded based on the deposits that they

mobilize and the size of their customer base. Thus, Grade IV is the biggest branches while Grade I is the smallest and mostly the newly opened branches).

Therefore, directors, managers and Grades III and IV branch managers were identified as middle managers in this study. Under the old structure, the hierarchy in Dashen Bank was president, vice presidents, department manager, deputy, division, section, unit, and officer. However, according to the leader of the restructuring team, department managers became department directors; deputy, division, section, and unit were brought together and became managers; and then there were officers at the lower end. Some divisions which have a lot of control, have 'head' positions between the managers and officers. Then, the hierarchy is president, vice president, director, manager, head and officer. From my discussion with the three directors, section heads never had much of a managerial role under the old structure and even the strategic documents were never sent to them. Therefore, one criterion that was introduced was that those who were managers in the new structure would only be considered if they served as division heads, deputy managers and managers in the old structure. Otherwise they may not fulfill the criteria of having knowledge about the operations and access to the top management for a considerable length of time (due to the fact that it had only been a year since the new structure was implemented).

3.6 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews are one of the most widely applied tools of data "construction" in qualitative research. In social science research, in particularly, semi-structured interviews play a very important role in 'constructing reality' or producing empirical material (Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2014). Based on her 30 years' experience as an interviewer in different countries, Czarniawska (2004) goes as far as saying that an interview is a stage for the practitioner to speak out his/her experiences without any practical consequences. Thus, interviews must be viewed as a mutually beneficial process rather than viewing it as someone looking for information probing/interrogating others.

This study is mainly based on interviews. Therefore, it is important to explain the nature of the data to be constructed, and its relationship with reality. I purposely use data 'construction' instead of the commonly used term 'data collection' following Czarniawska's (2004) recommendation. Data "construction" implies that the researcher is very active in constructing empirical material (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2014;

Czarniawska, 2004). All empirical investigations, data constructions and reality are theory-laden. This means that the researcher's predispositions and perspectives are active throughout the research process. Czarniawska (2004) argues that the term 'data collection' is misleading as it does not reflect the 'reality' on the ground. It excludes the researcher as if the interaction in the interview situation was done without his/her involvement. In relation to this, Czarniawska (2004: 4) writes:

> *Recognizing the interpretive nature of research means that no data, except possibly those on trivial matters, are viewed as unaffected by the construction of the researcher. For this reason, we prefer the expression 'empirical material' and think that the metaphor 'data collection' is directly misleading. It sounds as if social studies resemble the picking of mushrooms. But 'in the social sciences there is only interpretation ... The researcher does something active in order to produce empirical material*

Following the tradition of critical realism (Van de Ven, 2007), interview accounts and any other tools must be used cautiously. The positivist and neo-positivist views that reality is 'out there' and can be collected through interview and other data collection tools is too simplistic. On the contrary, it must be emphasized that no interview, observation or other technique of data 'collection' mirrors reality. Rather, they are a sample of the reality. In other words, these techniques construct reality. Specifically, "an interview is not a window on social reality but it is a part, a sample of that reality" Czarniawska (2004: 4). Similarly, Alvesson (2003: 13) questions the relationship between language, data, and reality. He stresses that language (hence interview accounts) construct phenomena rather than mirroring phenomena which leave "representation and, thus, empirical work privileging "data" a basically a problematic enterprise." To sum up, in line with a critical-realist ontological view and the interpretivist epistemology, I reject the 'naïve empiricists'' assumption that interview accounts (or language in general) mirror reality. Interviews construct reality, as interview accounts are samples of reality. In addition, it must be borne in mind that unless critically conducted and interpreted, interview accounts are problematic. I now briefly explain the caution taken while conducting and interpreting the interviews.

Alvesson (2003) stresses that interview situations must not be simplified given that they are linguistically and socially complex phenomena. There are different political, social, structural, and linguistic elements that are explicitly or implicitly reflected by an interviewee in an interaction with the interviewer. Alvesson (2003: 14) emphasizes that:

...It is important not to simplify and idealize the interview situation, assuming that the interviewee—given the correct interview technique—primarily is a competent and moral truth teller, acting in the service of science and producing the data needed to reveal his or her 'interior' (i.e., experiences, feelings, values) or the 'facts' of the organization

Alvesson (2003) identifies different metaphors, which could be apparent in an interview situation of which the researcher must be cautious. These metaphors are related to the linguistic and social complexities that could be reflected in an interview as the interview account is not straightforward business. Hence, Alvesson (2003) proposes a 'reflexive approach' to an interview as a caution which guided my study as well. A reflexive approach to interviewing simply means that alternative lines of the vocabulary and a theoretical understanding will enhance the interview situation and interpretation, leading to the identification of hidden patterns and mechanisms that are not explicitly said and understanding the perspective and the interest from which emanates the plainly explained. It also means a re-interpretation of the favored lines of understanding with the involvement of alternative theories and perspectives. Without a theoretical understanding, Alvesson (2013: 14) argues, "any use of interview material risks being naive and interpretations of it rest on shaky ground." Thus, the two potential advantages of a reflexive approach to interviews are "avoidance of naivety associated with a belief that 'data' simply reveal reality, and creativity following from an appreciation of the potential richness of meaning in complex empirical material" (Alvesson 2013: 14). On the other hand, Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012) suggest that care must be taken (that is, representativeness and quality must be emphasized) when selecting participants and deciding on how to use their accounts to overcome the earlier-mentioned challenges. Although the epistemological orientation and specific research purpose affect them, the following principles can in in overcoming these challenges. The first principle is that representativeness in a loose sense must be maintained in a loose sense. Variations and breadth among interviewees help to grasp and explore different categories and views. The second principle is striving for quality in the interview responses. In line with this, Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012: 7) write:

One who sees interviewees as 'informants', for example, might pay considerable attention to participants who will render rich (e.g. intricate, perceptive, insightful) accounts. Less anxious about reducing bias through comprehensive representation, this researcher would be eager to use the resources (e.g. intellectual, verbal, emotional, moral) of qualified people with the 'right' experiences and an ability and willingness to communicate these. Sometimes key

informants will emerge, and the researcher will cultivate close relations with these participants, more in line with romanticist leanings. They may be targeted for repeat interviews, for advice on who to interview, for help in getting additional background material and for analytical support (e.g. understanding the cultural context)".

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest that using data generation approaches that limit bias is of paramount importance in mitigating the challenges related to interview data. For instance, identifying key informants who are knowledgeable and view the phenomena from diverse perspectives is one approach for minimizing bias in interview data: "These informants can include organizational actors form different hierarchical levels, functional areas, groups and geographies as well as actors from other relevant organizations and outside observers such as market analysts" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007: 28).

Therefore, an effort was made to maintain both representativeness and quality to overcome some of the challenges mentioned earlier. The sample includes directors, managers, and branch managers. The interviews continued till I felt that saturation had been reached and more interviews would not add value to the data already collected (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In other words, I had collected exhaustive information. Second, key informants emerged while I conducted the interviews and they were interviewed repeatedly. For instance, two directors from the restructuring team emerged as key informants and were interviewed two times each, besides the casual conversations we had whenever I was at the bank for interviews and paid them a casual visit. Third, I was referred to some individuals who were considered knowledgeable by the interviewees. In addition, I contacted two individuals who were recommended to me to talk to, one is a former staff in Dashen Bank who later clashed with the top management and finally resigned (or was made to resign), and the other is someone who was considered the 'brain' (Director, VI) behind the new structure but was later demoted. In addition, different interviewees referred me to the leader of the restructuring team, and as indicated earlier, I formally interviewed him twice in addition to having casual conversations with him. Fourth, I also contacted and had an informal conversations with bank and finance professionals working in other private and state banks. Secondary information was also gathered from outside observers in the industry.

I do not believe that the any of the metaphors identified by Alvesson (2003) were problematic in my study. Since one of the criticisms of the interview method in a discourse

analysis is that it, "obviously reflects more what is said in the interview situation rather than 'naturally occurring talk' in the organization more broadly" (Laine and Vaara, 2007: 39), the view that "[t]he interviewee is a political actor rather than a truth teller; the interviewee is controlled by and within discourse, rather than a language user in control of meaning" (Alvesson, 2003: 27) was very relevant given that the focus of this study was uncovering the discursive struggles and the power/political play among different groups of middle managers. In other words, according to the metaphors the interview accounts could be considered part of their naturally occurring talk. Second, since the discursive struggle emerged as a theme after the data had been collected, some of the metaphors were not only taken positively but as suggested by Alvesson (2003) alternate angles or theory were also applied to overcome other challenges.

The interviews lasted between September 2015 and October 2016 and 54 formal interviews were conducted with 51 respondents. The interview sessions followed the following path: I would introduce myself, explain in brief about the study including its purpose and significance, how their accounts would be used and promise anonymity. Finally, I requested their consent (although I was allowed to collect data from Dashen Bank by concerned authorities, I felt that getting the interviewees' consent was still important). Then I asked them if I could record the interviews. Some were suspicious and asked me about the significance of recording their voices and I had to explain to them that if I recorded the interviews, first, I would not miss points when I focused on taking notes and second it would help me have direct quotes in my analysis. Thirty-eight interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim by me after the interview came to an end; and for those interviews which were not tape recorded, detailed notes were taken which were compiled on the same day the interviews were conducted, usually in the night. The interviews lasted between 50 minutes and 2 hours, and there were three outliers which lasted more than 3 hours. All the interviews were conducted in the respondents' offices during working hours except three interviews which were conducted in a cafeteria over the weekends. When I went to each respondent to arrange the schedule, some asked me to send them the interview protocol and it was sent to them (Table 3.1).

Table 3. 1 Interview Schedule

S.No.	Interviewee Position	Number of interviewees	Tape Recorded and transcribed

1	Director	12	11
2	Manager	28	23
3	Branch Manager, Grade IV	3	1
4	Branch Manager, Grade III	4	2
5	Senior officers (non-management workers)	3	None
6	Resigned (Former Middle Manager)	1	1
Total		**54**	**38**

Some asked me to turn the recorder off when they felt that they were going to tell me sensitive information, some tried to formulate their answers to my questions in a political or diplomatic manner and they tried to appear rational by mentioning the pros and cons of the new structure. But later, when the interview progressed, they forgot that there was a recorder recording their opinions and they candidly said what they felt. Some even told me that they did not care about the recorder because their views were what they had been reflecting on previously even in the presence of the top management. To my surprise, some interviewees believed (or wished) that the research would reach the top management and therefore they tried to be as straightforward and honest as possible in their criticism of the new structure. Some asked me to give the top management and the restructuring team feedback based on my observations as an outsider who did not have any interest in Dashen Bank except as a researcher. Since I observed deep resentment and resistance from many of the middle managers I talked to, I arranged a meeting with the leader and two members of the restructuring team and presented my first analysis regarding the restructuring. This was done out of good faith and I tried to be neutral in my reflections by simply relying on what I had observed, and I took maximum care not to be viewed as partial. However, I do not think that they understood the discursive struggle as I did and could interpret my actions otherwise (as indicated, I also came to see the discursive struggle after the data was collected and during my interpretation). Although they understandably tried to be defensive with regard to most of the points, they admitted that some of the resistance was

genuine and promised that an effort would be made to address this. One member promised me that further communication would be done.

As indicated earlier, the research focus changed from the middle management's involvement in strategic issues to discursive practices in relation to change, and obviously, the focus of the interviews also changed. Although slightly different questions were asked to follow the emergent themes which were adjusted to the position of the respondent, the interviews revolved around the following questions: What is your view about the new structure? How did and from where the idea of new structure come from? How was your involvement during the restructuring? How did you evaluate the restructuring team? and How do you evaluate the new structure? When the interview situation focused on the strategy and the middle management's involvement, some interviewees were inclined to give me theory-based answers (maybe because I am an academic) by drawing on top-down and bottom-up approaches to strategy and different leadership styles. However, after the interviews evolved into restructuring, the interviewees started focusing on their practical experience and what they felt about how the restructuring should have been done rather than providing theory-driven answers. In general, the interviews flowed smoothly. Sometimes, when I felt that they were not comfortable talking about something or in providing detailed accounts, I mentioned some information from previous interviews to send a signal that 'I am well-informed about this thing and you will not be the only one telling me about it as many have raised this point so you should feel free.' Surprisingly, I found this technique very helpful in generating detailed and insightful accounts.

Although I went to Dashen Bank as a researcher with my own goal and purpose, most of the interviewees wanted to tell me about issues that bothered them. Somewhat surprisingly, they were less careful about my objective and purpose even if I told them at the very beginning the interview about why I was talking to them and it was also explicitly stated in the letter of permission that was directed to them by the Director of Office of Strategy. However, they used the interview session to make sense of the situation in the bank and as a means of channeling their voices by thinking that the research output would at the end of the day reach the top management. I believe that this was an advantage as it made them genuinely and unreservedly tell me their feelings, frustration or delight. In line with the theory applied, it also meant that voices of different interest groups were heard.

At the final stage of the interview session, I explained how the interviews and their accounts would be used (including direct quotes), and further promised confidentiality and anonymity. I also asked them if I could contact them briefly in their office if I needed to clarify something or needed further elaboration and most gave me their business cards and told me that I could call them anytime; some gave me their mobile numbers. I contacted some of them for follow-up interviews, and to explain my rough findings and to solicit their thoughts. Some of my respondents were second degree students in Addis Ababa University and I helped in their research (which is a requirement of their program), we exchanged many things and became friends. Some of them came to the library, which I often used after working hours and over weekends, and this was a very good opportunity to bond and discuss Dashen Bank, and about my initial interpretations. They told me many things about Dashen Bank and different interests that were reflected (that is, different discourses). With some I socialized on Facebook and when I needed any elaboration or clarification or had any follow-up questions, I phoned them, or I sent them emails, or 'chatted' with them via Facebook. For instance, the Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing, is my Facebook friend and we frequently interacted on the same platform in our posts and status updates. Therefore, when there was anything that was unclear to me while I was transcribing the data or analyzing, I in-boxed him and if he was online, he would respond immediately; if he was not, he responded later.

Some were surprised when I told them my preliminary interpretations and assured me that I had understood Dashen Bank well and some even asked me to organize a workshop in the attendance of the president and the vice presidents to present my findings.

As indicated earlier, one of the challenges of using interviews in discourse studies is that an interview is not a 'naturally occurring talk'; rather, it is what is said in an interview situation (Laine and Vaara, 2007). However, the different documents that I saw (though I was not able to get printed or copied versions of them) and casual conversations indicate that the accounts provided by the interview situation were similar to the naturally occurring talk in the bank about the restructuring. For example, the director of Director VII, Operations Wing, showed me some email correspondence and documents that he had exchanged with the top management and the restructuring team. Similarly, Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing, showed me the documents that had he prepared outlining the benefits, drawbacks, and side-effects of the new structure and submitted to the concerned authority. One director also showed me the revised structure of

his department (designed by him) which he had submitted to the top management and subsequent email correspondence until most of his recommendations were accepted. The Director of Office of Strategy, whom I was introduced to by my local co-advisor in the midst of my data collection and with whom I spent the whole afternoon in a cafeteria in Addis Ababa and talked about what was going on in Dashen Bank in relation to the new structure; we also talked while walking. After the interview, two directors (Customer Relationship Department and Customer Account and Currency Management Department) gave me a ride to my area (because of taxi problems after working hours and during late night) and we discussed about Dashen Bank and the new structure along the way. One manager did not agree to an interview when I contacted him, but he explained the situation in Dashen Bank for about 20 minutes and talked about issues that he felt were important. Fortunately, he spoke about the restructuring. However, during this time, his thoughts were not recorded, nor detailed notes taken. Therefore, it only gave me hints on what was going on in Dashen Bank with regard to the new structure. Moreover, there were many off-the-record conversations, immediately after the interview sessions came to an end. These were important as they enabled me to make sure whether their accounts in the interviews were what they really felt under normal conditions and I used these conversations as a source of additional information. Sometimes, the interviewees and I spent more time on off-the-record than on-the-record interviews. For example, one manager gave me 1:20 hours of a recorded interview and we talked for more than 2 hours off-the-record.

I also attended one short meeting in a department (which lasted about 35 minutes) that was chaired by the vice president and the director. They discussed the deposit mobilization efforts. The director mentioned that the recent restructuring had been very helpful in mobilizing deposits and he commented that he was happy with the performance of the staff in that department, but he said that they needed to work much better, otherwise they may face difficulties in meeting their targets. In fact, my attendance was coincidental. I was doing an interview with the director and the interview could not end as per the scheduled time (45 minutes) and he had to stop the interview and chair the departmental meeting. When the time for the meeting approached, he explained to me that it was a very short meeting and he promised that we would continue with the interview after the meeting. He offered me two options: either to wait for him in his office or to attend the meeting. I chose the latter and attended the meeting. The meeting gave me an insight into the new structure and that it was still a hot issue in the bank. The vice president and the director were briefing

relationship managers that the top management expected a strong performance in deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation as per the new structure. When the interview came to an end (which resumed after the meeting), it was already dusk (8:00 pm) and thus he gave me a ride home (45 minutes approximately) and it was a good opportunity to raise many broad issues.

In addition, I had casual conversations with people from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Bank of Abyssinia, and Hibret Bank. This was important to better understand whether some practices in Dashen Bank were common in the industry and to gain general insights about the industry.

3.7 Documentation/Archival Material

Although this research is mainly based on interviews, secondary data was also collected. This secondary data/archival material came from internal and external sources and included the bank's websites, reports, articles, newspapers, magazines, and newsletters; even Facebook and YouTube were important for triangulating the data. As indicated earlier, one challenge of the interview technique in discourse studies is that it indicates only what is said in the interview situation, rather than representing 'naturally occurring' talk (Laine and Vaara, 2007). Therefore, different secondary material was important to triangulate the data from interview accounts to highlight whether the 'naturally occurring talk' corresponded with the interview material. For instance, although I was not able to copy/print them, different revised structures that were submitted to the top management and the restructuring team and different reports by concerned employees suggesting strong sides, weak sides and side-effects of the current structure and sent to the restructuring team and other authorities indicate that the interview accounts were not 'an impression management' or they were not 'theoretical'; rather, they corresponded with the 'naturally occurring talk.'

Second, Dashen Bank's website was an important source of information. For example, the president's speech outlined the most important issue in the bank — the restructuring – and indicated the position of the president (the top management) in this regard. Further, interviews with different authorities including the president, which were extracted from YouTube were also important sources of information.

Different internal archival material including newsletters, reports, magazines, brochures, and the like were specifically important in building the case description and for gaining an overall understanding about Dashen Bank. Specifically, different material that was produced and prepared during the 20th year anniversary of Dashen Bank was helpful in understanding the trajectory of the bank. Since that material was specifically prepared for that purpose showing the path, milestones, and the ups and downs that Dashen Bank had passed through, they were very helpful in gaining a good understanding about the bank.

External sources were also important for understanding the industry and the grand discourses in which the discourse at Dashen Bank were subsumed. In particular, weekly newspapers such as Addis Fortune and Capital News that are published in English were very important for understanding the major events that happened in Dashen Bank and in the industry. In addition, the website of the National Bank of Ethiopia (as a regulatory body) was a rich source of information about the industry and Dashen Bank. Directives, circulars, proclamations, and regulations since the birth of the financial sector in Ethiopia were very rich and helpful sources of information. For example, some changes such as the Core Banking System, branch expansion, and the 27 percent Bond Purchase Directive were imposed on all commercial banks by the National Bank of Ethiopia and these were used in several ways to mobilize discourses by different groups of employees in relation to the new structure at Dashen Bank. Therefore, such information was important for triangulating the interview accounts and understanding how social-political factors affected discursive practices and rhetorical strategies at the organizational level and vice versa.

3.8 Approach to Analyzing Data

All the interviews were conducted in Amharic (the most widely spoken language in Ethiopia, especially in urban areas) and transcribed in the same language. However, during the analysis, those parts of the transcriptions which were to be used in more detail were translated into English.

Although my initial focus was on middle managers and their role in strategic issues, after a few interviews I realized that the recently implemented new structure was the most important issue in Dashen Bank and the study continued along that path and I collected empirical material for it. Although I had fully transcribed the data on the restructuring process (and about the new structure) at my hand, I was not clear what I would do with it

and what I was looking for. This is consistent with Blumer's (1969: 40) argument about the benefits of in-depth case studies: "…shift from one to another line of inquiry, adopt new points of observation as his study progresses, move in new directions previously unthought-of, and change his recognition of what are relevant data as he acquires more information and better understanding". During his study on social positions assumed by organizational members from the CEO to the operative level in the organizational strategy process, Mantere (2003: 61) was not able to identify research questions until he was immersed in the data and theory:

> "The paradox that in order to come up with good questions you actually have to have knowledge about answers was classically formulated by Plato in Meno (1983). While the theoretical roots of my research question have been elaborated in the first two chapters, the actual process in which the research question came to be realized was a dialectical process, in which I searched for the correct question while I was simultaneously searching for the answer. I became interested in social positions as I heard, figuratively speaking, what the data and theory were discussing about. While the traditional style of scientific writing often poses the research question as if it were determined as an a priori issue, I have found that good questions can usually be discovered only after you have immersed yourself in the data and theory".

Therefore, in line with the tradition of a critical discourse analysis (Laine and Vaara, 2007), my approach to data analysis is abduction, that is, a constant back and forth movement between theory and empirical data is necessary. I read and re-read the data to find themes. When reading the material (second order interpretation according to Alvesson, 2009), I asked myself: 'What are the interviewees trying to tell me?' 'What is that that really concerns the interviewees?' 'What is the central message of each interview, if it is possible to discern as amny broad issues as possible?' 'What is the case about?' and 'What strikes me most?' in order to gain a very good understanding of the data. In other words, I let the data talk to me (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). When I felt that I had understood the data well enough, I tried to pick a theory that could provide interesting insights into the data. I talked to many friends from social science who are also PhD students, explained the nature of my data to them, and we tried to see the different theories. Finally, I ended with the *discourse theory* after I came to believe that this theory might give interesting insights into the empirical material. I spent a month or two reading about discourse theory and scientific works that were conducted based on this theory to familiarize myself with it. However, it has been underscored that applying a critical discourse perspective to studying

organizational or strategic change is not simple and a researcher's 'craft skill' has paramount importance (Phillips et al., 2008).

Phillips et al. (2008) mention that scarcity of standard models that can be followed is one of the major challenges that researchers face in adopting a critical discourse perspective in their work. Hence, they suggest that developing innovative data analysis techniques, though a challenge is very important for researchers who wish to apply the critical discourse analysis to their studies. Although I took lessons on how other researchers who had applied the critical discourse analysis had approached their analyses, the analysis techniques that are outlined here are not adopted from any one researcher or are not standard techniques. Nevertheless, I believe that they were appropriately crafted, and the relevant steps were taken to generate insights from the data.

In general, my approach to the analysis followed three steps. After the data collection started focusing on the new structure and the process, that is, restructuring, two views started emerging. The first view was not only positive about the new structure and restructuring, but it also appreciated what had been done. The second view was totally negative and undermined the work done. Thus, these views were coded separately, and proponents of each view were coded as antagonists and protagonists. Although no clear dissect was found between positions or identities (for example, directors as proponents and managers as antagonists or vice versa) (cf. Laine and Vaara, 2007), the protagonists tended to coalesce around the restructuring team. In other words, besides the restructuring team, there were also other managers who supported the new structure and they were coded as protagonists. However, all directors who were not part of the restructuring or implementation teams (which were found in each wing under each vice president) were categorized as antagonists. Implicit here is that a clear distinction was made between the 'official discourse' and the 'critical discourse' and the former was propagated by the restructuring team and its supporters because the restructuring team was established by the top management and delegated to undertake a new structure whose idea came from the top management. In other similar studies, the official discourse is pretty obvious since the top management is a part of the discursive struggle and its views are considered as the official view (Laine and Vaara, 2007).

Second, once I identified the 'official discourse' and the 'critical discourse', I inductively identified the discursive practices mobilized in relation to the restructuring and the new

structure. Here, I looked for common expressions (text production, dissemination and interpretations) which were frequently used to identify the discursive practices of each group. Hence, the themes that emerged in the antagonists' discourse were coded as: The timing was not right; outsourcing to a foreign company would have been better; there is unfairness in the bank; the restructuring team was not the best and its members pursued personal benefits; the process was not participatory; the restructuring was not well-developed; the new structure is a copy of what the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia did; adverse consequences of the restructuring; succession opportunities were compromised; responses to the new structure; and new structure after new strategy.

The themes that emerged in the discursive practices of the protagonists were coded as follows: Rationalization of the new structure and problematization of the old structure; the restructuring was well-done; addressing the observed resistance; and the change was successful. These themes of both the groups are discussed in the empirical chapters as discursive practices.

Third, I focused on the rhetorical strategies (persuasive appeals) used by both the antagonists and protagonists. After the discourse practices were identified (that is, themes that were mobilized by the antagonists and protagonists), I read and re-read the material very carefully in what is called a 'between the lines' manner to identify the words, phrases, statements, vocabularies and arguments that were indicative of the rhetorical appeals that the discursive actors applied to convince others of their points of view (that is, their discursive practices). Based on the work of Erkama and Vaara (2010) the texts were carefully coded under the following rhetorical strategies or persuasive appeals: *logos* (rational argument/reason); *ethos* (authority-based arguments/credibility); *pathos* (emotional-morale arguments/emotion); *autopoiesis* (autopoietic narratives); and *cosmos* (cosmological constructions). Table 3.2 gives the process of the coding.

Table 3. 2 The Coding Process

Example statements	Rhetorical appeals
"there was clear guidance on this issue from the top management," "it was approved by the top management," "the top management has seen that," and "it was presented to the top management."	*ethos*

"Dashen Bank is required to expand its branch 25-30% every year," "every four year or less, Dashen Bank's branches will double," "in the past, Dashen used to open four or five branches every year."	*logos*
"the restructuring is a logical continuation of the 'resource modernization management project' which was studied by the foreign consulting company, Ernst and Young-"	*autopoiesis*
"…the new structuring was mandatory according to me. Otherwise, the bank would have exploded by now and things would have deteriorated further."	*cosmos*
"…not surprisingly, the highest dissatisfaction was among the staff and positions below us (division managers). Because those below us were hired like new staff by applying to vacancy announcements, unlike us who were assigned-"	*pathos*

At this stage, I also saw that the protagonists and antagonists had different patterns of using rhetorical appeals (except the appeal to ethos).

Various authors (Hardy and Grant, 1999; Phillips et al., 2008) underscore that exploring the societal level of the discourse is problematic and identifying "how external discourses are imported to the organization from the expressive sphere of culture to establish intersubjective meaning" (Phillips et al. 2008: 782) is a challenging task for a critical discourse researcher who wishes to examine different levels of the discourse. Phillips et al. (2008) used company documents for a textual content analysis to identify the Grand discourses whereas Hardy and Grant (1999) use editorial cartoons as an indication of the broader societal discourses. I used both techniques (internal company documents and external sources) to identify the societal and institutional discourses that were appropriated into the discursive struggles in the organization over the restructuring. Stated differently, besides interview accounts and internal documents including the company website, weekly newspapers, magazines, website of the National Bank of Ethiopia, informal conversations with employees of other private and state banks, interviews and other secondary sources were also used to identify societal level discourses or discourses that existed outside the organization but were imported to the organization for the sake of the discursive struggle.

Different conceptualizations of societal discourses are evident in the literature. For instance, the societal discourses identified by Hardy and Grant (1999) are similar to

discursive practices (discourses that exist inside the organization) and are used to indicate that discourses that are mobilized by different parties are public discourses as well. On the other hand, societal or grand discourses identified by Phillips et al. (2008) are discourses that have different sources and they emerged for different purposes, that is, science and business. I used the latter technique and identified the following societal level discourses: globalization, neo-liberalism, corruption, changing environment, national culture, science, macroeconomic problems (foreign currency shortage and poor saving habits), justice/ethics/corporate social responsibility, and unfair trade practices/unfair competition.

3.9 Criticality of the Study

As this study is informed by CDA, I believe that it is 'critical' in line with the conceptualizations of 'critical' in CDA. First, this study shows the discursive struggle of different groups of middle managers around the restructuring in a way that advanced their interests at the expense of the others. These discursive struggles (between the 'official discourse' and the 'non-official discourse') were an effort to make one's own version of reality regarding the restructuring and the new structure the dominant reality of the organization. To fulfill the aim of the study, I show that different groups of middle managers used language to achieve a specific end that had material and social implications. Second, I tried to be self-reflective and self-critical so that I took a political stance explicitly (Wodak, 2002) and explain how I, as an individual with my background and subjectivity, might affect the study. As someone influenced by a 'reflexive method' (Alvesson, 2000), those issues were taken care of (see earlier). Third, as a practice itself to social change, an application of the results in CDA is really important (Wodak, 2002). Similarly, Wodak and Meyer (2001: 7) state that "[c]ritical theories, thus also CDA, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection. So, they are aimed at producing 'enlightenment and emancipation.' Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. … Critical Theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests." Hence, the findings of this study were communicated to the concerned parties in the case company and a written report was submitted to the leader of the restructuring team (who was a proponent of the official discourse) thereby voicing the concerns of the rest of the employees and the middle managers. In addition, as this study focused on the discursive struggles of different groups

of middle managers, all voices in the bank were given equal space and competing and alternative discourses were accentuated. Furthermore, once I defend this study, I am planning to organize a formal workshop in the bank to be attended by the top management and the board and other stakeholders so that my findings are discussed; this will give a chance for many voices to be heard. So far different points have been discussed informally with different middle managers who represented the protagonists and antagonists. Therefore, not only is this study informed by CDA, but I also argue that this study is 'critical' in a real sense as outlined by Wodak (2002) and Wodak and Meyer (2001).

3.10 Quality of Research and Ethical Considerations

Although the appropriateness of using checklists to assess qualitative research is questioned due to the diversity the approaches followed in collecting, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data (Kitto, Chesters and Grbich, 2008), there is a trend of outlining criteria to evaluate the quality of qualitative research, including case study research. For instance, according to Yin (2014), identified that the quality of case study research can be judged by the following elements: *construct validity* (identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied); *internal validity* (seeking to establish causal relationships, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from of spurious relationships); *external validity* (defining the domain in which a study's findings can be generalized); and *reliability* (demonstrating that the operations of a study such as data collection procedures can be repeated with similar results). According to Silverman (2013) mentioned that 'validity' and 'reliability' are two important criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. Tracy (2010) outlines a very detailed 'big tent' (as she calls it) criteria for excellent qualitative research. These are: a worthy topic (good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative); rich rigor (is there enough data to support significant claims? Did the researcher spend enough time to gather interesting and significant data? Is the context or sample appropriate given the goals of the study? Did the researcher use appropriate procedures in terms of field note style, interviewing practices, and analysis procedures?); *sincerity (*which can be achieved through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing); *credibility (*refers to the trustworthiness, verisimilitudes, and plausibility of the research findings); *resonance (*refers to the research's ability to meaningfully reverberate and affect an audience. It can be achieved through aesthetic

merit, evocative writing, and formal generalizations as well as transferability); *ethical; meaningful coherence*: (a) achieving the stated purpose; (b) accomplishing what the study is espoused to be about; (c) using methods and representative practices that partner well with the espoused theories and paradigms; and (d) attentively interconnecting the literature reviewed with research foci, methods, and findings). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) underscore that 'richness in point' is relevant for qualitative research, that is, the study should go beyond what the empirical material is able to say.

Although developed for the medical context, Kitto et al.'s (2008) offers interesting criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research. I use these criteria to discuss the quality of my study.

3.10.1 Clarification and justification

"Clarity of research question reflected in the aims of the study is essential for evaluating results and their interpretation. The demonstration of theoretical rigor (referring to the soundness of fit of the research question, aims and the choice of methods appropriate to the research problem) is extremely important" (Kitto et al.,2008: 244). As discussed earlier, my research questions were not only clearly indicated but controversial issues that could be raised in this study were also addressed. For instance, issues such as 'who are middle managers?' and 'extreme constructivism or the Foucauldian view of discourse versus critical realism' were clearly discussed. Plus, in line with discourse theory, why conducting 'a single-case study' and the use of 'abduction' were justified.

3.10.2 Procedural rigor

This section explains how the study was conducted including how the data was collected, and analyzed, and how the respondents were approached. This is related to procedural or methodological rigor which refers to "the transparency or explicitness of the description of the way the research was conducted. It involves detailing issues of accessing subjects; development of rapport and trust; how data are collected, recorded, coded and analyzed; and accounts of the manner in which errors or subject refusals are dealt with" (Kitto et al., 2008: 244).

3.10.3 Representativeness

There are a number of commonly available, non-probability sampling approaches such as maximum variation, homogenous sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling. I clearly indicated that "opportunity for learning" (Yin, 2014; Stake, 2005) was considered in case selection which can be considered as convenience sampling: "studying easily accessed individuals or groups" (Kitto et al., 2008: 244).

3.10.4 Interpretative rigor

Interpretative rigor relates to as full a demonstration of the data/evidence as is possible. Although the commonly used techniques of interpretive rigor are inter-rater reliability (using a type of researcher triangulation by which multiple researchers are involved in the analytical process) and respondent validation (offering the subjects interviewed an opportunity to view and amend their transcripts as a type of validity), they were not used in this study and that can be considered as one its limitations. I tried to give the transcribed accounts of the interviews to the interviewees, but none of them were able to review and return them except one. Some did not even want to receive the transcription, claiming that they were too busy. In addition, inter-rater reliability would have been very essential in at least coding the interview material against 'rhetorical strategies' to ensure consensus. However, I could not find anyone who had ample knowledge of rhetorical strategies. Nevertheless, I did use other techniques that enhanced interpretive rigor such as different forms of triangulation. For instance, data (that is, multiple evidentiary sources like documents, interviews, and some observations), and theory (multiple theoretical and conceptual frames applied to the research to enhance insights into the phenomena) have been clearly explained earlier.

3.10.5 Transferability

Conceptual generalizability and transferability refer to how well the study's findings inform contexts that differ from those in which the original study was undertaken. Since my case is an instrumental type (Stake, 1995), I intended to learn something beyond the case itself and I believe that my findings have implications beyond the specific case of the study i.e. Dashen Bank. For instance, my study provides insights into the middle management (its role during change and their struggle for meaning), change (why a given change fails), and the impact that the top management has on middle management, that is, when the top management applies a hands-off approach, the official discourse can be reversed by the critical discourse. In general, it enforces the view that organizations are

sites of struggle for meaning. Although I have claimed earlier that I have followed many procedures and techniques that ensure/enhance rigor and credibility, it is for the readers to judge whether I achieved the things as I claim to have achieved.

3.10.6 Ethical considerations: Reflexivity and evaluative rigor

Evaluative rigor refers to ensuring that the ethical and political aspects of the research are addressed. It has been clearly indicated throughout this chapter that appropriate ethical requirements in research were followed during the data collection. I was granted full access by the top management to conduct research in and about Dashen Bank. Moreover, I received the informed consent of each interviewee before the interviews and most interviewees were recorded with the interviewee's agreement. Although some of the interviewees warned me that they might ask me to stop the recording in the middle of the interview if they so wanted none of them did this because they hardly noticed the presence of the recorder when the interview progressed. The transcribed accounts were sent to all the interviewees, but no one commented and sent them back to me. Finally, anonymity was promised to all the interviewees. Further assurances were given regarding the handling of the interview accounts: they would not be accessed by anyone other than me and will not be used for other purposes.

Reflexivity is where researchers openly acknowledge and address the influence that the relationship between the researcher, the research topic, and the subjects may have on the results. Regarding reflexivity, I clearly mentioned earlier that I was obviously an outsider and I believe that this gave the respondents some confidence to tell me their views thoroughly and honestly. Moreover, some asked me to present my observations to the top management and concerned bodies. However, my being of middle age, male, an academic, and a PhD candidate (a big deal in the Ethiopian context since most employees did not have a BA degree) might have slightly influenced the data that was collected.

Finally, I believe it is important to present my assumptions about the empirical material. Although I have discussed my philosophical assumptions earlier, it is crucial to highlight how I understood the empirical material. I concur with Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000) 'arguments' metaphor for understanding empirical material. Empirical material should be understood in a way that generates arguments for or against theoretical ideas or a particular way of understanding the world rather than as something that can definitely falsify or verify theories. It plays the role of inspiring ideas and theories, elaborating and clarifying them

besides offering them credibility. This is not to say that the empirical material was less important; rather it was about assigning a less robust and clear-cut character to it. It must be seen as an expression of negotiable, perspective dependent interpretations, channeled through ambiguous language. Hence, empirical material can be subjected to different lines of interpretation against or for a particular way of seeing the world. This is consistent with the view that language (interview) does not mirror 'reality' (Alvesson, 2003). Therefore, it is fair to say that my data can be used in a different way to argue for or against a given idea or a way of seeing things. This leads me to assert that this story is one of many stories that can be told. Therefore, what I would like to remind readers of when we move along to the empirical part of this study, is what Norback (2011: 95) rightly and beautifully says, "…what follows will be a *description* (one of many) of the world, a story told by me, from my perspective" (emphasis original).

Chapter 4: Case Description: Dashen Bank

This chapter introduces the case company, Dashen Bank. However, before that, I briefly introduce the history of banking in Ethiopia, which has been compiled from the website of the National Bank of Ethiopia.

4.1 History of Banking in Ethiopia

The establishment of the Bank of Abyssinia in 1905 following an agreement between Emperor Menelik II and Mr Ma Gillivrav, the representative of the British owned National Bank of Egypt, marked the birth of modern banking in Ethiopia. The Bank of Abyssinia was inaugurated on 16 February 1906 and became fully operational under the management of the Egyptian National Bank. The following agreements were signed between the Ethiopian government and the National Bank of Egypt regarding the Bank of Abyssinia: the capital of the bank would be £500,000 of which one-fifth would be subscribed and the remaining amount be collected by selling shares in cities such as London, Paris and New York; the bank was authorized to issue bank notes and monitor coins; land for the bank to build offices and warehouses would be given free of charge; and the government would not allow the establishment of any other bank in the country during a concession period of 50 years. Although the bank had opened different branches throughout the country until it was liquidated in 1931, the society at that time was new to the banking experience and the bank had to face huge difficulties in familiarizing the people with the banking business. Therefore, the bank was mainly engaged in government business such as keeping government accounts, undertaking tasks for the government and some export related businesses.

In general, the bank was considered to be very inefficient and was operating at cost for the first few years. Finally, the bank abandoned its operations and was liquidated to free the banking sector from foreign control and to make banking institutions responsible for Ethiopia's credit needs. Following the coronation of emperor Haile Selassie to the throne, the Bank of Abyssinia was legally replaced by the Bank of Ethiopia in 1931.

Bank of Ethiopia was a fully Ethiopian institution and was the first indigenous bank in Africa. The bank took over all commercial activities of the Bank of Abyssinia and was authorized to issue bank notes and coins. The new bank opened branches throughout the

country and was successful in its business. However, during the Italian invasion in 1935, the banking sector once again experienced major changes as branches and outlets of foreign banks started operations in the country—Banca d'Italia, Banco di Roma, Banco di Napoli and Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. All ceased operations following Italy's defeat in the Second World War which led to the liberation of Ethiopia from foreign occupation. Barclays Bank came to Ethiopia in 1941 with British troops who marched along with Haile Selassie to liberate Ethiopia from Italy. However, the bank ceased operations in 1943 when the British troops left the country. On 15 April 1943, the State Bank of Ethiopia started full operations. In addition to commercial activities as the principal commercial bank in the country, the State Bank of Ethiopia also acted as the Central Bank of Ethiopia and was authorized to issue notes and coins and to deal with foreign currency. The bank opened branches throughout the country and outside like a branch in Sudan and a transit office in Djibouti till 1963.

Following the enforcement of the Ethiopian Monetary and Banking law in 1963, the banking sector in Ethiopia witnessed another major shift as the law demanded separating the functions of commercial banking and central banking which led to the creation of two institutions, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and the National Bank of Ethiopia. The law also allowed foreign banks to operate in the country with a maximum ownership limit of 49 percent with the remaining balance to be owned by Ethiopian shareholders. Following this law, Banco di Roma and Banco di Napoli applied for re-licenses and started operations. In the same year, the first local private bank, the Addis Ababa Bank, was established at the initiative of Ethiopians in association with the National and Grindlays Bank, which owned 40 percent of the total shares. Other financial institutions, namely Home Ownership Public Association (ISHOPA) which specialized in providing loans for the construction of residential houses and the Saving and Mortgage Corporation of Ethiopia with the aim of mobilizing savings and deposits; providing loans for construction; repairing and improving residential houses, commercial and industrial buildings; and carrying out all activities related to mortgage operations, were also established. Agricultural Bank, that was established in 1945, was replaced by the Investment Bank of Ethiopia in 1951 and renamed the Ethiopian Investment Corporation Share Company in 1965. However, in 1970, the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank Share Company was established by taking over the assets and liabilities of the former Development Bank and Investment Corporation of Ethiopia.

The socialist regime (called Derg), which came to power in 1974, took control of the whole economy and nationalized all large corporations. In 1975, foreign owned banks, Banco di Roma and Banco di Napoli were nationalized and merged with Addis Ababa Bank to make it the second largest bank in Ethiopia, called Addis Bank. In 1980, Addis Bank and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia merged to form the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia which enjoyed a monopoly until a regime change in 1994. Under the socialist regime, the Savings and Mortgage Corporation SC. and the Imperial Saving and Home Ownership Public Association were also merged to form the Housing and Saving Bank in 1975 and the Agricultural and Industrial Bank was reestablished as the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (AIDB) in 1979. When the socialist regime was overthrown, there were three banks in the country —the National Bank of Ethiopia, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (AIDB) — all of them enjoyed monopoly in their respective markets.

Following the downfall of the socialist regime, under EPRDF's rule Ethiopia declared a liberal economic system in which the banking sector was opened to competition but protected from foreign competition. Under the Monetary and Banking proclamation of 1994, the National Bank of Ethiopia was separated from the government and was established as a judicial entity. Following that proclamation, the first private bank after many years, Awash Bank was established in 1994 and Dashen Bank, the second private bank, was established on 20 September 1995. From then onwards, a number of private banks blossomed in the country. Currently, there are 17 privately owned and three government owned banks in the country and all of them are local companies. In the following section, I will introduce the case company.

4.2 Background Information about Dashen Bank

This case description is compiled based on the annual reports for the year ended 30 June 2017 and for the year ended 30 June 2016 (the fiscal year when the restructuring was implemented) in combination with the interviews of middle managers to compile some 'facts' regarding the restructuring. The annual reports are available on the website of the company since 2001 and are designed for its shareholders to be presented at the annual shareholders' meetings. The annual report has reports of the president of the bank and the chairperson of the board of directors (BOD). Though the reports represent the views of the top management and the board, I found it inappropriate to consider the reports in the

discursive struggle to show how the top management and the board wanted to produce a hegemonic discourse to control the organization (Laine and Vaara, 2008), because the reports are tailored for the consumption of the shareholders (for the purpose of external communication) and thus, they present selective information to the shareholders. However, the reports of the president of the bank and the chairperson of the BOD designed for the shareholders can be discursively analyzed in their own right and can shed light on how 'realities' are constructed for shareholders; how managers rationalize their success and failures; how this generates a sense of personal and organizational security for managers; how the exercise of power is legitimized; and how it constructs the subjectivity of the top management, the board, and shareholders as particular categories of persons who secure their sense of reality through engaging in such a discourse (Knigts and Morgan, 1991). I now briefly discuss Dashen Bank's profile.

Following the downfall of the socialist regime in Ethiopia and the coming to power of EPRDF (a coalition of different ethnic-based parties), the country was declared a free market economy and many private companies including financial institutions have blossomed since then. Currently, there are about 18 commercial banks (one government owned and 17 privately owned) operating in the financial sector in Ethiopia and Dashen Bank is one of the pioneers in the financial sector and the biggest among the private banks in the country. According to the auditor's report in the annual report, Dashen Bank is a privately-owned company that was established in 1995 in accordance with the "Licensing and Supervision of Banking Business Proclamation No. 84/1994, now superseded by Proclamation No.592/2008, A Proclamation to Provide for Banking Business to undertake commercial banking activities. After securing its license from the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) on 20 September 1995, the bank started normal business activities on 1 January 1996 with a paid-up capital of Birr 14.9 million.

As of today, the bank has 303 branches throughout the country and it is reinforcing its investments in digital banking channels including ATMs, POS terminals, mobile banking, internet banking and agency banking. Currently, Dashen has deployed 205 ATMs and 837 POS terminals in the market and has six foreign exchange bureaus. In addition, Dashen Bank has established correspondent banking relationships with 461 banks scattered across 172 cities in 72 countries. At the end of 30 June, 2017, the bank's total assets were Birr 34.6 billion and the total revenue generated by the bank from various sources stood at Birr

3.4 billion. Regarding human resources, the bank currently has more than 7,297 staff at the head office and in branches throughout the nation.

4.3 Changes in Dashen Bank

Dashen Bank has undergone different change initiatives since its establishment. To focus more on recent change initiatives, in fiscal year 2015-2016, the president reported to the shareholders', "Dashen has been going through various change initiatives, from business model revisit to process improvements and organizational restructuring. While undergoing through the multifaceted change initiatives, the Bank has managed to establish eight District Offices, which spearheaded the opening of 64 branches, the highest ever and twice the number opened in the previous fiscal year. Subsequent to the strategic partnership established last year with American Express, the Bank also launched issuance of Dashen AMEX Gold & Green cards, recording yet another milestone in the Country's banking industry" (President, Dashen Bank). In addition, in the same period, the national e-payment switch, Ethio-Pay, serving the integration of ATMs and point of sale (POS) terminals of all commercial banks, of which Dashen Bank is the one, was officially launched in May 2016. According to the president this major development was because of growing competition, and has been fueling adoption of modern banking technologies, technology-driven products and services, and delivery channels.

The bank's ongoing initiatives for upgrading its core banking were expected to be finalized during the fiscal year 2017-2018. According to the president, "The upgrade will enhance customer service, improve management information system and overall synchronization of operational activities of the Bank."

In addition to major change initiatives that were implemented and initiated in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, fiscal year 2016-17 marked the end of the fourth strategic plan period (a strategic plan is for five-years years) and formulating a 10-year roadmap and the 5-year strategic plan were among the priority agendas for the 2017-18 fiscal year. As indicated by the report of the BOD chairperson, "the strategic plan formulation project is presumed to bring in new strategic outlook and chart the Bank's course for the period ahead while creating a fitting organizational set-up and performance management system." Regarding the previous strategies and the strategy to be developed, the president underscored, "the strategies put in place in different periods have been instrumental to the sustained successes attained by the Bank. Accordingly, the fifth strategic plan formulation and subsequent

implementation is expected to take the Bank to the next level stretching our sights. Moreover, the finalization of the ongoing initiatives shall fasten the Bank's course in the upcoming periods" (President, Dashen Bank). Further, according to BOD chairperson, investments in human capital will be intensified in fiscal year 2017-2018 and the move to the newly built headquarters will be one of the major activities in the fiscal year. The chairperson of the board of directors expressed his hope as: "The overall comprehensiveness of initiatives are expected to strengthen towards uplifting the growth momentum of the Bank by improving earnings, quality of assets management and efficiency gain." In addition, the president said this regarding the change initiatives: "The fiscal year has seen changes in the Bank's organizational set up, operational modality, business processes and technology. Upgrading the Bank's Core Banking System (CBS) had been a matter of priority during the concluded fiscal year. The urgency put on the upgrade could hardly be overemphasized given the impact it would have on product innovation and service quality. The migration to the latest Flexcube CBS powered by Oracle is scheduled to be made by the lapse of 2017" (President, Dashen Bank).

4.4 Restructuring: The focus of this Study

The focus of this study is on the restructuring that was implemented in fiscal year 2015-2016. There are disputes and different views regarding its initiation. For instance, those in favor of the new structure claim that the idea for the restructuring came from the top management and the board and is the logical continuation of the 'resource modernization project' that was undertaken by Ernst and Young (a foreign consulting company) which studied Dashen Bank's processes and recommended certain solutions. Those against the new structure claim that the idea of restructuring came from one manager. During the interview with the said manager, he recalled that after seeing the experience of Kenyan banks and their structures, he submitted a proposal for a new structure to the top management.

After the top management decided to go for restructuring, it organized a team which was called the restructuring team. The restructuring team comprised of three managers, one deputy manager, and one section head (in the old structure) from the Human Resource Department, the International Banking Department, the Risk and Compliance Department, the Organization Methods Section, and Program Management Office. After making relevant assessments, the team was tasked to propose a new structure for Dashen Bank.

However, later the team itself oversaw the general implementation of the new structure with the help of respective implementation teams that were established in each wing under the restructuring team. Regarding staff assignments, the assignment of 'directors' in the new structure was carried out by the top management itself. On the other hand, the assignment of managers and other lower level staff was undertaken by the restructuring team in collaboration with the top management (basically, vice presidents).

One major change in the new structure was that the middle management levels were delayered. In the old structure, there were manager, deputy, section, unit and finally officer below the vice presidents. In the new structure, deputy, section, and unit levels were merged together and labeled manager. The manager in the old structure was labeled director. Therefore, the new structure had the following levels: president, vice presidents, directors, manager, and officer (president office, VP offices, department, division, and principal respectively). In some instances where their span of control was large, there was one level called 'sections' headed by a 'head', but this arrangement was rare. Regarding major changes in branch arrangements, some roles (tasks) of the branches such as foreign currency allocation and loan provisions were centralized to the head office. Below the vice president operations, 12 district offices were established (nine were established during the restructuring and the remaining three were established in the just ended fiscal year outside Addis Ababa) and roughly one district office supervised 40 branches. Thus, in the new structure, the accountability of branch managers was to the district managers, rather than to the vice president operations as was in the old structure. As a means of segmenting the market, according to the chairperson of the BOD, the bank opened a well-furnished premium branch in the heart of Addis Ababa that to serve high-profile customers, also called corporate customers (those who had deposits above 5 million ETB). According to this arrangement, experienced and well-qualified customer relationship managers were assigned to each corporate customer and these relationship managers were to handle every issue including any financial advice, investments and credit analyses (in collaboration with the credit department) for the corporate manager. One customer relationship manager was assigned 30 corporate customers. Therefore, other branches focused on low-profile customers who had small deposits.

After the restructuring was officially presented to the forum of managers, it triggered an alternative and competing discourse about the restructuring pertaining to questions such as 'when?', 'how?', 'by whom?' and 'what?' of the restructuring. There was discord and

alternative views on a broad range of issues related to the restructuring. Questions about the source of the idea of restructuring surfaced and I classified these managers based on their views as the restructuring team and other protagonists (simply, protagonists) and antagonists. The following chapters document the discursive struggles for meaning over the restructuring between these groups of middle managers. In addition to the discourse practices of different groups of middle managers, they have also used rhetorical appeals and the societal- and institutional-level discourses that informed their discourse practices; these are discussed in subsequent chapters. The following figures show the evolution of organizational structures of Dashen Bank before and after the discursive struggle. Figure 4.1 shows the old structure that was changed. Figure 4.2 gives the new structure that triggered the discursive struggle.

Figure 4. 1 Levels in the Old Organizational Structure (the actual organizational structure was not found unlike the newest ones)

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          President          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│       Vice President        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Department Manager      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Deputy Department Manager  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          Division           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          Section            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│           Unit              │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          Officer            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```
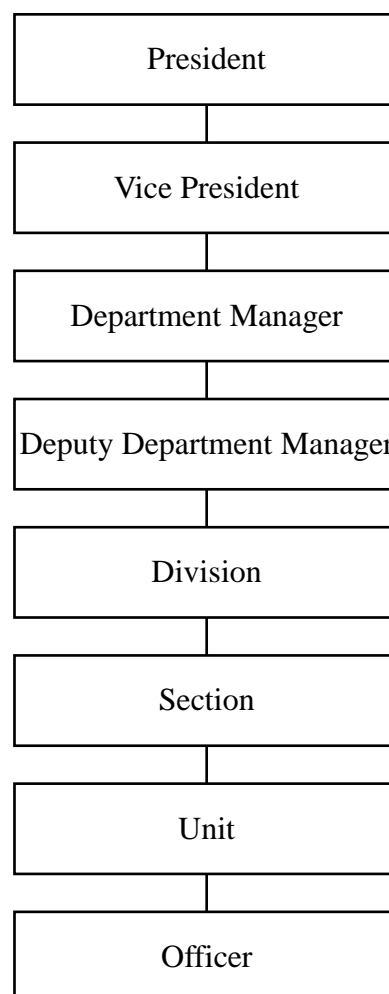
Figure 4. 2 The new Organizational Structure (2016-18)

```
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │ Board of Directors  │
                          └─────────────────────┘
                                                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                                                    │  Board Secretariat   │
                                                    └──────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Chief Internal Auditor│  │  President  │    │ Chief, Risk & Compliance Officer │
└──────────────────────┘   └─────────────┘    └──────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐
│ Advisor to the President│
└──────────────────────┘
                                              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                                              │ Director, Strategy Management Office│
┌──────────────────────────────────┐          └──────────────────────────────────┘
│ Director, Program Management Office│
└──────────────────────────────────┘          ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                                              │ Director, Legal Service & Credit  │
┌──────────────────────────────────┐          │    Recovery Department            │
│ Executive Assistant to the President│        └──────────────────────────────────┘
└──────────────────────────────────┘
```

Vice President-Operations Management	Vice President Resources and Facilities Management	Vice President-Information Systems & E-Banking Services	Vice President-Marketing & Business Development
Director, Trade & IB Services Department	Director, Human Resources Management Department	Director, IT Infrastructure Department	Director, Research Development department
Director, Credit Analysis & Appraisal Department	Director, Human Resource Development Department	Director, Application Support & Development Department	Director, Marketing Corporate Communications Department
Director, Customer Relationship Department	Director, Facilities Management Department	Director, Human Resources Management Department	
Director, Customer Accounts & Currency Management Department	Director, Finance & Accounts Department	Director, E-Banking Service Department	
Director, Interest Free Banking Department	Director, Engineering Service Department	Manager, IT Service Delivery	
Manager Portfolio Management	Chief of Security	Manager Information System Security	
District Managers	Manager, Outsourcing Management	Manager innovation & IT Projects Management	
Branch Managers	Manager, Head Quarter Facilities Management		

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Chapter 5: Discourses Mobilized by the Protagonists

This chapter empirically documents the discursive practices that were mobilized by the restructuring team and the other protagonists of the new structure. Its purpose is gaining control of the entire process, which may (re)produce the top management's hegemony (as the restructuring team was formed by and represented the top management) and thus can be considered as the official discourse. However, this official discourse triggered an alternative and competing discourse by other groups of middle managers (adversaries/antagonists), which is presented in the next chapter. In general, the discursive practices of the restructuring team and other protagonists include the following elements: rationalization of the new structure and problematization of the old structure; restructuring as being well-prepared and executed; fixing (defending) the observed resistance (in relation to the formation of the restructuring team, assignment of team members as directors, cancellation of progress review meetings, and priority to the strategy versus structure); and that the change (new structure) was successful. An overview of the discursive practices along with the themes is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5. 1 Discursive Practices and Themes (protagonists)

Timeline	Discursive practices	Themes
Antecedents of the restructuring	Problematization of the old structure and rationalization of the new structure.	Industry practice. Sub-branch arrangement. Five-year strategy. Customer service. Emergent strategy. Study by Ernst and Young.
Process of the restructuring	The restructuring/new structure was well developed.	Qualification and experience of the members of the restructuring team. Intensive discussions and deliberations/participatory process. The restructuring team was independent (no intervention from the top management or the board).
Output of the restructuring	The restructuring was a success.	The way the process was followed The magnitude of the change Customer service (loan imbursements). Better/more transparent branch-customer relationships. Cutting redundancies and empowering the middle management. Alleviating manpower shortage/staff development.
	The new structure was not copied from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.	Studied by Ernst and Young Context (size). Industry practice.
	The resistance is due to a lack of adequate communication.	Resistance was natural. The key to successful change management was the top management.
	Defending observed resistance (views of the antagonists were illogical).	Self-interest. Capacity/impracticality. Efficiency and effectiveness. Corruption. Empowerment and staff development.

Source: Based on the empirical study

5.1 Antecedents of the Restructuring

This section focuses on the discourses mobilized by the restructuring team and other protagonists about the inevitability of the new structure. Contrary to the discourses of the antagonists, the protagonists tried to draw a picture that the new structure was not only a must but that the bank was a little late in doing such a restructuring which might halve already led to serious consequences to the bank. They tried to justify the new structure

using many discursive techniques including problematizing the old structure and persuasive appeals (see the Chapter 'persuasive appeals'). This was important to pave the way for subsequent actions with regard to the restructuring and to secure the buy-in of staff members at all levels for the new structure.

5.1.1 Rationalization of the new structure and problematization of the old structure

The restructuring team and the other protagonists of the restructuring (and the new structure) put into effect various discursive practices. In fact, as one director said, "The idea of restructuring did come from the top management, you can say from the board" (Director I, Advisory Wing). However, the restructuring team and the protagonists of the restructuring mobilized different discourses to justify that the restructuring was a must and that it was inevitable. As one director who was also a member of the restructuring team argued, Dashen Bank's inability to make frequent changes cost it a heavy price and its market share dwindled. Since it had been amassing the highest profits among private banks and due to its culture which shied away from change, Dashen Bank was not very active in introducing changes and it seemed comfortable with the status-quo:

> *"...Since Dashen Bank amassed the largest profits among the private banks and was very proud of its achievements (success trap), it didn't try to change itself in response to the market but eventually, the bank's market share was being eroded and it was declining steadily. Finally, the bank reached to this predicament. Whether you like it or not, change nowadays is a must or else you will be kicked out of the market ...therefore, for me, new structure was mandatory Otherwise, the bank would have exploded by now and things would have deteriorated further" (Director, member of the restructuring team).*

The main tool that these people used was strategy to justify that the restructuring was thought of and planned well in advance. Thus, by drawing on strategy, they not only rationalized that the strategy was inevitable, but they also stated that it was already very late, to enhance the urgency behind the restructuring. The strategic document clearly states that there would be major restructuring in the bank in the mid-term of the strategic period. However, the restructuring did not take place as per the schedule in the strategic plan and therefore the protagonists argued that the structure had many flaws and was not accommodative of change. One director, who was a member of the implementation team of the credit wing, contended that this had created a huge gap between performance and targets:

"...The very reason for the restructuring was that there was a huge gap between the targets in the strategy and the actual performance. So, what was the problem? The enabling mechanism for the strategy was developing an enabling structure, wasn't it? Thus, one or two years after the strategy, there was a minor restructuring, but it was not comprehensive and didn't reach the grassroots level, even it didn't even touch the departments. Therefore, the major goal of the structure was creating an enabling environment for the strategy. Although the strategic term was ending, given the current scenario and challenges and to cope up with them, it was a must to go in for restructuring." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

In addition, one director who was also a member of the restructuring team commented that the restructuring was one of the strategic issues that the bank had identified to be undertaken. When the strategy was developed, the structure was not dealt with at that time and according to the director, it was a correction that was made (the lack of an enabling structure for achieving the strategy).

"Strategic issues that the strategy identified were strategic and basic. ...For example, if you see the restructuring that was implemented, it was one of the basic strategic issues that the bank identified... because for the success of the bank, there had to be a strategy, there would have to be people and there would have to be a process. Thus, since the structure was among the success factors, the bank said we would have to work on structure. Probably, the bank had never undertaken restructuring of this magnitude since its establishment. Along with the strategy, the structure was not equally thought about or was not captured. That was a gap ...." (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

The other discourse that was practiced to rationalize the restructuring was the rate of branch expansion that was imposed by the National Bank of Ethiopia. According to this directive, every bank had to undertake branch expansion equivalent to 25-30 percent of its current branch number every year. Therefore, every bank was expected to more than double its branches every four years. This was used by the protagonists to justify that it was difficult to accommodate this level of branch expansion with the old structure because the costs would be high and the effort to run full-fledged branch operations would not be worthwhile. However, to fill this gap, that is, to reduce the operational costs of branches, the bank started implementing a 'sub-branch' arrangement. This means that unlike full-fledged branches, sub-branches were not allowed to allocate foreign currency and give loans and instead were required to focus only on deposit mobilization. This, however, was problematic for different reasons: First, it was not possible to mobilize deposits without foreign currency allocations and loan provisions, and second, sub-branches were not able

to compete with full-fledged branches that provided loan facilities and allocated foreign currency. Therefore, managers of sub-branches complained about their exclusive role of only deposit mobilizations and thus being disadvantaged in the competition. Also, the regulatory body (the National Bank of Ethiopia), forbid sub-branch arrangements. Thus, the remedy was that some activities that demanded huge manpower and space had to be centralized and branches needed to focus only on deposit mobilization, so that there was no division of branches based on roles and the sub-branch arrangement would be dropped. This justifies the point that the restructuring was to some extent the result of a push by the external environment (that is, by the regulatory body):

> *"...If you are supposed to give full-fledged services, the manpower you deploy and the office rent will not be viable after sometime because expansion is not something that you undertook as a result of your plan and model... expansion was important but it was not a matter of choice but it was a matter of necessity... for example, in the old model, we (branches) did everything, we did the whole process of loan facility, that is, we did a credit and risk analysis, and we also looked for customers...it was full-fledged. We handled foreign currency, international banking, and open LC (letter of credit). However, all these activities necessitate a huge manpower and a larger space. This had to stop at one point, as you cannot continue with it when you see it from a business operations' perspective. Thus, the restructuring was timely and a must. You could not continue with the old system because your overhead costs would eventually be higher and thus you would operate at a loss. Thus, this had to stop..." (Manager XIV, Grade IV Branch).*

In addition to the cost and space factors, the injustices and other unethical issues were also raised by many protagonists in relation to the sub-branch arrangement. A new structure that redressed this sub-branch arrangement was considered very vital. For instance, according to one manager who started by problematizing the old structure, the new structure which ended the sub-branch arrangement was a very appropriate move. He argued that the customer base was expanding fast and therefore it was very difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy these customers and benefit the bank with the old structure. He claimed that the sub-branch arrangement spoiled the reputation of Dashen Bank since having two types of branches in one bank was unfair. It killed the morale of the managers and staff members in the sub-branches and it had bad implications for society and customers in the areas where the sub-branches were located. Surprisingly, the sub-branch arrangement only applied to Dashen Bank and as will be discussed later, it triggered competition and disappointments within the staff members:

"...If I give you an example, our branches in Bule Hora or Metu (which are relatively large cities by Ethiopian standards) were sub-branches; thus, they could not give loans but they mobilized deposits. Was society in those cities foolish? If people deposit in your branch, they have to get some benefits in return. Either they have to get loan facilities or they have to get foreign currency. So, the former structure had all these pitfalls. To tell you frankly, people make deposits due to the fact that Dashen is a very big and popular brand, but the deposits in Bule Hora were given out as loans in Hawassa, why? Was it because Bule Hora is a sub-branch and cannot give loans? Okay, what is the contribution of Dashen Bank to Bule Hora's economy? What is the contribution Dashen Bank is making to Bule Hora town except collecting people's money? Did you get me? ...Therefore, sub-branches were not playing with the supply and demand structure under the former structure, but that is no more the case. We don't have sub arrangements under the new structure" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

Similarly, there was unnecessary competition between Dashen Bank's branches because of problems in the old structure. As indicated in branch managers' discourses, the huge expansion of branches had created a strain and this led to grabbing customers even between branches. However, adding insult to injury, those branches that focused only on deposit mobilization (that is, the sub-branches) were disadvantaged because branch managers unethically warned customers not to deposit in those branches as they could not provide loans and allocate foreign currency. Given the 'give and take' nature of the competition, it was very difficult for sub-branches to compete with larger and full-fledged branches and mobilize deposits. Second, although Grade I branches, and to some extent Grade II branches, were full-fledged in that they could provide loans and allocate foreign currency, they totally focused on providing loans without making a strong effort to mobilize deposits and this was not healthy for the bank either. Thus, these points can be regarded as a problematization of the old structure to pave the way and facilitate the way for a new and better structure:

"Due to their structure, Grade I branches focused on loans. Then, those which didn't give enough were undermined, and even worse and unethically (which should not be expected from bank professionals), some branch managers warned customers that this branch did not give loans, do not go there, it is sub-branch...all this, you know it was unfair. ...rather than appreciating and comforting the customer by saying that we are one bank and thus you can continue doing business in that branch, if you warn the customer that the branch is a sub-branch, it does not give you benefits (as it cannot give loans) it is not fair..." (Manager II, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

A number of protagonists used 'emergent strategy' to problematize the old structure and rationalize the restructuring. For instance, a member of the restructuring team argued that the restructuring could be considered as an 'emergent strategy' as Dashen Bank was forced to some extent to undertake the restructuring the way it did. He mentioned that external issues such as branch expansion required by the regulatory body was one push factor behind the emergent strategy. Dashen opened 5-6 branches every year some years ago and its total branch network was not more than 50-60 branches. But after the restructuring it opens 30-40 branches every year and its branch network is more than 270 (when the interview was done) and therefore the same structure could not accommodate the huge expansion in branches:

> "...Back-office support and other support would not be adequate. Therefore, a new head office structure was a must and unquestionable. So, with this level...for example three years ago, in the Logistics and Facility Department...'logistics', 'materials' and 'human resources' were under one department, it was called the "Logistic and HR department." With this structure, you could not function now because at that time, we had 50-60 branches but currently we have about 240 branches and thus your support would have been diluted and became inefficient...and thus, 'did we have a structure in place that could support our growth in branch expansion?' We were forced to see it from that angle (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

The other point that was emphasized by most protagonists was that the restructuring was a result of a process study by Ernst and Young. This discourse was used by the restructuring team and the protagonists in two ways: First, that the restructuring was done based on the recommendations of the study and it clearly recommended that a new structure be put in place. Second, to sometimes downplay the role of the restructuring team (for example, to cool down resistance and disappointments). For example:

> "I believe that the restructuring was a must because Dashen Bank is a professional company. It was driven by a systematic and scientific study; the bank didn't get into that randomly or speculatively. These days, we are trying to implement the structure which was developed based on a study and its tangible findings.... look, after the restructuring, there are visible indications that we are working better and thus, the restructuring is very important. ...what I want to underscore is that since the restructuring was based on a professional study by Ernst and Young, if you ask me whether the restructuring was right or wrong, I would side with the view that it was a must and timely. I believe that it was a right move and we are witnessing the fruits of the restructuring already" (Manager II, Grade III Branch).

'Industry practice' was used by both the antagonists and protagonists to mobilize their own discourses which competed with each other. For instance, a number of antagonists mentioned that Dashen Bank got into restructuring to imitate others (as this was the industry practice) rather than out of necessity. On the other hand, following an industry practice was also a reason that was forwarded by many protagonists to justify the restructuring, in addition to putting Ernst and Young's recommendations into effect. Many private banks changed their logos and implemented new structures. In addition, many banks including Dashen Bank outsourced their strategic development to international consulting companies; this happened during the last two or three years. Thus, it can be concluded that the 'industry practice' was one factor that forced banks to comply and engage in similar undertakings. As a result, 'industry practice' was employed as one tool to rationalize the restructuring. As one director commented, although the idea of a new structure came from the top management or the board, emulating best practices in the industry that other banks had used was one sound reason that made the restructuring the must:

> *"The restructuring work had been initiated as a result of the top management or board's assignment. When we think about it, the restructuring was a must for basically two reasons. First: to update its processes and increase its asset optimization, the bank got its processes studied and documented by Ernst and Young. So, that document affected all processes in the bank, whether it was credit, international banking, whatever and when their processes were updated/changed, it affected the structure. Second, although we had a strategy, it was difficult to say that the strategy was comprehensive. Therefore, although we could not follow the strategy, there were best practices that others had achieved. Thus, either by following the best practices in the market or putting the processes studied by Ernst and Young into effect, it was a must to rework the structure. I believe that these two points were the springboard of the restructuring" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

Not all protagonists accepted the idea that Dashen went for restructuring to emulate an industry practice. A number of protagonists considered Dashen Bank as a leader in the banking industry which did not need to follow the industry as it was followed by many private banks. Their argument was that Dashen was pushed towards restructuring by the external environment which demanded huge branch expansion and as a result Dashen Bank was one of the pioneers in hiring a foreign consulting company, Ernst and Young, to study all its processes.

Problematizing the old structure, one manager noted that the establishment of district offices under the new structure was a relief in providing the necessary attention and empowerment to support staff and departments and thereby decentralizing power. Since everything was previously handled in the head office, especially in relation to resource allocations, support was not timely or adequate in the older structure. In addition, in the old arrangement, even minor loan requests were sent to the board for approval, but now districts were given the discretion to approve loans up to Birr 5 million and except for very rare cases, loan requests did not go to the board for approval:

> *"...If you take logistics, the Logistics Department provided equipment and materials for all the branches but doing this was inefficient, if not impossible. Therefore, satellite logistics, satellite stores had to be organized. The current structure solves this problem. Centralizing logistics in one location at the head office and trying to provide necessary material from one location is very tough. However, since districts are authorized under the new structure, they can engage in promotional work, marketing work, human resources work, can hire individuals and branch managers, and can even have budget planning. Therefore, a given district can give immediate solutions and responses for branches under its supervision/constituency ..." (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

By problematizing the old ways of doing things, one director below noted that the main reason behind the restructuring was enhancing customer services as the new model was more relationship focused.

> *"Customer relationships normally focus on customers. The purpose is to provide efficient, customer oriented, and customer focused services to our customers. Previously, customers were viewed and served by transaction type services. The platform was servicing customers on the basis of 'first come, first served' approach rather than on the value that the customers had for the bank. And that is contrary to what we call Pareto where the bank gets 20 percent of the profits from 80 percent of its customers and 80 percent of the profits from 20 percent of its customers. Thus, based on that logic, we had to treat customers preferentially based on the value that they gave to the bank; we classify our customers based on their value, or frequency, or duration (that is, number of years as customers), and try to provide tailored services and value propositiosn to each segment (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

As indicated earlier, now customers are not treated alike and are segmented based on the value that they provide to the bank. Therefore, the first segment of customers is corporate customers who have more than a Birr 5 million credit portfolio; the second segment is

business customers who have loans ranging from Birr 2 to 5 million; and the third segment which is known as small and micro (SM) have loans which are lesser than Birr 2 million. The bank generates more than 70 percent of its profits from corporate customers and they account for 5 percent of all Dashen clients. Therefore, the bank tries to serve these high-profile customers preferentially by assigning senior and highly qualified relationship managers to them. A relationship manager dedicates his/her time to some customers throughout the year (this means that more attention is given to each customer) and tries to work out and resolve any problems and challenges that they might face.

These points indicate that a variety of themes were used to rationalize that the restructuring was not only inevitable but also that it was initiated late. Dashen Bank's 5-year strategy was employed as one discourse to rationalize the structure. Although the strategy was ending, it identified the strategic initiatives that the bank would undertake in a 5- year period and restructuring was one of them. Although the strategy stated that the structure should be updated in the mid-term, this did not happen and when a new structure was put in place through radical restructuring, the strategy was used to justify that the bank had undertaken restructuring that should have happened a year earlier. Industry practice was another theme. A number of private banks had restructured, and implementing best practices was one theme that was used to justify Dashen's restructuring It was portrayed that unless Dashen Bank was able to emulate the best practices in the industry, it would lag behind competition and would lose its strong market share and leadership position among private banks. Branch expansion, as a result of the numbers demanded by the National Bank of Ethiopia, was another discursive practice that was used for justifying the restructuring. The restructuring team and others stated that the bank could not accommodate the newly added branches with the old structure that was designed when Dashen only had 40-50 branches. Finally, the process study that was conducted by Ernst and Young was often used to justify the new structure. Not only that the restructuring team implemented what was recommended by the consulting company, but the members of the restructuring team and others also emphasized that Dashen Bank's move was well-studied and scientific, rather than random and speculative. Increased 'customer services' and 'emergent strategy' were the other themes used for justifying the new structure and problematizing the old structure.

5.2 Process of the Restructuring

This section focuses on 'how' the restructuring developed. Here, members of the restructuring team and other protagonists argue not only that the new structure was well developed but also that the experience and qualifications of members of the restructuring team were fit for this responsibility.

5.2.1 The restructuring/new structure is well-developed

That the restructuring was well-developed and well thought out was another discursive practice that was mobilized by the restructuring team and its supporters. To substantiate this, the restructuring team and the protagonists mentioned the qualifications and the experience of members of the restructuring team. As indicated earlier, all the members of the restructuring team were from the senior management (that is, one level below the vice presidents and according to this thesis middle managers) except for one person, and after the restructuring, all of them were assigned as directors (again at the senior manager level) except for one who was made a manager but was accountable to the vice president. Therefore, it was portrayed that the restructuring team was very effective, experienced and well-aware of the banking sector. As the head of the restructuring team commented below, in addition to the assessment that they did during the restructuring and the visits they paid to other similar banks to gain experience, their prior experience and exposure to the banking sector were also of help.

> *"In addition, we had our own experience, we were high level personnel, we had different exposure as a team … in addition, we tried to gain experience from different companies in the industry. In selected areas, we tried to grasp the experience of different companies via interviews and discussions. We tried to see how they were structured and organized, how they were undertaking their activities, and tried to identify the weaknesses and strengths of their structures… (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

> *"…As I told you the others were members of the senior management, except me but I was head of the Organizational Methods Division and as a result had participated in different smaller restructuring projects at different levels. But as members of the senior management, they were involved in different organizational affairs starting from the bank's first strategic plan. Plus, they had a very rich and long (more than ten years) experience in the banking sector and they knew the nuts and bolts of the industry. Therefore, I think it ended successfully because of the fact that they had a very good track record in banking…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Although members tried to gain experience from other private banks, the team never benchmarked any of the banks, because Dashen Bank was relatively bigger and more experienced and thus considering best practices, if any, was the preferred option. However, as some explained, it was not possible to get the structure in a document form and the restructuring team mostly relied on their own experience and qualifications to undertake the restructuring:

> *"...With regard to some processes, we tried to consider incorporating their structure and in some processes, we found that our structure was better. We did not benchmark a company or companies, rather we tried to take their (other banks') best practices in some areas and processes..." (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

Although the restructuring was mainly based on Ernst and Young's study, a number of protagonists mentioned that many additional things were considered and modifications were made when the recommendations of the consulting company were implemented. For instance, a director who was also a member of the implementation team of the credit wing stated:

> *"...We tried to revisit and rework what they had studied, align it with our business reality and technological capabilities, consider the country's stage of development and practical scenarios, and benchmark the main actors of the industry; based on this, we revised their study and got into action" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

The other point that was raised by the restructuring team was that there were many different discussions and deliberations with stakeholders during the restructuring process, although this is something that the adversaries do not accept. Surprisingly, however, the discussions and deliberations were only done with the middle management (according to the definition of the bank) and above. They did not include first line managers and staff members. When it comes to the branches, except for branch managers, other levels starting from the assistant manager were not part of the process. The first draft was presented to all internal stakeholders including to the board and the top management and it was deliberated on:

> *"...Initially, there were many deliberations with the top management. After the first draft was presented, 'what does it look like', 'does it align with their thoughts and their experience?', and 'what do the market dynamics look like?' were issues that we deliberated on with top management on these issues. Then, the first draft was sent to the board and there were many discussions. All stakeholders including department managers and deputy department managers,*

and those whom we call the middle management below the deputy level such as division heads, section heads, and branch managers… many discussions forums were organized and discussions held. Then we tried to consider the many inputs that we got from these discussion forums with different stakeholders…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

In addition, as one branch manager who is a protagonist of the restructuring stated all city managers were convened during the restructuring process and asked to comment. Some unwilling or unable might not have attended; however, he argued, that for the restructuring to be participatory, not everybody and every manager necessarily had to attend and comment. Those who wanted had attended the meeting and commented. He believed that those who claimed that the process was not participatory were the ones who were likely to falsely denigrate the whole process:

"As far as participation is concerned…before implementation, some managers, actually all managers from Addis Ababa city, I don't know about the upcountry, we (city managers) were convened and made to comment. I think that it was participatory; before implementation we were briefed about the restructuring and asked for our comments… what does participatory mean? We were briefed, oriented at the moment, and asked to give comments…it was up to the individual managers to comment or not…but we were convened, it is a fact and we had to give our testimony..." (Manager II, Grade III Branch).

In addition, department managers (sometimes called respective process owners or the senior management team) were asked to comment the proposed staffing of their respective departments. Nonetheless, as the head of the restructuring team noted below, convincing the senior management team was a little tough. Maximum effort was exerted to change their attitude because if they were convinced and as a result bought the change initiative, it would be much easier going downwards since they were the ones who would be taking the responsibility of implementing the change downwards. Finally, although coercion and some unnecessary words were used, the head of the restructuring team believed that the involvement of the senior management team was effective.

Again, although most members of the senior management team commented on the proposed staffing and some brought in their own staffing plans in advance and there were very few who brought different staffing plans after comments were collected and things settled down accordingly. But in this case, one director had some reservations and suspicions regarding their intentions. In short, she made the point that the restructuring was

undertaken in consultation with concerned managers and directors, although they changed their mind very frequently and tried to advance their personal interests.

> *"Fund Management and IBD (International Banking Department) sent their respective department structures. True we had seen these. They sent their structures to us and then we tried to consider many things, in addition to their concerns. Restructuring is very tough. When somebody wanted to make his/her department's structure, you positively thought that it is out of his/her desire to device better ways for the jobs. But they are human beings and they might want to pursue their own interests, so they might engage in 'empire building', that is, trying to expand their department and control everything. ...After we were done with the first draft and before it was approved by the top management, we sent their respective proposed structures for comment to each department ...I think you should give comments before approval. Some did not give comments at that time but after it was approved and we started staffing, some came up with some revisions and changed their mind with respect to their departments..." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Another director commented that organizing a big workshop to take inputs and make the stakeholders aware, then producing a first draft and then again gathering stakeholders to explain what was being done and still receiving feedback, and then reworking the draft again accordingly, was totally impossible. Although they did not involve the organization as much as they originally envisioned, it was difficult to say that the process was not participatory. Shortage of time was one constraining factor that hindered the involvement of all the stakeholders and the collection of detailed inputs and comments. However, some departments had already started working on their respective structures and had come up with some modifications based on Ernst and Young's study. Thus, the restructuring team considered these efforts and incorporated them in the restructuring with little modifications. A director argued that the departments' participation during the restructuring was very high:

> *"I think it is very difficult to say that it was not participative. ...For example, if you take credit and international banking, these departments had already started reworking their own structures based on the study by Ernst and Young. So, what we did was, we took best practices and tried to organize them at the highest level. We tried to adopt what the departments had reworked on the basis of the process study by Ernst and Young; these were not reworked from scratch as process-based...As I told you earlier, if you take for example, credit, IBD, and other basic operations, their inputs were mostly considered. Therefore, their direct involvement is quite apparent. Second, every director was made to give inputs*

on the first draft, hence they were still in touch…" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).

The other theme that was used by the protagonists to justify that the restructuring was well-developed was that the team was independent of any influence or meddling either by the top management or by the board. In particular, till they came up with the first draft and consequently when they incorporated comments and inputs, they were free to do this in whatever way they liked and there were no interventions. This point was made to argue that no interest was served during the restructuring, not even the interests of the top management and the board (the antagonists mobilized a discourse to the contrary). Although the restructuring was given the assignment by the top management and the team was accountable to the top management, there was no 'arm twisting' to influence the restructuring in a certain direction. According to one director, two things helped maintain their freedom. First, the difficulty in influencing an entire committee and second, since the discussions were done in the presence of all members of the top management and senior management members, no one dared to twist the arms of the restructuring team:

> *"...As far as I know, they didn't try to impose their own interests or way of thinking. Actually, such kinds of things would be easier when the assignment is given to a single individual. It is very difficult to influence a committee. Secondly, it was not one person who was the owner of the process; for example, it was not only the team and the president who met and discussed; rather it was the president, vice presidents, and the team, and sometimes also the board. So, I don't think anyone dared to dictate his/her own ideas on such kinds of 'public' stages. Thus, only ideas were discussed and only those ideas which got majority consensus were taken up…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

However, the same director commented that the restructuring could be regarded as the overall effort of many different groups such as the restructuring team, the senior management team, and the top management. Drafts were enriched by the top management and other senior managers with a lot of discussions and arguments. Relations between the top management and the restructuring team were not subordinate-boss relationships, but they were more like peers for a given task, and they raised and challenged ideas freely.

> *"…We first studied and produced the first draft and then presented it to the top management. Thereafter, people at the top management put their maximum efforts into it and enriched it. Plus, surprisingly and luckily enough, we had two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, which had implemented the same model before Dashen, and they shared their experiences as they had worked with the model in their ex-organization and enriched it. I don't take it as*

the team's work and achievement, and I can say that it was a group effort with the top management. Although we managed to produce the first draft, then onwards it was with a lot of discussions with the top management that the structure was modified and enriched…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

In addition, to make the developing and implementing the new structure as smooth as possible, different teams were organized in which the top management was also a member. However, by drawing on the metaphorical expression that restructuring is 'changing a tire in a moving car', the leader of the restructuring team stated that everything cannot be perfect in restructuring and therefore, some ups and downs must be expected and are understandable. In other words, the leader of the restructuring team tried to make the point that problems in the new structure were not only the result of poor handing of the restructuring by the team, but they were also something 'natural' to be expected in any restructuring.

"…When it came to the implementation, since the scale was very grand and at the corporate level, we had been working on it as one project. There were teams, the top management was a member because there would be different obstacles…. if you want to implement without any disruption since it is very likely there will be resistance, obstacles and foot dragging from different sections it is a must to resolve these. However, undertaking restructuring is like 'changing a tire in a moving care', since it exhibited such a nature…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

In general, the discourse mobilized by the restructuring team was not only that the members were experienced and qualified, but different assessments were done and best practices were taken from the industry, especially from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia since that bank was the first to implement the model and had been successful and had reaped many tangible benefits from it. As one director who was not a member of the restructuring team, but had participated in a number of discussions and deliberations as a member of senior management team and was a member of the implementation team of the credit wing said:

"…We tried to study the staffing in the structure, examined the benefits that could be attributed to the structure, discussed with the concerned authorities and we were allowed to review their documents in depth. In addition, we tried to review the industry; we tried to question whether or not the model would work for us, and if it was compatible to our scenario; and we tried to enumerate the benefits that we could gain from the new model. All these things were clearly

examined, and seven documents were prepared as a result" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).

Another director, who was a member of the restructuring team, commented that the only thing that she was dissatisfied with was the timing of the restructuring since it preceded the strategy. However, to compensate for that, a detailed assessment about the internal and external environment was done and enough inputs obtained. Therefore, she did not believe that the timing of the restructuring had any impact on the overall output. Otherwise, according to this director, the whole restructuring process was well done and well-studied, and can be considered a success in so far as it has been fully implemented and the people are fully assigned:

> *"The restructuring was very good. The only concern I had about the restructuring was the timing. The timing was at the end of (in the final year) of our strategic plan term and thus it made our effort very challenging and difficult. ...however, we tried to assess the market dynamics and the future of the banking industry (where is it going?) and we tried to incorporate those inputs into our structuring. In general, I believe that it was very good, maybe I am biased since I was a part of it. Now it has been fully implemented and people have been assigned" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

5.3 Outcome of the Restructuring

This section discusses the discursive practices that were mobilized after the restructuring came to an end (that is, after the new structure was in place). Members of the restructuring team and other protagonists evaluated the new structure as successful using many objective and subjective parameters, and also tried to defend points and criticisms raised by the antagonists by mobilizing a counter discourse that the views promulgated by the antagonists were illogical. However, when the protagonists accepted that there are problems and defects, they tried to attribute these to the consulting company, or/and framed them as implementation issues and caused by poor and inadequate communication. This section specifically involves the following discourses: The restructuring was a success; not copied from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia; the resistance was framed as lack of adequate communication; and countering the antagonists' resistance/views as illogical.

5.3.1 The restructuring was a success

An evaluation of the restructuring (as a success or failure) is inter-related to the rationalization of the restructuring. For instance, problematization underscores not only

that there was a problem with the old structure but also paves the way for subsequent actions and solutions and it is very likely that these actions and solutions will be considered a success. Hence, this section focuses specifically on the discourses mobilized by the restructuring team and protagonists who labeled the restructuring a success.

One of the most widely mentioned success factors of the restructuring was the process that was followed during the restructuring. For instance, a number of protagonists mentioned the thorough internal and external assessments during the restructuring as a part of its success story. The magnitude of the change is another factor that the restructuring team and other protagonists raised to substantiate their allegation that the restructuring was a successful very grand project. As a director who was part of the restructuring team explained the restructuring was very radical in that it affected all levels and everybody in the bank and therefore, he judged it to be an absolute success. Some levels being cut off and increasing the number of departments during the restructuring was taken as a heroic work and thereby a success from the point of view of someone who took part in the restructuring:

> *"…I believe it was very successful and to your surprise, I haven't seen a change of this magnitude since I joined this bank. This is not because I was a member of the team, but the levels that the restructuring impacted…the extent of the restructuring is that at the top it defined the role of the president and the vice presidents and restructured them accordingly; at the department level, in addition to creating new departmental positions, it tried to modify and rework the structures of the existing departments and planned their staffing of them. You can imagine how much energy and resources it consumed as each role in every position and level had to be modified and balanced. So, I believe that it was very successful (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Another director commented that removing the deputy at the management level and the opportunity created for him at directly meeting his managers was a success since it ensured a smooth flow of information and resources:

> *"…We tried to make our structure flat. You know we had a tall structure. When I say tall structure, there was a section head, above the section head there was a division, and above that there was a deputy manager…but we totally cut out the deputy manager and the director could directly meet the managers under him/her…again, below the managers we cut off the section heads so that the managers could directly meet officers without the mediation of section heads…so we did that. I think the structure we have today is slim and flat and*

> *that ensures smooth flow of information and resources. It is responsive and fast, it is not huge…" (Director V, Operation Management Wing).*

Four levels in the middle tier (deputy, division, section, and unit) were delayered (or reorganized as a single level called the manager). The protagonists argued that many redundancies were abolished because of this move and both the managers and the directors were more empowered than before. For instance, the director was designed to be a strategic partner with the bank in his/her respective position and consulting the top management with regard to high level issues. With regard to human resources, the Human Resource Department's director is strategic partner of the bank, or of the sponsor (that is, the top management). He/she is just someone who is responsible for every human resource issue in the bank, and sets the direction, designs the functional strategy, and also policies and procedures. In general, as the leader of the restructuring team noted, one of the key successes of the new structure was that an enabling environment had been created by harmonizing relations between the director and the manager as commented below:

> *"…The director does not do the 'nitty-gritty', he/she does not get into details. If the director sets the direction, the manager must be the executor. This will create an enabling environment. Thus, what is crafted here [department], will be finalized here [division]. We tried to create an enabling environment for them (managers) by redefining their roles. We revised almost all job descriptions of managerial positions. Because the manager is the final person (with regard to implementation) in his/her respective roles…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

A significant impact of the restructuring something related to customer treatment. Unlike previous times, customers were segmented based on their profiles/value to the bank following a Pareto analysis and preferential treatment provided to high-profile customers. In other words, not all customers are not alike and so they are not treated equally. Plus, branches were giving full-fledged services under the old structure. Now branches only focused on deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation while loan processing and foreign currency allocation were centralized. Thus, the Director of the Customer Relationship Department, who is responsible for preferentially serving high-profile customers (who have above Birr 5 million birr in their portfolios), commented that the current arrangement in which customers were treated differentially and the roles of branch managers had become clear and focused, drove his employees to success. To substantiate his case, he pointed out some parameters in which the bank had registered tangible progress:

> *"Before the change, the way I treated customers with credit profiles of Birr 1000 and Birr one million birr was the same. Rather than reaping larger benefits by satisfying the interests of the high-profile customers and fostering their potential, spending my expensive time with low profile customers was meaningless and unproductive. Under the current model, we are successful ...In addition, performance-wise, we are very close to our loan targets and it is obvious that we will surpass our targets at the end of the term. ...our quality is excellent according to customers' feedback and we are seeing tangible results..." (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

In relation to customer services, one manager compared and contrasted how loans were processed under the old structure and how they were processed in the new structure to argue that the new structure enhanced customer services. Earlier, although some amounts could be approved by the vice president of operations, most of the time, larger loan demands were transferred to the board and are approved there. Many responsible bodies/levels pushed the demand up to the board to avoid risk-taking and this was found to be very cumbersome and took longer as it passed through many hierarchies. This negatively affected customers as they could not get loans quickly and invest the money for their purposes (for instance, if the money was sought for bidding, the bidding would close by the time the loan was approved). However, according to one manager, this problem was solved in the new structure:

> *"...But nowadays, the districts can approve loans up to Birr 5 million. Loan amounts of Birr 5-25 million are approved by loan committee C. Loan amounts of Birr 25-50 are approved by loan committee B, which is chaired by the vice president operations. Loan amounts of above Birr 50 million are approved by loan committee A, which is chaired by the president. Thus, unless there are exceptional cases, no loan request is sent to the board. This means that only loans of more than Birr 50 million are approved by the president. This is a result of the restructuring. So, I can say that the current structure is flawless. It is just impeccable..." (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

One of the major impacts of the new structure was on branches. The antagonists argued that the role of branches was diminished as a result of the new structure and that the tools they needed for mobilizing deposits, that is, foreign currency allocation and loan provisions, were centralized. On the contrary, one protagonists branch manager argued that the role of branch managers had become more focused and tilted towards marketing. This, in his view, was an advantage in mobilizing the scarce and much needed resources or deposits:

> *"…I don't see any limitation in relation to the new structure, to tell you honestly. …things are running smooth under the new structure at the moment. I don't see anything odd or a limitation or problem. In fact, people say that this diminished branch managers' powers, but I have reservations about that…most consider it as a limitation…but I accept it positively because it helps us devote most of our time to marketing activities, building and then managing strong relationships with important customers, thereby mobilizing the highly scarce resources through deposits, which is very good. Since it makes us better understand scarce resources, we focus our attention on them, and encourage compliance with rules and regulations of the bank and the National Bank, I don't see it as a problem as such"* (Manager II, Grade III Branch).

The new structure was also considered a success since the relationship between branch managers and their customers had become transparent and strong (although this is something that most branch managers disagreed with, see next chapter). The same manager argued that besides the customer relationship model that strengthened the relations between the bank and high-profile (key) customers, the new structure allowed customers to directly meet people in the head office and know about their case without an intermediary/interlocutor (that is, the branch manager) interfering, since their cases were transferred to and dealt with at the head office. Proper resource allocations and market related skills are other advantages that the bank could gain from the new structure as quoted below:

> *"… [In addition], it will help proper allocation of scarce resources. Because resources are scarce…when we say resources, it could be foreign currency or/and deposits and we have to allocate these scarce resources to appropriate individuals. [Also], it shifts branch managers' role towards marketing from routine work. It will help develop their marketing skills. These are major advantages that we have gained from the new structure…"* (Manager II, Grade III Branch).

As indicated earlier, the head of the restructuring team called the restructuring a success because it eased redundancies and bottle-necks at the middle management level. According to him, unless the middle management team was enhanced and empowered, it was a problematic area and its structural cost was very high as it had become a pipe (relaying information between the lower and higher levels) without any value added. A 'my boss will see it and there is no free lunch' kind of attitude was highly prevalent and therefore jobs were pushed upwards rather than being responsibility and finishing them. Whereas the number of directors increased due to the restructuring, four levels were delayered in the middle and it turned out to be that managers (and thus, the middle managers) were the

ones who were highly affected by the restructuring. Hence, when he was asked whether the restructuring was a success, he replied that delayering four levels in the middle was a success because an enabling environment had been created, and the work and the workers were now better connected.

> *"Although I am not sure how we can measure success, in my view, at least we are able to remove some bottlenecks through the restructuring. We tried to connect workers with work. There was delayering and positions were removed. But were those levels really necessary? ...delayering them could be taken as one success. It was just a waste, the people were redundant, and some boxes did not have any tangible delivery for the bank. When you cut them off, you could minimize your costs. Moreover, an enabling environment has been created. Whenever your structure is very hierarchical, those management posts which we call middle will be a 'pipe'...you see drafts will come to them from below, the middle personnel will comment on them and pass them to their boss, there was nothing tangible and no value addition. ..." (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

In addition, a number of protagonists argued that the shortage of manpower in the market, especially at the highest management level, would be resolved under the new structure. Maker-checker arrangements that were introduced in the new structure were seen as a venue for developing staff members to assume different activities as they have the knowledge about the job that they do or check, and they can work interchangeably when needed. (A maker-checker arrangement is similar to the check-and-balance arrangement, in which decision making and verification are taken care of by different bodies/individuals).

It was also portrayed that the middle management is a position that takes the bank into its distant future. The head of the restructuring team said that if the bank was poor in the middle, its journey ahead would be very dangerous and if it nurtured/enhanced this level and was good at this, the bank's future would be bright. Stated differently, if the middle is poor, the link between the top management and the bottom will be weak and the overall productivity of the bank will be negatively affected. Further, the middle management team can be used for career development purposes. Therefore, the new structure was considered a success as it enhanced the productivity of middle managers:

> *"...You have to test them, you have to give them responsibility and increase their productivity. ...you have to make them feel responsible and accountable. When you reduce their pipe role, as I said earlier, their productivity will increase and at the same time, you can develop a team that can take the bank for a longer*

distance. That area is very productive and important but to make a difference, you have to enhance it (work on its effective and optimal utilization). In this regard, I think we have worked enough in Dashen Bank…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

One branch manager mentioned that the new structure was very pertinent for staff development. He argued by referring to a case where two branch managers and one director who were promoted to vice presidents were rejected by the National Bank of Ethiopia except for one due to the fact that they were not able to fulfil the criteria set by the National Bank to be promoted to vice president level. One of the criteria required that managers could not be promoted to the vice president directly from branches and they should work in the head office and be accountable to the vice president for a number of years. He added that the reason they were not able to fulfill this criterion at the National Bank was that the old structure had some limitations as it had very few head office positions that were accountable to the vice president. The problem was not related to experience as they had worked in the bank for almost 20 years. But they spent their time wholly in branches (not in departments as heads) and thus, they failed to fulfil the criterion that only those persons who will be promoted to vice president positions who have worked as department heads being accountable to the vice president. As a result, Dashen Bank was forced to hire two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (the largest and state-owned bank in Ethiopia, and Dashen Bank's competitor) which created strong discontent among Dashen's managers and directors. The new structure was considered as a success in that it increased the number of director positions directly accountable to the vice presidents, thereby enhancing opportunities for staff succession to top jobs. Second, the restructuring established a separate section called 'staff development and succession plan' which will specifically work on staff development:

"…Is it because we didn't have a succession plan or was it our structure that constrained us? You see why restructuring was needed? Their qualifications were adequate, but they didn't fulfil the National Bank's criteria that for someone to be promoted to a vice president, he/she should work as the head of a department for several years and be accountable to the vice president operations. But since those who were proposed as vice presidents spent their time as branch managers…you see why we were constrained by the structure and it had to be changed? Surprisingly, the principle of Dashen Bank instead was 'grow your own tree.' You have to cultivate your own staff to assume higher positions. Thus, the problem is not minimum or inadequate experience, rather it

is structural in that they were not able to fulfil the criteria that the National Bank set for vice presidents …" (Manager II, Grade III branch).

Some commented that all this success was obtained despite and amidst heavy resistance in the organization. The resistance was overcome and that was considered a success, and even more successes as outlined by the consulting company, will be reaped if the bank performs well in terms of resources:

"But still we have a challenge even after the implementation and as a result, a restructuring team (ad hoc team) under the program management office was formed to follow and monitor how the new structure was doing. As a result, we are working together with the team to solve our problems and challenges. In general, the change is very important for the bank and in the study, the consulting company provided a list of benefits that we will get if we rework our structure and we are realizing those benefits. Moreover, when our resource requirements in terms of human resources and physical resources are addressed, we will reap more benefits. We will especially be able to strengthen our competitive position and leadership in the market…" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).

One director also said that to empower managers and put the structure wholly into practice, rhetoric was not enough and there were many tasks that still needed to be done. Although a new structure had been put in place, the old way of doing things continued. For example, as per the new structure managers will be the final decision makers in their respective areas, but minor things that should be decided at the manager level still came to the director for decisions and signatures:

"The manager will be the final executor as per the policy and procedures without passing it upwards, that is the idea behind the change. That was our intention and the job description also say so. In fact, tasks remain. For example, regarding financial authority, there was a new directive put in place after the restructuring that the manager will have some discretion concerning finance decisions up to a certain limit. Similarly, in every sector and department more delegation must be done after clearly examining the appropriate span of control. Further, issues like which 'activities really need to be finalized at the manager level?' must be clearly dealt with. In different sessions, we say that the manager must be the executor and the final person in his/her respective area but when I honestly think about it, you know…we have to capacitate them to do so, the ways that empower managers must be put in place…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

Although the restructuring team used a discursive practice that the restructuring had been a success, a different and competing discourse (that the restructuring was not a success and

its disadvantages would outweigh its advantages) was mobilized by other directors and managers. Although different parties in the bank struggled for meaning and interpretation, finally the discourse by other directors and managers (that is, antagonists/adversaries of the restructuring) remained dominant and even some protagonists (including the head of the restructuring team) accepted the alternative and competing discourse to some extent and presented the case (as the program management office) to the top management that a revision must be made after the new strategy (which has been outsourced to a foreign consulting company) is developed. As a result, the top management accepted the case that a new revision must be done. However, given the disruption that was caused by the restructuring, one director expressed her worries that revising the structure even slightly may not be a viable option, let alone revising it radically at this stage. In her view, the bank should wait a little longer rather than immediately getting into action whatever the new strategy will have brought:

> *"As far as I know, this restructuring has affected many individuals in the bank. This in turn has disrupted the normal functioning of the business. But the question is: Can the bank cope with a new disruption/interruption next year by doing a new structuring again? I think after examining this question, the bank might decide in favor of a new structure. In fact, the study and the strategy determine what will happen. But regardless of the recommendations of the study and the strategy, what I am saying is that you cannot immediately start a new structure. ... Because, as I told you, it is a little tough. ...the problem is if that necessitates a whole new radical structure, they have to see if the bank is ready to absorb a huge shock and disruption again within such a short time..." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

5.3.2 Not copied from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

The other discourse that was effectively practiced by the adversaries was that the new structure was a copy of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and/or that it was a copy/paste from the internet. However, the restructuring team and other protagonists answered this accusation/discourse by referring to Ernst and Young that studied the process prior to the restructuring effort. The restructuring team and other protagonists argued that the process was studied by a foreign consulting company and the accusation that it was copied from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia was baseless and unfounded. One branch manager even went as far as saying that the contribution of the restructuring team was minimal as the whole process, including 'what should be', was thoroughly studied and recommended by the consulting company:

>*"Since I knew Ernst and Young was being hired to study our processes, it is difficult to say that it was copied from somewhere else. ...Since the Commercial Bank was the first to implement it, it is wrong to conclude that it was a copy of what it did. For me, it is wrong ...when we come to the structure just implemented, what they [the restructuring team] did was they tried to implement what was proposed by a foreign consultancy company, they didn't do anything from scratch. Maybe they tried to contextualize it to our practical scenario...this is the reason why I don't accept the allegations that it was a copy of the Commercial Bank...It was basically done by Ernst and Young and the rest was built upon it"* (Manager II, Grade III Branch).

One of the members of the restructuring team also commented:

>*"There is no significant difference/gap between Ernst and Young's recommendations and the new structure. Let me tell you two things: One thing, they developed the IT strategy for us. What we did was just cascaded that downwards a little — we just cascaded that to the lowest level, that is, the grassroots level, otherwise they designed that. And second, as I told you, they reviewed our processes and thus we needed a new structure to enable the reviewed process, to put the reviewed process into effect. ...Thus, neither did the copy another bank nor did it choose this structure because other banks had chosen it...."* (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

In the same token, one of the members of the restructuring team talked about the purpose of the restructuring and how it was developed. By employing a large, international company, 'process as is' (the existing process and its flaws) was captured and 'to be processed' (how the processes should be designed anew) was proposed. Here ended the task of the consulting company and the restructuring team started its work from 'to be processed' and from recommendations made by the consulting company because it was difficult to run 'to be processed' within the 'process as is' because these were totally different models. Therefore, what the restructuring team did was to bring the 'unfinished project' to an end. The leader of the restructuring team gave examples of how the team undertook the restructuring based on the consulting company's recommendations ('to be processed') as evidence that the new structure was not a copy:

>*"For example, in some places, if centralization was required, or if creating shared service capabilities was recommended, you could only bring those shared services by undertaking new restructuring. Plus, when it comes to loans, previously loans could be processed at the branches, but loan processing has now been centralized with the district offices and head office. So, when you bring the loan processing to the head office or district offices, you have to expand the capacity of the head office and district offices in such a way that they can*

effectively handle the loan processing…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

A number of protagonists noted that the financial sector and the general banking context were similar (that is, there are similar industry conditions) and therefore it was natural that banks followed a similar model and processes in their operations. They also accepted that the model which was currently working in the banking sector was first implemented by the Commercial Bank which changed its structure accordingly. However, this should not be misinterpreted that other banks which consequently implemented the model copied from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

Adversaries/antagonists also employed a discourse that the time it took to complete a new and radical structure was too short and they used this to substantiate their allegation that it was copied from the Commercial Bank and the internet. However, one of the members of the restructuring team stated that it took them six months to complete the whole process excluding the staffing and argued that six months is more than enough to implement a new structure:

> *"Is six months a short time? Six months is not a short time for me. Sorry but I don't think that it is the shortest time. This is just to say that we, particularly I was working full time. I was there full time, not only me, but the guy from program management was also fully engaged with it and both of us were working full time. We used to call the rest for two or three days every week. In fact, we faced frequent interruptions and we were not able to lead the process very well, otherwise, a strategic plan can be designed and implemented within six months, are you serious? Structure is one output and I don't think that the six months that it took us to finish the restructuring is not short time, rather, it took us a longer time…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Besides discounting the antagonists' argument that the restructuring took a shorter period of time since it was copied, she explained that the real challenge in copying is the context in which materials (structures) available freely on the internet are produced. In the modern world practices are available freely on the internet and those are very difficult to implement them in the Ethiopian banking sector and in Dashen Bank in particular because there are obvious limitations in Ethiopia's context regarding technological awareness, banking habits of the society, exposure, and literacy rates.

In addition to the time it took, the arrival of two new vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia was effectively mobilized by the antagonists to highlight their views that

they brought the idea and the model of the new structure from their ex-bank. In fact, members of the restructuring team noted that such views by the antagonists were understandable given that the model and the structure of the Commercial Bank and other private banks was rather similar to what was being implemented in Dashen Bank. Therefore, such a conclusion was not unexpected. Moreover, members of the restructuring team confessed that these two vice presidents had some knowledge about restructuring as they had exposure to it and had experienced the model in their ex-bank. But the areas where these two vice presidents helped a great deal were human resources and the Office of Strategy, whereas loans and international banking were organized as recommended by Ernst and Young. One member of the restructuring team recalled that even in those areas (human resources and strategic management) where the two vice presidents made a significant contribution, their ideas were not simply taken; rather, there was a heated debate and discussion, and their recommendations were taken when they were accepted by the majority in the joint session of the restructuring team and the executives. One of the members of the restructuring team appreciated the help extended by these two vice presidents and outlined that that was the reason they were hired, to use their knowledge, skills, and attitude for the cause of the bank:

> "But these two vice presidents did not have any part in the restructuring. In fact, they gave their comments at the end as part of the top management. Otherwise, I don't see anything like twisting the arm of the team while the restructuring, was done. ...but the main reason for hiring individuals from outside, was using the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience that they had accumulated in a different organization. If they forwarded new ideas, I do not think this would hurt because the ideas came from those individuals who had worked with the Commercial Bank. But I know that because branches raised this issue in front of me also... but it is a pretext, I am sure the main reason is that loans and international banking were brought to the center and away from the branches. But this was EY's recommendation, it is nothing new that we invented..." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

Another member of the restructuring team argued that Dashen Bank could not have benchmarked the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia for two reasons: First, their different sizes made them incomparable since Commercial Bank has more than 1,200 branches while Dashen has about 270 branches as of today. Therefore, due to their size differences, the number of hierarchies (levels) and functional areas in the structure necessarily had to be different. The second reason is that the models they follow are different:

"Second, our business models are totally different. To give you a concrete example, we can only be concerned with and work on business aspects such as credit, but they are also concerned about the national economy and how they can support it. As a result, they only work with exports, industry, and agriculture. We work in all the sectors and thus, if we wanted to take the process designed for their business model, we would be in trouble…" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).

A number of protagonists also noted that although it was impossible to benchmark the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, taking its (the industry's) best practices was a must because it got its process studied by a renowned international company and its model had proved to be successful. However, besides the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, a number of protagonists mentioned that many private banks such as Wegagen Bank, Abysinnia Bank and Awash Bank also had their processes studied by foreign companies and 'joined the club.' Either they undertook a new overall restructuring including designing a new logo right now, or they had already implemented all this. Therefore, this had become an industry practice.

Moreover, many protagonists claimed that Dashen Bank was a pioneer in many aspects and took its own steps. For example, Dashen organized district offices very early. Thus, such things were not started after the vice presidents from the Commercial Bank arrived in Dashen, rather the assignment for a new structure and organizing district offices preceded the hiring of the vice presidents. But later on, during implementation, since the executives came from the Commercial Bank and had exposure to the model, they had an active role to play and their strong involvement was evident.

One director who was not part of the restructuring team but of the implementation team in the credit wing, stated that the team benchmarked the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia for obvious reasons. He argued that Dashen Bank should not repeat the unnecessary processes that Commercial Bank had gone through or the mistakes it had made:

"True that we tried to benchmark the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. When the Commercial Bank did its restructuring, it tried to benchmark world class bigger companies such as Commerzbank in Germany, Citibank in the US, and four or five other financial companies. Fortunately, our vice presidents were part of the change process in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and later on they joined our bank and were active change agents. The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia's change practice had been proved right and we were well informed about the benefits that it reaped, from our friends who worked there and from different publications and news…" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).

This clearly indicates that sometimes contradictory views were propagated by the protagonists to undermine the antagonists' discourse. Although many argued that Dashen Bank could not benchmark the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia due to their different sizes and context (such as the model that each of them follows) and instead best practices were taken, some mentioned that Commercial Bank was benchmarked during the restructuring and that this was appropriate given the success that it had Commercial Bank achieved with its new structure and model.

5.3.3 Resistance framed as lack of adequate communication

Although the restructuring team practiced a discourse that the new structure was well-developed and many discussions and deliberations had been done with different stakeholders, the restructuring team and other protagonists still mobilized a discourse that the resistance to the new structure was due to lack of adequate communication and hence a lot more needed to be done with regard to communication. In fact, there was fierce resistance to the new structure from different groups of middle managers — mainly branch managers, managers and directors at the head office. However, the restructuring team and a number of protagonists downplayed this resistance on different grounds. One of the most widely held belief by the restructuring team and other protagonists was that resistance to change is natural in any change and it cannot be escaped irrespective of whatever is done to please staff members:

> *"I think resistance to change is natural. You have to expect it all the time when you deal with change, and that is the major issue in change management, no question about it…" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

In addition, potential resistance from middle managers and other lower level workers was discounted because of the belief of the protagonists and members of the restructuring team that the key to the success of change management is found in the top management. As a member of the restructuring team said, the whole effort of the team was to get the buy-in of the top management which they also called the sponsor, because of the belief that once the top management gave a green light, it will be automatically accepted by lower level staff members:

> *"When you try to create some value systems and ensure their implementation, what matters is the 'tone at the top.' …As I told you earlier to prioritize the idea and thus provide the required resources for that initiative, there had to be the top management buy-in. If you secure the sponsor's buy in, the top management*

will decide to shift all its resources towards that initiative and allocate resources; having seen its 'tone', there is no way the staff will not accept the initiative. ... The 'tone at the top' will definitely trickle down. Because, if you are working on change, on new ideas, the key is with the top management. If there is a buy-in at the top, you can easily get down to the rest of the staff..." (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

Therefore, although fierce resistance to the new structure was evident, the restructuring team believed that the new structure was flawless as it hinged on the "resource modernization management project" suggested by Ernst and Young. In other words, the restructuring team had a very small influence since it only implemented what was suggested. Whenever there was resistance or any kind of responsibility, the restructuring team and other protagonists anchored their discourse with reference to the consulting company. As a result, the restructuring team held a belief that those who did not resist when the study was presented along with the recommended solutions, they had no reason to resist the new structure that was introduced based on the recommendations of the study. Therefore, the problem with the new structure was lack of adequate communication rather than being related to the structure itself:

"It is a communication gap... as I told you earlier, communication with the required quality, frequency, and seriousness should be undertaken to clarify doubts and skepticism. ...One way or the other, that operating model was preferred by the top management, and was suggested by an external party. So, if the bank wanted to move this way with this model, 'how should the structure look?' and this is what we tried to answer and put a structure in place, so, it was clearly out of our mandate. But if you ask me as someone who was involved in the process, I believe that detailed communication is necessary" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).

Huge resistance came from branch managers who were greatly affected by the new structure as some of their important activities related to deposit mobilization were centralized in the head office. But protagonists argued that branch managers were made to focus on and exert their efforts on resource mobilization because it is a major constraint and is critical for the bank's success. If branches were required to process loans by doing a credit analysis, it would be inefficient, and the time taken to serve the customer would be longer. Therefore, the idea was to let the managers 'hunt' customers and bring them to the head office, and when tasks related to the credit or foreign currency allocation were done centrally, shared capability at the highest scale would be created since there will be support from the back office. However, at this point, some confusion might still remain among the

branch managers and one of the members of the restructuring team commented that detailed communication must be put in place:

> *"But there could be different questions at this point, for example, when loan and foreign currency are centralized, the branch manager might ask 'how am I going to hunt for customers?', 'to what extent is it my responsibility?', and 'how will the document flow?' All these things must be clearly defined and communicated to the concerned people to make them buy the change…" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

Although one member of the restructuring team believed that some of the resistance was driven by personal interests, she reluctantly pointed out that communication is important rather than letting gossip hold sway in the organization:

> *"What does transparency mean? To whom do we have to communicate that we are undertaking restructuring and therefore being transparent? To different stakeholders? I don't know if that would work…. maybe that could be one reason why the people assumed things and talked without any evidence because we were not briefing them and we were not providing them with sufficient information; rather than letting people panic through gossip, you could have told them the reality and made them relax…I think that is one lesson that we should draw for future endeavors. When new initiatives and assignments are undertaken in the bank, briefing staff members and other stakeholders may not be a bad idea" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Members of the restructuring team were hopeful that it will be possible to get people's buy-in through communication and that it was not too late even a year after the structure was put in place, to do so. They hoped that people will be on board when they understood the rationale behind the restructuring:

> *"Although many people resisted the new structure, I believe they will eventually come on board when they understand it. Thus, more communication is required from the management… Besides concentrating on minor things like 'computers are not purchased for my section' and 'the tables are broken', by raising bigger agendas repeatedly and clarifying doubts, I believe we can achieve even better results" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

One of the members of the restructuring team mentioned that a workshop was organized for middle managers at the final stage after the first draft was produced and many people were not able to give their comments and suggestions on the first draft since it was a half-day workshop and not everyone had the chance to reflect on it. This led to speculations and therefore, he believed that more communication was still needed even though a year had

passed since it was implemented so that the resistance to the new structure could be overcome.

> *"Yes, true because you can only break the observed resistance with detailed communication, you have to learn from feedback, modify the structure accordingly, and show them that their inputs were considered. In doing so you can overcome resistance… We have to work a little more with communication, but I think it is not too late and we can still communicate because it is still under implementation" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

5.3.4: Countering the antagonists' resistance (antagonists' views are illogical)

The other discourse mobilized by the restructuring team and the other protagonists was that the views expressed by the adversaries were not only illogical, but also a pretext for resistance as they were driven by personal interests rather than organizational benefits. Stated differently, the discourse that the protagonists mobilized was that if the restructuring was seen from the point of view of the bank, it was worth it and made the bank up to date in terms of implementing international practices. One member of the restructuring team commented:

> *"The problem with restructuring is…. instead of back-end and organizational benefits and interests, what drives stakeholders' reaction is 'what is in it for me?' since it was shrouded with many questions such as 'what is my fate?', 'where does the new structure put me?', and 'where does it take me?' It was a very difficult exercise. Honestly, convincing stakeholders to be selfless and consider the restructuring from the point of view of the benefits and interests that it got for the bank (regardless of their own fate, regardless of the position they will be assigned) was very difficult. It was a very daunting task (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

Most of the views by the antagonists were presented in the form of 'it will not be good for the customers and/or the competition' but the protagonists argued that when these arguments were examined in detail there was nothing. The leader of the restructuring team also mentioned that although what was presented by the antagonists was illogical and a mask for their resistance, an effort was made to see if there were things that had been overlooked in the process by taking their concerns seriously and taking inputs till the end.

In this discourse mobilized by the restructuring team, it is possible to clearly see the antagonism and differences among different groups of middle managers in the organization. Thus, this discourse serves two purposes: First, it tries to show that the views expressed by the antagonists are illogical and they do not consider international practices.

Second, it tries to see each view raised by the antagonists and tries to address these to get their buy-in for the official discourse. In general, the protagonists wanted to state that there was no major problem with the restructuring process and the new structure, rather the criticism was a cover for the antagonists' resistance and was done by those who wanted to advance their personal interests.

The first issue that the restructuring team and the other protagonists encountered was that the process was not participatory. A point was raised raised that experienced people in the area (for example, those who knew about branch operations) were not consulted and all of a sudden the Dashen community was notified that a new structure had been developed by a team. However, the counterargument is that the team did nothing except implement what was suggested by the consulting company, Ernst and Young, which was supposed to consult all stakeholders. In other words, the restructuring team did not have the option of proposing a different structure than what was presented by the consulting company and therefore, involving different stakeholders in the process was meaningless as far as the team's tasks were concerned:

> *"Look, it is not even that we could propose options. If you tell me that Ernst and Young didn't consult the branches when it did the consultancy work, it is hard to believe. But our purpose was to 'accommodate' or put into effect Ernst and Young's recommendations, that was our task, do you understand? Ernst and Young's study was one of our bases and inputs, so we had to incorporate its recommendations and I believe it is logical. I would have consulted the branches, if there had been options, right? ...I am not sure if Ernst and Young consulted them, but as far as our team is concerned, it is meaningless to talk to them now, to discuss with them when your task is putting into effect what has already been suggested..." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

In addition, a number of protagonists noted that the claim that the process was not participatory was made to undermine the group's efforts. In fact, many argued that the main brains of the bank (that is, its top management, board and executive leadership) had participated in the process and they were convinced that it was enough given that gathering input from everybody in the bank was not feasible. This perpetuated the hegemony that top management was the brain of the bank, engaging in the thinking part of the organization while others engaged in the doing part. For instance, one manager argued below that as the brains of the bank they were in touch on the restructuring and so it was participatory. Besides, the team organized a workshop after the first draft was produced and oriented the staff members on the process and the proposed structure, and then tried to collect some

inputs from them. Therefore, the view that it was not participatory was not only something that the manager accepted. In fact, he called it 'trivial' and asked, 'What is participation more than this?' and argued that not being able to give comments on the proposed structure in the workshop was not the problem of the restructuring team:

> *"And who is supposed to be involved in the process? Those who had to participate participated, all those you think of as the 'brains of the bank' participated. Since the participation didn't reach to our level (division head), it is wrong to say that the restructuring process was non-participatory. The board participated, all the executive leadership participated, the corporate council that led the bank participated, so since I, Mr X, didn't participate, does it mean it was non-participatory? Those who are above us and the brains of the bank participated and shaped the restructuring. If it is believed that the restructuring was only the effort of the restructuring team, it is wrong. ..." (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

The discourse mobilized by the branches that the new structure would hurt their business and shrink their powers faced fierce resistance from the restructuring team and other protagonists, who claimed that these critical voices were driven by self-interest. The new structure centralized loan processing and foreign currency allocations to the head office from the branches. Branch managers viewed their business as 'give and take' with customers. Stated differently, branches provided foreign currency and loans for their customers, and in return mobilized deposits. However, centralizing foreign currency allocations and loan provisions to the head office following the new structure was like 'snatching the weapons of a combatant in the midst of a fierce battle' (Manager III, Grade III Branch). One director who was a member of the restructuring team argued that those services were still offered by the bank (wherever it is) and anyone who thought from the perspective of the organization must admire this decision. Further, the districts still had some discretion in providing loans. She emphasized that unless there were personal benefits attached to it, where foreign currency allocations and loan provisions were transferred should not matter as long as the bank was still providing these services efficiently and effectively:

> *"I agree that the business is give and take. But the fact that they cannot allocate foreign currency and give loans, does not mean that the bank has stopped giving these services. The bank still gives loans and allocates foreign currency. For example, let us assume that branches hunted one huge potential depositor, then after questions like 'is the depositor eligible for foreign currency or a loan?', and 'shall we deliver those services to him/her' will be analyzed and decided*

centrally. They were only denied the privilege of taking decisions over these issues since they were now taken centrally, otherwise, the assumption is that it is still through the branches that customers will be attracted to the bank ...” (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

A number of protagonists argued that district offices in the new structure had some discretion to allow loans up to a certain amount (Birr 5 million) and allocate foreign currency. Therefore, branch managers can discuss with the district managers and still serve customers regarding foreign currency and loan up to a certain amount.

On the other hand, many protagonists (who are not branch managers) mentioned that resource mobilization was not only a tough job but also a success factor for the bank. Therefore, they argued that branches should not undermine their task of deposit mobilization. Similarly, the director of customer relationships argued that it was important to centralize foreign currency allocations and loan processing for the sake of control and focus. He believed that branches had to focus on resource mobilization, and this was advantageous for the bank. Of course, this director handles some of the centralized activities and therefore it is not surprising that he argued that the issue should not be exaggerated and portrayed as if this was introduced to hurt branches:

“It is right that there is a value proposition in the loan facility. For customers to deposit in my branch, I have to give them proportional services [loans and foreign currency]; ...when customers come here (centrally), branches are a gateway. Customer recruitment and selection is the responsibility of the branches. Branches will send to us customers whom they recruit and we will extend the required resources/services to the customer and in that way, branch involvement is huge. Previously, they worked on the process end-to-end from recruitment to resource allocations but nowadays for the sake of control and focus, branches are compelled to focus on resource mobilization and customer hunting...” (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).

One branch manager considered these services of foreign currency allocations and loan provisions to have been central from the very beginning. Branches did not have any authorization to give loans except providing recommendations and doing an analysis and following other processes. Approval was always reserved for the top management and the branch manager thought that as long as loan approval was not in his mandate, he could not assume that he was authorized to give loans. However, doing credit analysis and making recommendations were seen by a number of branch managers as very important jobs, as the loans would have been approved at the end of the day, because the top management

would not have any information fir rejecting his/her recommendation or downplaying the analysis:

> *"As far as I understand it, if I did not approve any loans earlier, what is the difference now? The way we handle loans is the same before and after the restructuring...but currently under the new structure, the recommendation part that was done by the branches has been removed. However, processing customer requirements for a loan is our job...it is the branch's job. ...we recruited customers earlier and we are doing the same now. The recruitment role is still our responsibility and this is nothing different in the new structure...the only change is that there are the district offices in between the branches and the vice president, otherwise there is no change regarding our roles. The mandate of the districts is to give loans is up to 5 million, and loans above that amount will be allowed at the corporate level and thus, the difference is not that big..." (Manager II, Grade III branch).*

In addition, in relation to branch operations the protagonists mobilized a discourse that branch operations were highly corrupt and the huge resistance that came from branch managers was due to the fact that the new structure abolished personal interests and corrupt practices. Although branches gave full-fledged services, the protagonists accused them of giving diversified attention to different functions and solely focusing their attention on some activities. In line with this, one director commented that the branches focused on loan provisions (since it led to personal advantages) totally overlooking deposit mobilizations. Therefore, to make branches focus on deposit mobilizations and for adopting international practices, according to the director who was a member of the restructuring team, it was a must to centralize loan processing and foreign currency allocations and she did not think that this diminished the powers of the branches, rather it made their role focused:

> *"Actually, I don't think that the new structure has shrunk the powers and roles of the branches. The problem is that they thought that their role was only giving loans. But attracting customers is a bigger role. But if you ask me to tell you honestly, they need these loans and foreign currency allocations for unnecessary benefits; they do not need them to advance the purpose of the bank or their duty, I am sorry to say this. Honestly, if they are keen to serve the bank and be loyal to it, they have very interesting and demanding duties such as customer attraction and marketing, but they do not spend their time in doing any of this. ...it is true that their roles have been changed, not minimized, but altered....and it is not only in our bank, every bank in the industry goes the same way when it comes to branches, it is a common practice among banks..." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

The director also mentioned that branch managers were going too far and were hurting the bank as they complained a lot instead of working hard. Although Dashen Bank is a very tolerant organization and thus, no one is penalized, the director claimed that strict measures should be taken against those branch managers who were going against the interests of the bank. "*If we want to achieve our aspirations of being one of the top banks in Africa, we should go for international practices. And in order to go there, I think branches must show interest and commitment…*" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

Another discourse mobilized by the branch managers was that the cancellation of Progress Review Meetings (PRM), a forum in which the top management, all branch managers and concerned stakeholders convened every three months, was a bad idea and was interpreted in diverse ways including that the top management would not be interested in the concerns of the branches, and that it would signal the negative view that the top management had of branches. On the other hand, the restructuring team and other protagonists mobilized a discourse that PRM at the top level was not only unnecessary but it was also viewed by some as a mechanism for developing district managers to assume higher positions (which was considered by many as a weakness in Dashen Bank owing to its hiring of two vice presidents from a competing bank). As one director who was a member of the restructuring team commented, branch managers had to be convinced that the district was a higher position and could solve their problems, and an alternative mechanism to PRM must be devised. He mentioned that he had been branch manager for ten years and at that time the bank had not more than 20 branches and thus, it was logical and appropriate for the top management to gather 20 or so branch managers and discuss their problems and performance. Continuing his explanation, the director argued that today the bank had a network of more than 270 branches and if 100 of them were located in Addis Ababa, it was practically impossible to discuss with all these people. Therefore, he did not believe that the platform (PRM) was needed at the top management level but he mentioned that a different mechanism that replaced PRM, such as establishing a well-organized 'suggestion box' system must be created so that it was possible to make the executives accessible to the branches. The suggestion box was placed in the president's office in earlier times and was seen by some as one of the best mechanisms that Dashen Bank used by which people, including branch managers, reflected on everything they felt should reach the top management:

> *"…The concept of an idea box is that you can directly write to the president whatever you think is helpful for the bank and propose any innovative ideas. After reading the suggestions and ideas from the box, those ideas that the president believed were important were directed to the concerned authorities. Plus, although they are not active these days, two committees had been established previously – the quality assurance committee and the deposit mobilization committee. Thus, if you allow or give a chance to people to contribute by creating such kinds of platforms, it is the bank that will benefit at the end of the day. Therefore, we have to work more on these things…" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

A number of protagonists argued that the very purpose of the new structure was to decentralize power in certain issues and that is why the district offices were established. Therefore, although the way PRM was conducted, attended and the level it was organized at changed a bit, many protagonists argued that PRM was still intact. For instance, one branch manager noted that PRM had not been cancelled but it was now conducted at the district level (without the attendance of the top management). But he thought that it was not only impractical to convene more than 100 branch managers (city branch managers) every month, but it was also appropriate to develop district managers. He was of the opinion that vice presidents should not waste their time organizing and leading PRM (on nitty-gritties of branch operations), instead this must be left to the district managers and the vice presidents should focus on strategic issues:

> *"The reason PRM was cancelled at the highest level was because one of the purposes of the restructuring was developing staff. It was assumed that district managers will be able to discharge the role of the vice presidents. Therefore, the district managers took that responsibility from the vice presidents. Thus, district managers were required to conduct the progress review meeting every month or two months. If there are things beyond their capacity [raised in the PRM], they could forward these to the top management and a general meeting will be organized as it was clearly indicated in the guidelines that were dispatched…" (Manager II, Grade III branch).*

Another director who was a member of the restructuring team said that PRM was to be held at the district level to decentralize power but she also added that a lot was expected from district managers to convince branch managers that PRM at the district level was worth having. She called districts offices 'little head offices' as they handled everything that was taken care of by the head office before the new structure was implemented. Regarding their roles, they worked on the entire process from planning to controlling and they performed all the management functions. Regarding human resources, they could hire

up to Grade II branch managers; hence, they were empowered in every respect. Nowadays it was considered a privilege and a rare opportunity to be a district manager according to a protagonist. However, the only problem was that since district managers were chosen from branch managers and were friends, branch managers might have a harder time accepting district managers' authority and may find it difficult to believe that they can make a difference: "*These district managers must outshine and prove their competence; by using their expert powers, they have to make people accept their capacity and believe in them*" *(Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

She also strongly criticized the view that PRM was cancelled at the bank level due to a loss of appetite by the top management to listen to the branch managers' views and instead she argued that the top management gave more emphasis to branch managers than before:

> "*...Last year, I and one vice president toured the Mekele district (800 km from Addis Ababa). Thus, the top management never overlooked branches assuming that now there were district managers. We visited every branch…. we went even to rural areas in the Mekele district and talked to seven or eight branches, not only with managers but we also talked to staff members and tried to see how operations were going on in those branches. What I am telling you is that the top management has an interest in coming even closer to the branches, rather than distancing itself. To tell you frankly, I haven't seen such a thing in the history of the bank…*" *(Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

These quotes clearly show that although the antagonists mobilized a discourse that PRM was cancelled was due to lack of interest by the top management to address the problems and challenges of the branches, the restructuring team (and other protagonists) effectively mobilized a counter-discourse and defended the decision regarding PRM. According to the protagonists, conducting a PRM at the top management level as was done before was practically impossible now due to the expanding branch networks; PRM was not cancelled but relocated to the district level, which is also important for developing district managers; strengthening different mechanisms of feedback gathering such as 'suggestion boxes' can be done to bring branches' cases and problems to the attention of the top management; and that the top management is becoming even closer to the branches by touring different districts, including those located far away.

The assignment of directors was another issue around which competing and alternative discourses were practiced among different groups of middle managers. Specifically, the assignment of all members of the restructuring team as directors led to different

interpretations thereby leading to different discourses. For example, the antagonists' view that the restructuring was a pretext to serve a given group's interests and those favored were promoted and others demoted was countered by one director, who was a member of the restructuring team, in a way that acknowledged the hegemony of the top management. She asked: 'Doesn't the top management have authority to promote anyone it likes and demote others it doesn't like? *Fire anybody it does not like and replace with or hire someone it likes?*' and argued that the top management did not need a new structure to fire and hire or/and to demote and promote. On the contrary, the director argued:

> *"Rather, positions have been created in abundance because the structure was expanded and became very large. In the old structure, there were only two vice presidents. And when we say that the structure at the highest level was revised, there were only three vice presidents. But now we have four vice presidents. While we had 14 departments, we now have 19 departments under these four vice presidents. At division level, we have 46 management positions and so on. So, I don't know the office politics but what we have witnessed is that positions have been increased…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

On the other hand, one manager downplayed the discourse practiced by the other parties saying that it was not healthy and was full of pessimism. He argued that those who thought this way were inept who could not even produce a one-page report whereas people in the restructuring team had the capacity to discharge any responsibility, did an excellent job and deserved directorships, if not more.

> *"Always negative thoughts…I hate negativity because there are some people who always like to see 'the half empty glass.' Imagine…these guys sacrificed their Sundays, Saturdays, and many other things in their lives without any payment. They benchmarked many banks and tried their best to produce something. Have we seen their efforts? Really, do we have the determination to shoulder the same responsibility? …" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

He also mentioned that had the restructuring work been outsourced to an external company, the bank would have spent millions, but since the new structure was developed in house, the bank was able to save a lot. Continuing his argument, the manager noted that the restructuring team was not paid anything for what it did and it didn't assign themselves and instead submitted the document related to the restructuring and the top management did the staffing, at least the directorships:

"They did the restructuring…they said 'this is what we did' but they didn't assign themselves to the posts. It was the executive management that assigned individuals and this was confidential till the end. I would be very angry if they were not assigned to where they are now. Because if they were not assigned after all these efforts and sacrifices, it would have been very painful given that they were not paid anything for their hard work. All of them are master's degree holders and have had ample experience in the banking sector. I am not saying that their work is flawless or perfect. But I am saying that the other perspective is not healthy. It is jealousy, it is an envious feeling like 'why am I not made part of the team?', and 'why wasn't I not assigned?'…" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

Some protagonists claimed that it was not necessary for the criteria to be clear to them, but also that the top management had every right to do whatever it wanted when it came to staff assignments. This view clearly shows the power dynamics in the bank and reproduces the top management's hegemony. However, as indicated earlier, some also conveyed the view that the restructuring team had not contributed that much to the new structure because the basics were provided by the consulting company including the criteria and qualifications that the position holders needed to for their positions. For example, one branch manager claimed that everything was done based on the criteria developed by the consulting company and thus, it was difficult to state that there was favoritism:

"For example, a BA degree holder cannot be a director as per the criteria. I am not quite sure about the criteria but from what I see, I think educational background has been considered more. Moreover, the top management might have its own preferences like personal behavior and other issues might have also been considered. There are criteria for lower levels as well. I think the top management has every right to assign any individual whom it thinks can efficiently and smoothly perform and achieve more and as a result they might have used their own criteria such as personal behavior which may not be clear to other people. And I don't believe that the criteria should as such be clear to everyone …" (Manager II, Grade III branch).

In addition, the same branch manager argued that those who were senior but had achieved less in terms of formal education complained that there was unfairness in assignments and also accused the top management of favoritism:

"You see someone who is a high school graduate may complain and aspire for a director's position because of the fact that he/she has stayed many years in the bank (because he/she is senior), this is wrong. Therefore, if one is fit because he fulfilled the experience, qualifications, and performance requirements, I think seniority does not matter. I think the recently assigned directors do have the

experience and qualifications required. Although they are relatively junior, their minimum years of experience is more than ten years, plus they are greatly advanced in terms of qualifications. We have to admit they are better… Most of them do have more than two Masters (second degree), and there is no one among the assigned who does not have a Master's degree…" (Manager II, Grade III Branch).

The restructuring team was also accused of making 'boxes' and creating positions for themselves and their supporters. Among the accusations was the decision to separately establish a Human Resource Development Department at the director level from the Human Resource Department. This was severely criticized and was interpreted as a self-serving measure. However, the member of the restructuring team who was later assigned as the director of the Human Resource Development Department argued that it was appropriate to separate human resource development from the 'normal' human resource functions and claimed this was an industry practice by mentioning Abyssinia Bank as an example. Abyssinia Bank divided human resource management into 'Human Resource Strategy' and 'Human Resource Administration' so that the latter took care of operational nitty-gritties whereas the former had a more strategic focus. Therefore, the director of the Human Resource Development Department argued that having different departments which undertook different functions of human resources would help give appropriate attention to each of them.

Moreover, Dashen Bank's weakness in staff development surfaced when two of its vice presidents were rejected by the National Bank and as a result Dashen Bank was forced to hire two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. In addition, a director noted that leadership interruption had sometimes cost the bank a heavy price. Organizing human resource development at a director level was thus helpful and so a 'succession plan and career management' was established as one section thereof:

> *"Something that I still remember is that there was one vice president and he was served as the acting president for more than six months without any vice presidents under him and that had a huge impact on operations. True that there was a problem with regard to staff development. That is why we have a manager under a section called 'succession planning and career management.' We have faced the problem and paid a heavy price for it, we suffered a lot and that is probably the main reason that Awash Bank has overtaken us as the leading private bank in Ethiopia. That did not happen without a reason. Leadership interruption is not a good thing…." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

The position to which the leader of the restructuring team was assigned was one of the issues that the adversaries picked to show that the team served its own interests and the interests of the top management. First, the Program Management Office was accountable to the president. Second, most of the activities and strategic issues that should have been handled by the Strategic Management Office were organized under this department. Therefore, the Office of Strategic Management (which is also accountable to the president) was perceived to have become powerless. However, the head of the restructuring team and the director of the Program Management Office argued that it must be like this for the sake of efficiency and it was appropriate that the Office of Strategy should take care of strategy implementation and monitoring and leave the strategic development/formulation or other activities related to strategic issues to another department. He also explained that even the new Strategy Development Department will be handled by his office, whether it was outsourced (which was later the case) or developed in house:

> *"With regard to implementing high level projects, corporate strategic initiatives or those which were identified as strategic issues in our strategy… considering the efficiency problem that may be caused if different sections and departments were required to lead the project at the same time as the daily operations, the Program Management Office was formed. …there may be different projects which have similar goals and by embracing them in a program framework, it is possible to implement them be it either internally or by employing experts via outsourcing arrangements. I am responsible for implementing the programs and project management … We have the Office of Strategic Development but that comes during strategy implementation and monitoring…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

A director who was also a member of the restructuring team defended the accusation that the same person (the director of the Program Management Office and the leader of the restructuring team) had been serving in the same position even before the restructuring started. The reason why the restructuring was run by his office was because his office was responsible, that is, restructuring was one of the strategic issues that the bank identified. However, the new structure made the Program Management Office accountable to the president and she argued that it was the right decision given that someone who ran a project needed to have ultimate power and that power must be conferred to him by making his position accountable to the president:

> *"I think it is [Mr X] whom they accused of pursuing personal interests. From the very beginning, he was head of project management and he continued in that*

position. But the point is that he did not know whether or not he would continue in the same position because assignments were done last. And the reason the head of the position was made accountable to the president was not due to his ability to influence. But to run a project, someone with ultimate power is necessary, for sure. Wherever you go, someone who is determined to take timely decisions and is accountable to the president is assigned as head of projects, I think that is a common practice wherever you go, isn't it? I believe so, that must be the case. Is it not the same in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia? It is! So, I personally believe that no personal interests were pursued" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

A number of antagonists mobilized a discourse that the new structure put a lot of pressure on the managers and freed the directors. As clearly indicated in the discourses mobilized by the antagonists, the deputy's position was delayered, and two or three levels below the manager were also delayered and the manager became isolated and had to shoulder a huge responsibility. Whereas the roles of the directors were enhanced to give them a strategic character and they were labeled 'senior management' (in this research, they are defined as middle managers) and 'strategic partners to the president.' This move, however, was interpreted as a self-serving measure by the antagonists (it has to be recalled that all members of the restructuring team were assigned as directors). However, many protagonists noted that directors should be strategy focused if the bank is to be world-class and their orientations must change from 'managing' to 'directing' (hence, the name 'director'). Therefore, the new structure addressed such issues. For instance, the labeling of directors as 'senior management' and defining their role as 'strategic partners to the president' was defended by one director as:

"From the very beginning, strategy was an issue of the top management, it did not concern us. Therefore, perhaps the only reason why it was said that the directors were strategic partners to the top management was because the directors were responsible for developing functional strategies and ensuring their implementation in their respective areas. The responsible body to take the department to the highest possible standards (that is international and the modern world practices) is the director himself, not only from the direction of the top management. ...the head of the department should be able to direct, should change his/her orientation into directing although its practicality depends on the capacity of the person as director" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

This quote clearly bestows strategic thinking and handling of strategic issues to the top management and the strategic partners of to the bank (that is, the senior management)

whereas the 'doing' part was left to the rest of the organization. The other point which the restructuring team defended was the assignment of the restructuring team, and this was a hot issue in the bank and was an effectively mobilized discursive practice used by the adversaries. In fact, how members of the team were selected was not obvious to both the protagonists and antagonists and even the members of the restructuring team had no idea. However, the protagonists used many discursive tools to show that the team was one of the best that the bank could have for the purpose. For example, one branch manager commented that the educational background of the members of the team was better than anyone else's in the bank.

> *"How the selection for the restructuring team was done and composed is not clear to me…but I hope that qualifications plus experience were considered. We were not briefed about that but when I see the bank's norms and practices, experience and qualification are always considered. And as can be seen, those who make up the team are better in many ways, including qualifications and experience. They are much better than most of us, honestly. I think those things are considered but particularly, I assume, that educational status could be highly emphasized for that particular purpose" (Manager II, Grade III Branch).*

As will be indicated in the next chapter, antagonists mobilized a discourse that the restructuring team was not diversified, that is, they all came from the business wing (setting aside the technical wing and branch operations) and were cliques of the top management. However, this was defended by the restructuring team and other protagonists. For example, contrary to what was discursively mobilized by the antagonists, a number of protagonist and members of the restructuring team noted that people from different backgrounds were made members of the team and that was the right decision that helped the process. The team had the right mix of people from risk and credit, human resources, Office of Strategic Management, branch operations, and the Program Management Office. In addition, according to one director who was a member of the restructuring team, they all had long experience in the banking sector and had reached the director level except one member. The one who had not reached the director level was a manager of the division of organizational methods when she was made a member of the restructuring team. However, she claimed that she had related experience as her division was responsible for smaller-level restructuring in each department, and designing job descriptions and specifications was under her mandate. Therefore, although she was not sure of the criteria using which the team members were assigned, she believed that her assignment could be directly related to her experience and exposure:

"As far as I am concerned, I believe that I was made a member of the team because I was head of organizational methods, a section under the Corporate Planning Department. Therefore, although not at this scale, I was in charge when minor restructuring was done in different departments and parts of the bank and I believe that my assignment as a member of the team is connected to that. ... As far as other members are concerned, assigning people from different sections and backgrounds was really important for the task. We had people from risk and rredit; for example, [Mr Y] had worked in risk and credit; [Mr X] has very good knowledge of international banking and branch operations. We had [Mr Z] from human resources...in fact, I am not sure how the team was composed or whether these issues were considered; it is only the top management which knows that" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

However, later she acknowledged that the absence of IT personnel in the team was a major weakness and it affected some processes, especially IT and other related functions a bit, although this may not have had a major impact on the entire restructuring. She added that lessons must be drawn from this experience for similar endeavors in the future.

Contrary to this, a director who was also a member of the team confessed that there were many individuals in the bank who were better in terms of experience and qualifications but she thought that they would advance their own interests and they were poor in team work, whereas the restructuring demanded team work:

"You know sometimes it is not about qualifications or the position holder's level, it is about team work; individuals should be keen to work as a team, some individuals are good, talented but they may not be interested in working as a team or could be ineffective in team work. These points should also be considered. I know there are individuals in our bank who have ten times more potential than I do but they always advance their personal interests. So, if you think from the top management's perspective, is it possible to involve such individuals?" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

The quotes above from someone who is a director and member of the restructuring team indicates that people can mobilize different and sometimes even contradictory discourses to make their case. Although she acknowledged that the restructuring team and its composition was the best that the bank could have, later she admitted that there could be better individuals in terms of qualifications and experience, but they may not be fit for the job because they may want to advance their own interests and were not good at team work. In addition, she admitted that some relevant functions such as IT were left out from the team and that was a mistake to be corrected in the future.

The other discourse which was defended by the restructuring team and other protagonists as naïve was precedence of strategy over structure. Although some in the restructuring team accepted in principle that strategy should come before the structure, the head of the restructuring team stated that he discussed possible minor modifications in the new structure based on the new strategy that would be developed by a foreign consulting company with the top management. This process would be handled under his office. However, one member of the restructuring team, as indicated earlier, noted that assessments and scanning the environment were done to compensate this (the wrong order) and in so doing, the point that the strategy should have come first was made meaningless. In her words:

> *"...the only thing that disappointed me is the timing, we were not able to revise our structure in the mid-term of the strategy as clearly articulated in the strategy itself...had we done that, what would be the benefit? As you know structure is an enabler, isn't it? After you figure out your course, restructuring will not be difficult and challenging for you...you are not expected to assess the market because it would have already been done when the strategy was formulated, so this increased our burden and pain" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

On the other hand, one branch manager rejected the idea that strategy should have come first because, in his view, there was already a strategy and the structure could be based on that since there were no huge modifications with regard to the new strategy except incorporating some developments/updates especially in relation to the government's plans such as GTP II (growth and transformation plan) and different targets such as deposit amounts, loan ceilings, foreign currency generation, and branch expansion that are required by the National Bank of Ethiopia:

> *"We had a strategy although its life was ending, otherwise we did not get into restructuring without developing a strategy. ...therefore, I don't think that this could prevent us from getting a new structure. Because we already had a strategy, thus what was expected of us with regard to the [new] strategy was that we needed to fill gaps if any, we had to modify them but that didn't mean that we didn't have a workable strategy. When a new strategy is developed, we build on the previous strategy and try to modify it and fill in the missing elements, I don't think we will go for a whole new strategy. ...I don't think that it will have a major impact on the structure we just implemented recently. So, what I could say is that we built on what we had..." (Manager II, Grade III Branch).*

This clearly show that organizations are places of discursive struggles and as a result the restructuring team singled out and justified the adversaries' views as being naïve, in addition to mobilizing their own discourses. In other words, the findings show that subjects in the discursive struggle do two things: They mobilize their own discourses and counter the adversaries' discourses point by point (produce counter-arguments for the adversaries' arguments).

Chapter 6: Discourse Mobilized by the Antagonists

This chapter gives the antagonists' discursive practices of the official discourse introduced in the previous chapter. It discusses the antagonists' discursive struggle to make their own version of the reality and its interpretations regarding the restructuring the dominant one. The top management applied a hands-off approach during the restructuring (except staff assignments for the directors) and the discursive practices that followed. Therefore, the top management was not directly involved and its role in the discursive struggle was very minimal (although the discourse by the restructuring team to a large degree represented the top management, the personal involvement of the top management in the discourse practices was very rare). This void provided an opportunity for the antagonists to freely and openly challenge the official discourse. My findings reveal how the antagonists effectively curbed the official discourse even leading to a decision by the top management that a new structure would be in place after the strategy (which it awarded to a foreign consulting company, KPMG) was in place.

The antagonists' discursive practices included antecedent of the restructuring (the timing of the restructuring was not right, outsourcing of the restructuring to a foreign consultant would have been better, and there was differential attention and unfairness in the bank); the restructuring process (the restructuring team did not have best composition and its members pursued personal interests, the restructuring process was not participatory, the restructuring was not well-developed, and staff assignments were poorly handled); the restructuring's output (the new structure copied that of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, adverse consequences of the restructuring, and compromising succession opportunities); and finally, the aftermath of the restructuring (responses/reactions to the new structure, a new structure after a new strategy). An overview of the antagonists' discursive practices along with the themes is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6. 1 Antagonists' Discursive Practices and Themes

Timeline	Discursive practices	Themes
Antecedents of the restructuring	The timing of the restructuring was not right.	Strategy versus structure.
	Outsourcing the restructuring to a foreign consultant would be the have been the best.	Time and capacity constraints. Office politics/lack of neutrality
	There was differential attention, unfairness in the bank	Injustice and differential attention. Intervention by the board. Blackmailing.
The process of the restructuring	The restructuring team was not the best composition and pursued personal interests.	Non-inclusive. Skills and experience. Extracurricular activities. Selection criteria. Biasness of the restructuring team and office politics.
	The process was not participatory/no involvement.	Ernst and Young.
	The restructuring was not well-developed/well-done.	Bank versus individual interests. Foreign consultancy company. Lack of objective/no compelling reason. Lack of assessment. Processes or work flows were not studied. Wrong sequence of the processes in the restructuring. Wrong merging and splitting of activities. Role ambiguity and role overlap.
	Staff assignments were poorly handled.	Corruption/self-interest/network/clique.
Outcome of the restructuring	The new structure was copy of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.	Hiring two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. Inconsistencies, discrepancies and mismatches.
	Adverse consequences of the new structure (the restructuring was a failure).	Staff turnover. Pressure and stress. Morale and motivation of employees. Confusion and frustration.
	Succession opportunities were compromised.	Value (strong and high performance). Succession plan .
Aftermath of the restructuring	Responses to/reactions on the new structure.	Upward communication. Creating pressure on the top management. Creating activities. Enhancing objectives and repositioning the focus of the departments/divisions. Mini-restructuring. Staff development. Developing manuals, policies and procedures.
	A new structure after ta new strategy.	

Source: Based on empirical study

6.1 Antecedents of the Restructuring

This section focuses on the discourses mobilized by the antagonists about 'how' and 'when' the restructuring should have taken place. These discursive practices underline the initial steps, which according to the antagonists should have been taken before the restructuring started. It specifically involves the following discursive practices: the timing of the restructuring was not right (strategy development should have preceded the structure); outsourcing the restructuring to a foreign company would have been the best, and there was unfairness and differential attention in the bank.

6.1.1 The timing of the restructuring was not right (Strategy versus structure)

One of the discursive practices that was put in place by the antagonists to undermine the official discourse was the timing of the restructuring by contrasting the structure with the strategy (structure versus strategy). Dashen Bank had a culture of designing strategic plans every five years and the current strategy was entering its fifth year and thus ending when the new structure was put in place. The common perception in Dashen Bank was that the structure was a tool for implementing strategy and thus, it did not have a life of its own without the strategy. Therefore, by drawing on the argument of 'strategy versus structure', antagonists of the new structure mobilized a discourse that the new structure should not have been undertaken at this point in time:

> *"To tell you frankly, it would have been better if the restructuring had happened a little earlier because its timing was not right" (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

> *"...do you know what the problem was? Structure is an implementation tool of the strategy. Trying to develop a structure without knowing the strategy (without updating) is not the right sequence for me. Since it is a tool that helps you implement targets you set in the strategy, when you put the 'boxes' you think that they will help in achieving the strategy ...but what should come first is the strategy, the strategy should precede ... that is why I said earlier that the structure should be based on the strategic objectives or should start from the entity's strategy" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

Some respondents applauded the new structure, the composition of the restructuring team, and the entire process. However, they effectively used the fact that 'the timing was not right' to conclude that the new structure was 'good for nothing' and a waste of time and energy:

"They used a very good and scientific analysis to develop the new structure. In this regard, they did a very good job and the team members were capable, they didn't have any problem in discharging their responsibilities and therefore they produced a very interesting thing. But my question is about the timing ... the biggest problem was that the restructuring was based on an already ending strategy. I don't see forming a new structure on an expired strategy as a good thing." (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

This is an interesting point because it shows that it was not necessary to undermine the whole effort and even the composition of the restructuring team to mobilize a discourse against the official discourse and the new structure. As indicated earlier, a number of antagonists appreciated many things about the restructuring and the new structure, but they later picked single incidents or signals to refute the restructuring and the new structure. In doing so, they effectively mobilized a discourse against the official discourse.

Due to the timing of the restructuring, one director in the Interest Free Banking Department mentioned that that if with the structure was a must, it was possible to make minor changes to the old structure to close some loopholes until the strategy was developed.

In fact, interest free banking had been a project when the new structure was developed and therefore, assessments of many kinds had been done and a functional strategy had been developed to restructure the department. However, since the department is related to many other departments and divisions in the bank, the impact of the timing was significant for interest free banking as well. The director commented:

"For example, we submitted our part in August and it took us almost till November to get approval since it passed different hierarchies. But had it been done together, it could have finished along with the main structure. They finished in February last year, it also could have been done by then and gone operational. During implementation, it [the new structure] had many problems. For example, in relation to human resources and budget allocations, it might have issues. Actually, as far as we are concerned, we just proposed our budget and got it approved as early as possible by going parallel [with the restructuring]. When you see it from the point of budget allocation and human resources, there are many issues and it is like 'firefighting', your moves from now will be like closing loopholes and you won't know your direction, 'where will you be going?' When you see the plan, it doesn't guide us. That is why I say it would have been better if the restructuring had been delayed a little bit..." (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

In addition to the timing and the order of strategy versus structure, some managers mentioned that the gaps in the strategy had affected the restructuring process.

> *"...Plus, a gap in the strategy is one reason for the poor design of the new structure. Not only the resources that I could have had at my disposal but I could have also developed my plan and strategy by taking into account the resources that I had; even what I would do with the resources in a specified time framework, breaking down the budget, and meeting the strategy as these are also the tasks of the department. But when you see 'what comes', 'goes' and 'how should it be', the team doesn't know the technology. But what was said was that...even after that the department must develop its own roadmap in relation to the technology but to develop the road map, first we had to know everything otherwise it would be wearing a different and unfit jacket and therefore, it wouldl be difficult. So, there were such kinds of problems" (Manager VI, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Although some adversaries mobilized a discourse that the restructuring was not timely and thus should not have happened, some antagonists mobilized a discourse that the restructuring was a must have and they shared a similar view in this regard with the restructuring team and the other protagonists. For example, one manager provided statistics regarding ATMs and POS machines to support the view that the tasks could not have been carried with the status-quo and thus changes in the department were a must and he was happy with that (although he had issues on how the restructuring was developed):

> *But eventually when the number of ATMs increased...by the way, when I came to this department from the branch four years ago, it had 105 ATMs and these were what I received. But now, the bank has 220 ATMs and this had more than doubled in my term; when I came to the department I received only 300 POS machines but now the bank has 900 POS machines. Therefore, all these machines operated for transactions. So not only the machines, but when you also consider the transactions I work with, you can guess how stressful it be can. The volume of transactions at that time and now is quite obvious. ...the volume of transactions has increased, the pressure is huge and therefore I also believe that the job must be split..." (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

On the other hand, some antagonists commented that the flat structure of the bank helped ensure a smooth and efficient flow of information among the different levels and also strengthened the relationships among different units. Therefore, some supported the change in the structure. Although most antagonists of the official discourse fiercely resisted the delayering of the deputy director level posts on the ground that it would have a negative

impact on staff development and increase the pressure on managers, one antagonist supported the delayering at the deputy level:

> *"They (the deputy and the manager) communicated with each other and we received what cascaded down from them…in communication systems, if I whispered something in your ear, you may not exactly disseminate what I told you to the other parties. In the same way, anything from the board, or from the top management, or the strategic planner did not come to you directly as it passed through three hierarchies; the manager received what was sent from the executive, and the manager cascaded it down to the deputy, and the deputy cascaded it down to us (managers). Therefore, some distortion or twisting may have happened in the middle. Since there was no direct communication between the top management and us (division heads), there could be distortions which led to a headache when it came to implementation. I think that is the main reason they went in for a new structure. I think they wanted to avoid that kind of distortion. Because unless the owner of the task/process is directly involved, it is very difficult to bring productivity. Therefore, I think that they have worked on the first line…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

The above quotes clearly indicate that the antagonists mobilized different and contradictory discourses to counter the official discourse. They drew on different signals to make different assessments about the necessity or the timeliness of the new structure. As is clearly evident, those antagonists who put in place a discourse that the restructuring was not timely drew their argument from the order of 'strategy versus structure.' On the other hand, those who mobilized a discourse that the restructuring was a must, anchored their discourse in rational arguments, focusing on statistics and on effectiveness and efficiency. However, they did have the feeling that the restructuring was not effectively undertaken, personal interests were pursued, or there was a problem with the restructuring team. Some antagonists drew on a single story to undermine the official discourse.

6.1.2 Outsourcing the restructuring to a foreign consultant would have been the best

The adversaries also mobilized a discourse that the restructuring should have been done by an external company. This discourse was mobilized to challenge the official discursive practice that the restructuring team was fit to perform the task and the restructuring was well-developed except for very minor flaws. However, some antagonists mobilized a discourse that the timing of the restructuring was not right and therefore, it should not have

been undertaken altogether. Against this, those antagonists who felt that the structure was a must mobilized a discourse that it should have been done by an external party. In general, the discourse that the restructuring should have been done by an external party was mobilized as a solution to many problems that had been observed during the restructuring (done in-house). For example, some managers argued that the restructuring team faced time and capacity constraints (in terms of experience and expertise) and thus suggesting that the external party could have solved these problems:

> *"The reason is that…the restructuring was done by internal staffs. When internal staff carried out the restructuring, it may not have involved each unit in depth and may not have been professional or had the expertise that an external consultant had. For example, if you got the restructuring done by an international firm or consultant, since it specialized in that task, it may have its own plan and procedures and principles and may have considered each unit in detail and involved them"* (Manager VIIII, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

> *"I think that was the biggest problem, the red-line is underlined there. From the very beginning, most of the time the structure was not developed in-house, it would not be studied in-house and doing so would be crossing the red-line … the 'outlook' too would not be appropriate because it cannot look out of the box, may not capture the practical scenario and therefore it would have been good if it was undertaken by an external consultant. Foreign consultants who work on restructuring and have exposure and are experienced…"* (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

Some managers drew on the existing culture in society and the nation to mobilize a discursive practice that the in-house development of the structure was not a good idea. As one manager commented, "By the way in-house restructuring is not advisable in our country because personal interests are involved" (Manger V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing). One manager below stressed that a party which did not know the internal political and power dynamics should have undertaken the restructuring:

> *"When you undertook such a strategic change, it would have been better if it had been studied by an external party, I personally believe so. It would have been undertaken by a body which did not understand and was not immersed in the office politics, you know if you develop it internally, personal interests will haunt you. Moreover, you have to keep in mind that we are 'habeshas' (Ethiopians) and even studies show that we are not good in many aspects"* (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

6.1.3 Differential attention and unfairness in the bank

Another discourse mobilized by the adversaries was that there were some problems with the top management in its treatment of different divisions and departments. These adversaries made it clear that the restructuring and its problems were a continuation of the injustices and differential attention that had been given to different departments and parts of the organization. For example, a manager in IT mentioned that although the IT department's contribution to the overall success of the bank was paramount, it has been given a bad name (and thus neglected) and this was also reflected in the new structure. Besides the core banking system that was developed in-house for the bank (which other banks might have bought off the shelf), the IT department had many achievements to its credit:

> *"I can give you tangible data. There are about 16 systems for the bank which have been developed in-house. All these systems were designed by the IT Department… You know this must be appreciated because the IT Department developed and established paperless communication. The top management should have recognized this. It should! The department should have been given an opportunity…but do you know, IT is just like 'shinfila' (a part of the stomach which can't be clean no matter how you wash it), and it cannot be clean no matter how you wash it …what you fix today will be messed up again tomorrow, you find a problem today it will get fixed tomorrow. It requires daily struggle, especially in our country, in a third world country, our communication infrastructure is very weak. In situations where dependency on the third party for communication infrastructure is very high…you know your knowledge; your skills are not enough…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

A manager in the Engineering Department mentioned that lack of attention to the department was also reflected in the restructuring and it was not only sidelined in the whole process, but many pressures and inconsistencies were left unaddressed. The Engineering Department is responsible for estimating the collateral for customers who request loans, and thus visiting sites where the properties (buildings and houses) are located and taking pictures of those properties from different angles are their main tasks. However, since the department was not equipped with HD color printers, the photos had to be printed in photo-studios, resulting in inefficiency:

> *"I know the Engineering Department is a support department, it is not core a department. Engineering, IT, legal are support departments. However, although they are supporting departments, if their roles are bigger, they have to be given due attention all the time. They have to be given due attention, you get me? Not understandably and strangely, even the HD color printer cannot be bought for*

the department. I am telling you practical examples. I am also a bit confused why the department was denied enough attention, that is why I raised this with you. …. What they want from the Engineering Department is only output. They only want you to deliver outputs. We are suffering but leaving out the department on the pretext that it is a support department is not fair…" (Manager VIIII, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

Several respondents said that some processes were beyond the control of the top management. Some claimed that the board had an upper hand when it came to the restructuring, as the idea of the restructuring originally came from the board.

"You know sometimes, the problem I see in Dashen Bank is that there is no transparency, especially in the top management. In Dashen Bank, you know board members have a huge influence and power over the top management and therefore, the top management doesn't work freely and that is a major problem. … They intervene even in the day-to-day affairs of the top management and their hand is very much 'long' and ubiquitous…" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Adversaries mobilized contradictory discourses about the top management readiness to accept new ideas and views with regard to the restructuring or other issues. One manager claimed that alternative views are taken negatively and are silenced:

"You know what? You try to raise ideas and put forth recommendations, we tried to propose many things in relation to the new structure but raising ideas and recommendations by itself does not matter, you have to be heard. Do you understand? There needs to be a mechanism and means of communication to 'suck'/collect what is in the people's minds and to know their understanding. The willingness and determination of the top management must be there for this. Otherwise, after we have studied and submitted many suggestions, people say 'why do you accuse us?', don't they? They say 'why did you sue us?' This is not an accusation, rather it is a kind of 'let us work together' approach. You see, we have to confront reality, we were asked to give comments to the committee but they didn't want to receive our comments. …Besides that, trust needed to be built between the management and the staff. We are all the same soldiers fighting the same cause, we don't have different goals. Do you understand? Therefore, we needed to trust each other, things should not have been hidden from us. Plus, all staff must be treated equally and only the task must drive us…" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

Another manager commented that the top management was receptive to new ideas and comments and thus, he had confidence in the team. For him, the source of the problem was the restructuring team, and the new structure had many problems inherent in it:

"We cannot continue like this. Last time, the president convened all of us under the new vice president's wing, that is, the new vice president and departments and divisions under him, and the president clearly outlined what he expected from us, from the wing in general and we in turn reflected on the challenges we were encountering. We reiterated that we were committed to our work, we presented our plans and they were endorsed, and we got the blessing of the top management. The president said that whatever idea you think is good for the bank, 'put it on the table and we will accept it'. What does that statement mean? That definitely shows the management's flexibility. This is a new chapter in the relations between the management and other staff members. There is no such thing as 'this is the new structure so just accept it'. Just put forward your logic and let others put their logic, and the better one will be endorsed. So, since this shows a normal and healthy relationship between the top management and the staff, there is no reason to believe that the modifications in the new structure in relation to our department would not be accepted" (Manger I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

The quotes above highlight the discourse that was mobilized by the antagonists with regard to the top management and its role during and after the restructuring. The adversaries commented that the top management did not pay attention to the support departments (although important), was under the influence of the board and thus could not play an active role, and different views were reflected about the top management's appetite to hear alternative views and ideas.

6.2 Process of the Restructuring

This section focuses on 'how' the restructuring was managed by the restructuring team. It shows that the restructuring process was poorly handled and was not done well. The discursive practices specifically involved the following elements: the restructuring team was not ideally staffed and pursued personal interests; the process was not participatory; the restructuring was not well done (not well-developed); and the staff assignments were poorly handled.

6.2.1 The restructuring team was not ideally staffed and it pursued personal interests

A discourse that was mobilized by the adversaries of the new structure was related to the restructuring team. As discussed in the previous chapter, although the official discourse propagated by the restructuring team and the other protagonists was that the restructuring team was the best possible which the bank could compose and its formation considered the

inclusion of relevant units and experienced individuals, the alternative discourse mobilized by other managers and directors was that the restructuring team was unfit for the purpose. For example, people with an IT background were not made members of the restructuring team and many claimed that the restructuring team tried to reorganize and develop job descriptions for departments such as IT without having any know-how and exposure to the jobs and tasks. However, one manager from IT stressed that they could have let people from the IT Department participate to offset that weakness: "You know I am not saying that they should have the knowledge about every process in every department. No, they cannot have that knowledge, but they didn't participate, they could have participated. They haven't done that" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing). However, a little later the same manager commented that "… being able to identify those who have knowledge and expertise is also extremely important." This clearly shows that the antagonists put forth a discursive practice that was contradictory to their own discourses and to other antagonists' discursive practices at different times to make their case.

One director, who led the Interest Free Banking project, argued that it was not only the team members, but everybody in the bank lacked project management skills and therefore it was not surprising that the restructuring team had a gap in some skills, especially in relation to project management and this was clearly witnessed during the restructuring. This director did not question the capacity of each member regarding their normal duties (technical skills).   However, he noted that the team lacked soft skills or project management skills:

> *"I believe that project management skills are more important than technical skills. Hence, if team members were equipped with technical knowledge… when you lead a project, soft skills are equally important. It is not just Mr. X or Mr. Y, it is a must. Similarly, in our case, what put our project management in question was that if you asked 'how are we handling/proceeding with our project undertakings?'…there were many initiatives in the pipeline but when you evaluated their progress/execution, when you saw how they were being dealt with, the problem was not related to technical skills but we are poor in soft skills. I mean, including those who are assigned as team members" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).*

Noting this aspect, the director requested local training when he was assigned to lead the Interest Free Banking (Islamic Banking) project. He took trainings on Islamic banking and

how to run a project. However, this was not done when people were assigned to lead the restructuring as a project.

One manager who had worked in more than four organizations before joining Dashen Bank (and led change in his earlier organizations), evaluated the team members as less experienced and noted that what they did was very odd for him (as someone who was well experienced in change and change principles).

> *"I think this was just similar to what I told you, it was not research based and the team members were not experienced ..." (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

However, some antagonists mobilized a discourse that the problem with the restructuring team was that the restructuring was an additional task for them. According to one manager, the team did not devote its full time to the restructuring as they also had to take care of their 'normal' responsibilities. Therefore, this constrained the team in fully discharging its duties on the restructuring and see everything in depth:

> *"But since our structure was developed by the internal staffs, they did it as extra work. They had their normal duties and the restructuring was an extra duty, which might have resulted in inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. ...As I told you, the time given to them to complete the restructuring and the fact that the restructuring was extra work for the team were factors that constrained them in coming up with an interesting and comprehensive structure" (Manager VIII, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

The other discourse that the antagonists mobilized was that the criteria by which the team members were selected was not clear to everyone in the bank and therefore this led to the discourse that those who were in the top management' cliques were made members of the restructuring team. In addition, the antagonists used the discourse that there wasn't adequate diversity, and different parts of the bank were not included or represented in the restructuring team. By drawing on his experience in other government and private organizations, one manager commented that support departments in particular were excluded from the restructuring team and therefore the team failed to think 'outside the box':

> *"Everyone has his/her own experience and exposure…when it comes to the restructuring, people with similar backgrounds should not be assigned as team members, and some sort of diversity must be maintained ... they were not the right persons in some aspects…for instance, they should not have undertaken*

detailed job descriptions, job grading and evaluations, they were not the right persons to do this. When all this happened, the task was the centerpiece (the focal point), was there no conflict of interest? Why was external expertise not considered? …if people at least one from each department were assigned, I think diversified ideas would have been put forward and different expertise would have been there in the team. And I believe that kind of composition would have yielded very good results" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

As indicated earlier, the adversaries put forward a discourse practice that there was no representation in the restructuring team and hence the team was biased one way or the other. The fact that support staff and departments were sidelined was one effective discourse that was practiced undermining the composition of the team and its efforts (as discussed later, this was partially influenced by the culture of the bank in the way it viewed its different departments). It was widely believed by the antagonists that some members of Dashen Bank wanted to purposely create a mess in the bank for some reasons (such as advancing their own interests at the expense of the bank) and the leader of the restructuring team was nicknamed the 'Jawar of Dashen Bank' (after the name of a well-known dissident who was branded a terrorist by the government). However, although the leader of the restructuring team had a rather negative image in the bank (in the antagonists' views), one manager did not believe that the restructuring team and its leader purposely acted to create a mess in the bank: *"It is when the bank becomes successful that I can get a bonus, how can I expect a bonus after leading the bank into bankruptcy?"* (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing). Rather, by using an analogy from soccer, he added that 'overconfidence' of the restructuring team and some of its members was what got the whole process in trouble:

"You know overconfidence gets you into trouble, leads you to failure. For example, in soccer, if one team underestimates the other team, that team will lose the game. Overconfidence is very bad. So, in my view it was overconfidence that created a problem in the bank, what got us in trouble. Overconfidence…overconfidence like 'we know the problem and the solution'… 'I-know-all' kind of attitude" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Another discursive practice that the antagonists put in place was that the restructuring team pursued personal interests at the expense of the bank. As indicated earlier, especially the leader of the restructuring team was accused of advancing his personal interests by the antagonists. One director argued that the leader of the restructuring team tried to make the

position he thought he would assume accountable to the president and eventually he assumed a different position which was also accountable to the president. Unlike other departments which were accountable to the vice presidents, two departmental positions were made directly accountable to the president and one was assumed by the restructuring team's leader and the other by someone who was very close to the top management, which made the antagonists claim that there was a political move in the bank:

> *"What happened was they were given assignments, and there was one from human resources, also from credit…yes, all members of the restructuring team were assigned lucrative positions in the new structure (…) there was one guy in the team, and you could notice when he forged the position he thought he would be assigned to. I asked, 'why was the accountability of that position made to the president?' but unfortunately for him, he didn't get that position but this is what was done. When he led the restructuring, it seemed obvious that he was biased towards that position and as a result the position was made accountable to the president. Isn't that interesting? …What they did was, that not to disappoint the individual, they assigned him to a different position also accountable to the president. So, yes it gave them a chance to advance their own interests … they studied and undertook restructuring, and they assigned themselves…" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

Another manager added:

> *"…You know sometimes wittingly or unwittingly…of course, personal interests could be there and be served. They pursued their personal interests, but that doesn't mean that they didn't want the bank's success. In fact, human beings are inherently selfish, we are self-centered. No one wants to sacrifice his/her personal interests for the sake of the bank. Sometimes there could be concerns [about self-interests in the team] and understanding the source of those concerns will lead you to the solution…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Another manager commented that organizational politics was manifested during the restructuring besides the self-interests that were advanced by team members. According to him, this might have adverse consequences when it comes to staff retention:

> *"Most of the time, restructuring is damaging if it is linked to personal interests, it might cost you heavily. You may lose skilled manpower and whenever skilled and experienced people leave an organization, it is costlier to hire new staff members and train them. If you are not aware of this, if you don't see the impact, you are killing your organization. You know, the experience I had in other organizations and what I saw here was totally different. Even organizational politics is a destructive thing. You know in the business environment, experience should not matter, rather it must be merit based, performance based. … those*

who joined the bank yesterday can be prioritized. Otherwise, it might have an adverse effect, it sends wrong signals like 'you are not needed anymore.' Did we consider such things? (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

As indicated in this and in the previous chapter, delayering of the deputy level was one of the hot issues and was much debated in Dashen Bank (this is one area where discourses were mobilized from different angles such as staff development and redundancy based on who mobilized the discourse). As per the restructuring team and other protagonists, there were two reasons for delayering mid-level positions, specifically the deputy level. First, to reduce costs because it was believed that the middle level was a 'pipe' without any value addition. Second, and related to the first, was to make the structure flat thereby empowering managers and lower level positions (survivors). A number of managers, however, severely criticized the official reason given for delayering the deputy level. One manager rebutted the official discourse about the delayering of the deputy level, as he believed that this was a political move. He claimed that it was a conspiracy by the directors (as the restructuring team was composed of directors) against the managers to free themselves at the expense of the latter:

> *"Under the current structure, how flat you made the structure by delayering the deputy level, or how tall it would be if you left the deputy level as it is, I don't think it has a significant impact and I have a little doubt on that. Did you get me? Even before, I could easily approach the director and get things signed over while I was a division manager and the presence of the deputy did not have any impact on my job. And related to the decision making, it didn't have any problem in terms of making the structure more bureaucratic. Therefore, it might have its own advantages in making division managers shoulder more work than before and as a result freeing the directors and above, otherwise, I don't see the benefit of delayering the deputy level" (Manager X, Operations Management Wing).*

Ernst and Young's focus when it was studying the process in Dashen Bank was on all departments and divisions and it made specific recommendations about loan processing in relation to the branches and about IT and E-banking including how they should be organized. But later on, when the restructuring was undertaken (allegedly based on Ernst and Young's recommendations), many antagonists claimed that there was bias towards the business wing since all members of the restructuring team were from the business wing. One manager who participated when Ernst and Young was studying the process noted that not only was the team biased but the process study by Ernst and Young in relation to IT was effectively reversed or/and not properly considered:

"…They were definitely biased towards their knowledge and background since they had very little know-how about IT and technology. This was what was evident/witnessed during the restructuring. They tried to study an environment which they did not know and they said, 'accept it!' Ernst and Young's did a study, good! But the bank didn't believe that the study could work and it didn't accept it because it was assumed that the way the consultant company understood the bank had a gap. Accordingly, the new structure which was arguably based on the study of Ernst and Young…" (Manager XI, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

6.2.2 The process was not participatory (No involvement)

Different discourses were mobilized by the directors (who were not members of the restructuring team) and managers which contradicted the official discourse which was promulgated by the restructuring team and the other protagonists of the new structure. Although the restructuring team and the other protagonists practiced a discourse that the restructuring was participatory and many discussions and deliberations with different stakeholders were held (see previous chapter), antagonists/adversaries came up with a different and competing discourses: that there was no staff involvement in the restructuring process. The quotes below note that not even questionnaires (that were usually distributed whenever a new strategy was developed in Dashen Bank) were distributed to the different stakeholders to collect feedback for the restructuring: "There was no involvement and participation and I have a little discontent on that… Even by distributing some sort of questionnaire, you could have achieved a lot of things…" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing). A number of respondents were of the opinion that staff involvement was not only important to take their ideas and inputs, but it was also invaluable for enhancing the effective implementation of the change:

"I am sorry but when it comes to the restructuring, I don't know that much, it has been a while since it was implemented and I was not involved in it, I wasn't involved in anything … I don't know that because I was not part of the restructuring, I am just telling you my assumptions…but the staff was not engaged. When you see it practically…it means when it comes to Fund Management, the person in that department should have been engaged, he was not. Every stakeholder was not engaged, they might have distributed some surveys, I don't know the pressure on them but not even that was done […] Just ask everybody if they got involved, nobody will tell you that they were involved, it was all confidential" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

A number of managers also note that the restructuring was a surprise and the process itself was hidden from the larger public. For example, one manager commented, "The restructuring was done at the top management level" (Manager IX, Resources and Facilities Management Wing) and as a result, there was a huge gap between reality and what was on paper.

> *"Since it [the restructuring process] didn't incorporate our inputs, some issues were left without being worked out or were overlooked. As a result, there were gaps. You know if you want to do something fully, you have to involve each unit in detail" (Manager IX, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

Some respondents also commented on the futile action taken by the restructuring team to create a feeling among the staff members that the process was participatory, that is the restructuring team convened all stakeholders at the end of the process and presented the new structure, and a few individuals gave their comments. But there was no way that those inputs could be incorporated given that what was presented was the final version. Rather, this action by the restructuring team was interpreted negatively as an effort to 'fool the managers and directors':

> *"They tried to show us the approved document/structure in a workshop and wanted us to believe that this was an effort to involve stakeholders; this is naïve. Creating awareness and involving others are two different things. They are not related…" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

One manager was very frustrated about the fact that he was not involved in the restructuring at least in relation to his division. He commented, *"I personally perceived it as disrespectful" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Adversaries also mobilized a discourse that during Ernst and Young's process study, staff members had been involved and this created a nostalgic feeling among them. Both the antagonists and protagonists referred to Ernst and Young for mobilizing their divergent discourses. As shown in the previous chapter, the restructuring team and the other protagonists referred to Ernst and Young to argue that the new structure was not a copy/paste from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, that it was well-planned and based on a study, and at times, also to underscore that the role of the restructuring team was minimal given that it only 'implemented' what had been suggested by a foreign consulting company. On the other hand, by comparing the processes and procedures that were followed by Ernst and Young during the 'resource modernization project' and by the

restructuring team, the antagonists mobilized a discourse that the work by the latter was inferior and non-participatory:

> "When Ernst and Young was studying the process in the bank, I was asked for feedback and I provided it, this feedback still exists in a hardcopy and a softcopy. In addition, when the study was presented by Ernst and Young in the presence of the president and the vice presidents, I tried to raise many questions and give many constructive comments from my operational experience. I even expressed my concern about the proposed process and suggested an alternative" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Another manager talked of his experience of working with Ernst and Young when it was studying the process in the bank. According to him, it was not only participatory, but the inputs from staff members were also taken seriously and some of them were incorporated. For example, his suggestion that 'silent' and 'non-silent' (critical and non-critical) jobs must not be organized together was taken and the process was proposed as per his suggestion:

> "The study was conducted separately in each section, the network part, application, database, and core banking system all separately. Initially, I recommended that this division should be divided into different divisions. Silent and non-silent jobs must not be handled together" (Manager XII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Although some antagonists mentioned that they were not given a job description along with their assignment (it had not been developed), some others noted that job descriptions were developed without their involvement. One manager from the IT Department stressed that organizing IT related issues without the involvement of IT personnel reflected the bias of the business wing. By stressing that IT is technical, he mentioned that those who have experience and expertise should have at least developed the job descriptions. As he had technical expertise in the division, he claimed that he should have developed the job descriptions. The failure to do this led to problems during implementation:

> "You know, sometimes the business wing thinks it knows more, it always brags…that is why we are facing bigger problems now…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

On the contrary, other managers and directors mobilized a discourse that only the boxes were put in place (without job descriptions) to highlight the ineffectiveness of the restructuring team and the problems with the new structure (this is discussed in more detail later).

One manager believed that he and the others should not necessarily have participated in the process for it to be labeled participatory. As indicated in the previous chapter, he thought that the 'brains' of the bank had participated and that was enough. Besides that, members of the restructuring team were experienced and well-qualified and they could discharge any responsibility including restructuring. However, the same manager later mobilized a discourse that once the basics of the restructuring were over, managers and directors should have been given an opportunity to organize their respective divisions and departments:

> *"The other discontent I have is that after the restructuring had been approved…let us say marketing, they assigned the director, right?... they assigned us the managers, right? …If they had given us an opportunity to organize and structure our respective positions, if they had asked us 'how should we organize your sections and department?', do you understand? How should your internal structure be organized, what and how does the work flow look like? No one came and interviewed us about that. I have reservations about that, since that didn't happen…we could have gotten an opportunity, now one box had been structured. If they had given us an opportunity to provide proposals on how to organize our respective sections as per our wishes and in a manner that benefited the bank more, it would have been much better, wouldn't it? At least we could have proposed that the naming they gave was wrong, it is not inclusive and missed a given section..." (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

In addition, antagonists mobilized a discourse that their lack of participation in the restructuring adversely impacted the implementation of the new structure. A director below noted that there was fierce resistance from the entire staff in the bank to the new structure due to their little involvement in the process:

> *"When you see its implementation...including resistance, yes you saw fierce resistance and the reason you saw resistance everywhere was due to poor participation. I have a question on that, it was not participatory. Because if it had been possible to invite us to do our own respective structures, it would have been possible to see the bigger picture and involve the stakeholders. Simply putting the box of the director did not have any meaning. It would have been easier if it had been participatory" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).*

Some antagonists also put forth a discourse that the implementation of the new structure was not a success in their respective departments due to lack of participation:

"…That is why the restructuring could not move forward a single inch, it is stuck by the way. Why didn't the restructuring go effectively and smoothly like in other departments? Because the task was not performed at that time. Had it been that the job was performed during the design of the restructuring, the implementation would have been smooth and the department would have gone operational like other departments which had already satisfactorily put in place their new structures and had gone operational. But now, on paper, it says that the tasks should go to their respective departments but how should they go practically? The new structure cost me my position, I am in the air. Neither have I been assigned somewhere else along with the dispersed tasks, nor have I been given any other solution, it is very saddening when I say this, it is very painful" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Operation Wing).

Although the restructuring team did not have any interest in involving different stakeholders, some managers tried to contact the leader of the restructuring team and other members to give their suggestions. However, this attempt failed. One manager commented that his effort was interpreted otherwise and his suggestions were taken negatively:

"You know those directors (the restructuring team's members) are liars. It is like what you call 'sugar coated' stuff that they covered…they used a kind of sandwich style. The inside part was different. How was the look of a sandwich? The cover was cosmetic whereas the inside part was different. I call it sandwich style. It means that the problem was covered and embellished but it would have been better if we had let the problems come to the surface and discussed them. You know if somebody transparently speaks of problems, he has to be appreciated. You should not hate me when I say that you have problems. Rather you have to question what my problems are and look inwards. You should not say 'how dare he?' You just you have to ask what did I do? You have to look inward, you have to turn back to yourself…then you start a new life. But if you continue doing the same thing by denying everything, or if you engage in 'blame shifting' or 'diversion', then you are dying. What is happening in our bank is very stupid" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

6.2.3 The restructuring was not well done/well-developed

The antagonists put forth a discursive practice that the restructuring was not done effectively and was odd when compared to many change initiatives and undertakings. Actually, this discourse was partially an extension of another discourse practiced by the antagonists that the team was inept in carrying out such a change. Plus, some antagonists believed that one team being tasked to do the whole task including developing job descriptions made the entire process weak and ineffective:

"Plus, to maintain checks and balances, different analysts should have been involved by forming different teams, it should not have been the task of two or three individuals; you know 'one individual is always one' (referring to the leader of the team). Two or three teams of expertise should have been formed and they should have been tasked to see the complexity and the damage being done by thoroughly and exhaustively studying the process…it should not have been quick fix and unnecessarily broad..." (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

A number of antagonists also mobilized a discourse that during the restructuring the focal point was individuals in the bank, rather than the bank itself. As indicated earlier, the whole process was geared towards satisfying some and marginalizing others. For example, one manager claimed that he had worked in many organizations (in transport, cement, and a food complex among others) mostly in managerial positions before joining Dashen Bank and he had read a lot of materials on different change initiatives including BPR, BSC, and BPI. However, what he saw at Dashen Bank was totally the opposite of what he knew and the entire process was defective:

"… So, we had to study it again, I will not lie to you…we corrected and modified many things…the new structure had many problems. When restructuring is undertaken, you know the focal point/epicenter must be the entity, it must be the bank, not individuals" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

Another discourse that was raised repetitively by most of the antagonists was that the way the restructuring was undertaken was not systematic. For example, a number of antagonists mentioned that not enough detailed assessment and planning was done:

"When you undertake restructuring, I think you have to start by identifying the problem and by addressing that, you may want to make your organization internationally capable and up to the standards or it may be to make the business sector competitive or you may just think that this is something to achieve as a result of a new structure. …Mr X or Mr Y might have studied but I don't think they started from the bank's problem and challenges. Plus, when you study, it must be standardized, otherwise, if you say, 'I will add this position, I will delayer this position' or whatever you say, it will not be good in the transition. Therefore, there is logic that you have to follow, and based on that logics…otherwise it is not advisable to undertake the restructuring..." (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

In fact, some protagonists and members of the restructuring team admitted that they did not do any assessment when carrying out the restructuring. However, they claimed that

enough assessment was done and the whole process was scrutinized by the consulting company, Ernst and Young and therefore, the restructuring team's responsibility was putting the findings of the study and its recommendations into effect via a new structure. On the contrary, the antagonists claimed that the restructuring did not address the recommendations of the consulting company as the restructuring team started from scratch by sidelining the study done by the consulting company.

Similarly, by comparing and contrasting the ways in which such change is handled by a foreign company (maybe Ernst and Young) and locally (in-house team), one manager claimed that the process by the latter was not objective, that is, not 'formulaic':

> *"...When you undertake restructuring, you observe how westerners do it. They come and ask what the task of this division is, they go into detail to the grassroots level, and they collect that, compile it, develop a new workflow, and they analyze 'where shall we cut systematically?', 'shall we cut right here?', 'shall we organize here?' It looks as if they do it by principles in natural science, it does not look like they are led by social science, that is, one plus one is two, you move like that, based on formulaic concepts. What was the experience in our bank? Sometimes you said that five staff members needed, why and how were they needed? It was not justified. You said ten staff must be assigned, but 'why ten are needed?' it was not justified because we did not go into detail..." (Manager XIII, Operations Management Division).*

Most antagonists questioned the objective of the restructuring: 'Why was the restructuring needed after all?' Dashen Bank was the biggest private bank in Ethiopia and it was the highest profit earner. Therefore, a number of antagonists believed that there was no any compelling reason to undertake the restructuring. Some believe that the reason the bank was embarked on restructuring was to follow the trend as many banks were going for overall restructuring including changing their logos. Therefore, the restructuring was at the very beginning very weak in specifying an objective for why it was undertaken. For example, one manager claimed, "*other banks have done but that doesn't necessarily mean that you have to do the same" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).* One manager who claimed to have many experiences in leading change and therefore, was well-read about many change principles and the science argued that the reason for the restructuring was not clearly spelled out.

> *"So, the most important thing is to first know the objective, the aim of the change... The right thing is that...my stand is that you should not do something because of the fact that it is said/ordered. We have to first know the objective or*

the aim of the change, we have to know the reason why we want to implement that tool or system. Without being convinced with it, if we implement it since we are ordered to, it is tricky…it will not be effective. By the way what you saw here is nonsense…I was not even aware of the new structure but all of a sudden, I received a transfer letter to a different department, what is that?" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

One director commented that the internal weaknesses and strengths were not identified as part of the restructuring:

"…It was not able to capture. Because when they undertook the restructuring, I thought that they would benchmark, we heard that they even went abroad to benchmark, but you had to also give due consideration to your internal environment, you had to see your stock. You had to see 'what kind of personnel do I have, what other things I have, what will be the change that the new structure will bring, what will it affect and how will it be affected?'…" (Director VI, Operations Management Division).

Similarly, the adversaries put out a discursive practice of challenging the official discourse that the process flows of each task were not captured, which made the entire process of restructuring ineffective and random. According to the antagonists, without knowing how the process of each task would flow, it was difficult to split and merge activities:

"The process flow must be worked out. Would you work out a new structure simply by sitting in the office? What about the process flow? It must be necessarily worked out." (Director VII, Operations Management Wing)

"First you have to know about the nature of the change you are trying to implement. If you are not aware of the process/flow, you don't know where the problem lies. But if you know the process flow end to end, A to Z, you know the disease and you can prescribe the right medicine. When the process flow is known, or when you assign someone who is not aware of the process, it will be a 'hotchpotch' …" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

"Even, when it comes to some processes, I told them that it was not clear which department and who would perform them because the people in the restructuring team had no idea about what was being performed" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

The antagonists made a contradictory discourse about the job description to undermine the official discourse. Some argued that only their 'box' was put in place without job descriptions whereas others noted that the job descriptions were designed for their respective sections or departments. However, a number of antagonists commented on the way the job descriptions were developed. Some said that it was copy/pasted while others

mentioned that it was not properly done by following the right sequence. For example, one manager commented that first the objective of the job must be specified, then the tasks must be listed and finally, job specifications should be laid out. However, it was not only that the right sequence was not followed but also that the restructuring team tried to develop both the specifications and the descriptions (without having the right qualifications and experience), as a manager who claimed to be experienced in these areas found:

> *"The job descriptions were also developed by the restructuring team. ... First you have to see the benefits that the job would yield for the bank. After setting that and having seen the job complexity and description, then you should develop the specifications 'who is going to perform this job?', 'what is the nature of the job?', and 'how many individuals are required.' After addressing these issues, you would grade the job, you would evaluate it, you would measure it, you would describe the job, analyze it, and finally you would evaluate it. ... Therefore, when it comes to job descriptions, before the specifications (experience and educational qualifications), you need to 'jot down' the tasks, you have to enumerate/tally them. It is only after this that you would specify the experience and the educational qualifications that the people need to have for a job (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

A number of antagonists also commented on the human aspect during the restructuring. One director mentioned that people were not briefed on the different phases of the change and thus the Dashen community's expectations of were not set and they were not familiar with the possible consequences of the change. In other words, the human aspect in the restructuring was not considered or addressed.

> *"Plus, the effects of restructuring are well-known, there will not be lay-offs but equivalent to that, there will be people who will be downsized, "abstained" and so on. Therefore, such kinds of things create a shock among the staff. Hence, until a certain level you could hold it confidential but after that, you have to notify the people and inform them about the progress when it has reached certain milestones; had it been done, you know people would have been familiar and they would show a proclivity for accepting the change. ... you also need to see the psychological and emotional part and thus, I think if there had been such kind of sessions (like brain storming sessions), things would have been different. That is the reason why questions and concerns were raised and, yes, you tangibly saw the resistance" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).*

In addition to the illogical processes that were followed during the restructuring, the antagonists mobilized a discourse that their respective departments and divisions were not well-developed and were inefficient in terms of creating an enabling environment and

ensuring the smooth flow of information and materials. According to the antagonists, this was because of at least two things: First, process flows of the tasks had not been studied previously and there was no detailed planning. And second, the restructuring team did not have the right composition as it did not include different stakeholders from each department and from the branches, and that it was not participative, that is, process owners were not asked to comment on the proposed structure. A director, therefore, commented that details are missing and the functions of some sections were not clearly outlined:

> *"But when I look at it…you know the purpose was to change the structure, but when you went down to the detail, just only the "box" was done. The box was there but 'the details' were not worked out. After you put the box…I believe in the meantime…when you label it…it just says, 'currency service' but it has many nitty-gritties (it has everything in it) …currency…okay since currency is known, it doesn't have any problem. But when you say customer account, what does this include? It is not only the job description that was handed over…I don't know the details of some parts of the restructuring, maybe there was a reason, I have to say that …but as far as my part is concerned, shouldn't the details be written down? What is this function supposed to do? At least it must be highlighted that this section will do such and such functions, but only the job description was specified…" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

One manager, who was leading the Interest Free Banking project and who was later assigned as its director after it became operational as a department, commented that since the structure of the department was done during the project stage, there was no involvement of the restructuring team directly during the restructuring, so they were less affected by the new structure. However, the problem of the new structure in other departments, which were interdependent on the Interest Free Banking Department, led to major problems for them. Similarly, the establishment of Interest Free Banking could affect other departments, as it was not aligned with the new structure of the bank. In addition, there were issues such as job grades, and promotions and governance in the departments that remain unaddressed:

> *"For example, when it comes to legal issues, we need 'sharia' law besides the formal/normal law. You cannot get professionals from inside but the market also cannot provide you employees with these qualifications either. Therefore, the structure doesn't address that. …The other thing is that the impact that our structure created was very huge and radical. There is our department and there are also other supporting departments which I was talking about earlier, so even at the corporate governance level we needed one body, we presumed that we will have a sharia advisory committee. In Ethiopia, it is only Oromia International Bank which has such an arrangement, and the other banks do not have such an*

arrangement, they don't have work process units which have more than one advisor and this demands a huge organizational change….it needs a huge change at the governance level. All these things were not considered. This means that the new structure missed something huge. I am telling you from the perspective of our department" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

The director also mentioned that the same problems and concerns were also raised by other departments like the Risk Department, the IT department, and the E-banking Department.

The other discursive practice that was put in place to stress that the restructuring was not well-developed was that unrelated activities were merged and related ones were split-up and organized under different departments. A number of antagonists noted that the names of some departments and what they were supposed to do did not match and that the boundary between some departments remained fuzzy and consequently role conflicts and role ambiguities became evident in some cases. For example, one director commented about the Customer Account and Currency Management and other departments:

"Now the problem is…for example, if you see the currency and something department, I have reservations about that as a department. My question is that if you see the director as an individual, he is very capable, no question about it. But if you ask me, the name of the department and the functions it is supposed to do, they do not match. The same is true in IT, things are still blurred; the boundary between IT and E-banking is blurred and thus conflicts arise. The problem is that, had the process been participatory, there would have been clear demarcations because knowledgeable individuals from both departments could have sorted these out. The same story unfolds when you go down, there are many problems at the lower levels…" (Director VI, Operations Management Division).

Another director added about his department:

"When you go to the individuals assigned in the boxes, you will be perplexed, I swear, every burden falls on the shoulders of those of us who are assigned to the box, we have suffered a lot. What is next, what are you going to do…for example, what is the direction I am going to take? What troubles me practically is that when it says 'customer account and currency management', in the first place I had a very hard time even understanding the department. Then, I asked the leader of the restructuring team: 'what has a customer account got to do with currency management? how are they related?' For me, I don't have any problem, I can discharge my responsibility, I can perform even as it is, but how are they related, as they are both different. Why was it important to bring them together?" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

The antagonists mobilized a discourse about the accountability of two departments directly reporting to the president (the Office of Strategy and the Program Management Office). This was taken by the antagonists as an effort by the restructuring team to advance personal interests, as the leader of the restructuring team was assigned to one of the departments. On the other hand, a number of antagonists mentioned that the move sidelined vice presidents from important activities in the bank, that is, strategy development (and follow-up) and project initiation and management. Therefore, the antagonists mobilized a discourse that there should never have been an intermediary between the president and the vice president(s) when it came to strategy and projects:

> *"In the current structure, if there is the president and vice presidents, when the Office of the Strategy is made accountable to the president, the vice presidents will be meaningless and idle when it comes to strategy. Have you seen the contradiction? When I saw this gap in the new structure, I asked 'why was the Office of the Strategy made accountable to the president? why?'… Strategy, okay as a support, it has to be separated, you can make it an advisory position, you can make the person an advisor to the president, someone external to advice the president on strategic issues, but as a director and if you make it directly accountable to the president, it is a little perplexing" (Director VIII, Operations Management Wing).*

Another manager noted that the old way of doing things continued in the new structured and therefore, activities unrelated to marketing such as purchasing and supply issues remained unaddressed and this continued making the department's staff members unproductive as they were engaged in unrelated tasks:

> *"The other thing is that this division has to prepare bids and conduct auctions. When there is any auction or public bid by the bank… I am telling you about the hassles we have to shoulder, we conduct a meeting, then it is 'minuted' and approved. Then, after we select suppliers, we inspect and follow-up production until delivery, does the Marketing Department need to do that? Shouldn't it be the issue of supply or logistics? Or shouldn't it be the issue of facility? It still is under marketing in the new structure. Second, payment issues… Every three months, one expert gets out of accounting and makes payments and does related activities, which were done by a clerk. He opens a CPO, prepares the CPO, and makes CPO payments and the like. Routine! Once we announce a public bid, and the materials are supplied, we have to make the payment. Therefore, our two staff members are wasted. The first one who follows up the supply and the other one makes the payment" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

The discourse that related activities were split was also mobilized by the antagonists to challenge the official discourse according to which the restructuring was well-developed. A manager whose activities are now organized under four departments commented:

"By the way, it is not simple because the tasks are highly inter-related. If the cash team and technical team are going to leave at the same time, the cash team is in one department and the technical team is in a different department, how is it going to be? Since both of them were under the same supervision previously, reconciling the two teams, cascading orders correctly, penalizing staff if those orders were not executed, or asking staff to provide justifications for failing to execute orders could be done easily earlier. But when these two teams were divided and organized in different departments, how are those related tasks going to be managed? The future will tell us! I don't want to dwell on this and I would like to move on by saying we will see!" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

A number of antagonists also mobilized a discourse that there were huge role ambiguities and role overlaps in the new structure. For example, one manager explained that she was not provided with a job description and although the name of the division was changed, she continued with her old activities although a different department that was tasked with that role had been established. When her old department was upgraded to vice president level as Corporate Planning (it has two departments and five divisions), her section was organized as a division and named Service Quality Assurance. But the manager interpreted this as being tasked for customer relations and other issues related to the customers. However, under another vice president, Operations Management, a different department was established with the name Customer Relations. Therefore, she noted that there was a role conflict and role ambiguities in the new structure as different divisions or departments that performed similar activities were organized under different names and under different vice presidents:

"Service Quality Assurance was earlier under the Corporate Planning and Development Department, but now this [the department] has been upgraded to the vice president level. ... so, the point I raised is that this division was known as customer relations under CPDD and is still known by that name among many staff members. But under the new structure, I don't know if you have gone there but customer relations has been established as a new department in the Primum Branch. Therefore, there is conflict" (Manager VI, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

Another manager mentioned that activities that involved 'incident management' were made accountable to the vice president and the boundaries between the different divisions were still blurred in the new structure:

> *"That is why staff members in our department except the manager haven't gotten any assignments. Only the so called 'managers' have got their assignments, but the team leaders, engineers, and officers have not been assigned, they still haven't gotten their positions because when job descriptions and the new structure were developed, the demarcation between what job should be performed where was not done, there wasn't a clear demarcation. They don't know what activities must be undertaken in this department, it is blurred and that is why things are messed up in many positions and departments (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

A number of antagonists believed that the technical wing was paid scant attention by the bank as the real decision makers all came from the business wing and had a business background. As evidence hey mobilized a discourse that the IT Department, which is the back bone of banking operations, was not organized at the vice president level, unlike the best practices in the industry. IT related departments were organized as departments under a given vice president along with many other departments. This was presented as a failure of the new structure. Second, even minor activities, which involved 'incident management' were made accountable to the vice president. One manager in the IT department said:

> *"Vice presidents must be visionary, they must focus on the vision and mission of the bank and work accordingly. Therefore, at least these activities were reorganized to other departments. However, if this was done for maintaining independence, it is another issue. When you undertake restructuring, you will see it for its necessity. ... Besides that, you should not do activities that require incident management to be directly accountable to the executive management. Maybe other banks have done this, organized their activities in such a way. ...For example, we don't have a vice president IT in our case, you might have heard...we don't have that. Therefore, when you don't have a vice president IT, how can you cascade it?.... I am currently managing it but if there had been a vice president, help-desk would have been taken but since we don't have it, it has not been taken...it is still here" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Similarly, in the new structure some activities (which look minor but are important) were overlooked and the department was also not preparing for correspondence with international partners. There are many monthly and quarterly reports that must be prepared and sent to international partners and failing to do so may cost the bank as it will be

penalized in a foreign currency. These reports had earlier been prepared by one section by compiling data from different divisions and departments. However, according to a manager the new structure failed to address such kinds of activities and it is not yet known which department is responsible for this, as earlier sections were reorganized under different departments:

> *"Therefore, regarding these reports, issues such as who will do that, how will it be done are another big concern. Surprisingly, the department hasn't made any preparations for this, nothing. No preparation regarding who will send the reports, how will it be done, who will take related training…I personally think that this is one mechanism to tie me up as a human being!" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

The same manager commented that payments and communications that the bank had with its international partners were overlooked and the department had not been given any guidelines for these:

> *"There are also many, many things that connect us to the foreigners …communication and payments to vendors, revenues and customs… for example, there are invoices that are sent by foreign companies stating that 'we have performed this task and want these many dollars'…there are many things…following up all these to avoid punishment, checking to see whether the contracts are appropriate, whether the job has been done so that the dollar payment is right, is the payment double…following up these and other things so that relations with our international partners are smooth, building relations between the bank and our partners…I had been doing all these activities. Therefore, how is the department going to handle all these activities? nobody knows" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

As indicated in the section "The restructuring was a copy/paste", a number of antagonists mentioned the mismatch between the job descriptions and the structure to substantiate the allegation that the restructuring was a copy/paste. For instance, it was indicated that a department was tasked to control a section that was organized in a different department. Similarly, a number of antagonists mobilized a discourse that some sections were not created when they should have been according to the naming of the departments. For example, one manager commented that although the department was named as 'marketing and corporate communication', 'corporate communication' was missing in it:

> *"For example, in our department, you don't find corporate PR (public relations), where can you get it? Nowhere! Who is concerned about PR and who will give press releases? Will it be the director, is it me [manager of branding]?*

it is not clear. So, who is going to lead the PR, nothing is there, it doesn't have an answer. Who is going to lead the communication part? Nothing. It is really surprising, who is going to lead the communication? Okay, someone is assigned for marketing; branding, I am assigned; quality assurance, someone has been assigned but the department is the Marketing and Corporate Communication Department so who is responsible for overseeing the corporate communication part? Who is responsible? Is it going to be added/supplemented to me or to her [manager, quality assurance]? ..." (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

6.2.4 Staff assignments were poorly handled

The other discourse mobilized by the adversaries was in relation to staff assignments. Of course, staff assignments were basically the responsibility of the top management, especially assigning directors. "When it comes to assignments, I think you cannot do anything about it. I assume that the top management under the new structure assigned those who they thought were fit and performed better, especially at the director level" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing). However, directors along with vice presidents participated in the assignment of managers and all lower levels in their respective wings. Therefore, the adversaries mobilized different and sometimes contradictory discourses to challenge the official discourse. For example, the first discourse that was mobilized was that all staff who directly participated in the restructuring (either as team members or indirectly as implementation team members) got assigned as directors. As one director who was not the member of either of the teams commented, "… there were disappointments in the bank with regard to assignments, the way the assignments were handled … All who were assigned were members of the restructuring team" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

A number of antagonists commented about the top management that did the assignments in the new structure. By drawing on the culture of the nation and using the ruling political party as an analogy, a director stressed that assignments were problematic and were not neutrally done. The ruling party, EPRDF is accused by many of assigning only politicians and non-professional party members for professional jobs and this culture had spread all over the country including in the private sectors. Even school teachers and directors were politicians rather than professionals. Thus, according to one director from Operations Management Wing, the same thing happened in Dashen Bank when it came to staff

assignments. He claimed that only cliques and sub-servient individuals, who could not challenge the top management, were assigned:

> *"When you think about it sometimes those people who come (top officials), they only think about their own benefits, sorry to say this. ... Sometimes you see a network/clique thing, sorry to say this but this is not right. What is intimidating in Ethiopian culture, you might have witnessed that in other companies and offices, whatever your worth, whatever your intelligence, whatever your potential to change even the country, unless you are part of a clique, it is very difficult. To your surprise, many individuals who can change even in the nation have been sidelined. Clique is a national problem. ... When you see our bosses, they want subservient individuals, they don't want to get upfront and challenging individuals closer. They don't want to be challenged. People's rhetoric at the formal stages/public stages and what they do in the office is totally contradictory. We love to talk a lot but when you go to the details, it is zero! They talk a lot but when you turn around, there is nothing" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

The criticism was not only that unfit people were assigned to many positions, but a number of antagonists also mobilized a discourse that positions were created for some managers, especially for those who had stayed longer in the bank and were closer to the top management:

> *"But as I told you, some unfit and improper people were assigned at higher levels, whom I don't accept, whom I am not convinced about. Because they have stayed longer in the bank…some have stayed a lot longer in the bank and they were assigned and it appears that their assignments were based on the top management's view that 'what would he/she say if I don't assign her/him?', based on the feeling that 'let it be', which I don't accept. ….I am sure there will be people who cannot shoulder the responsibility…when they cannot shoulder the position, fail to make a difference and achieve their targets and KPIs… I am sure there will be some who will collide with reality. You will see it very soon. Why? Because the box was made for them ('the position was sewn' for them). Because the position was sewn for them to maintain their morale and ego, I have reservations and discontent about that … if the 'boxes' are not filled with appropriate individuals, if they are filled by those who do not challenge the status quo, it will be of no use, and it will only end up serving the interests of (and unnecessarily benefiting) some people. ... But there are also some for whom positions were created and they were inappropriately assigned. 'And how far will this take the bank?" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

In addition, those who were assigned as directors were not notified of their positions in advance and their interests were not considered. It was repeatedly mentioned by many antagonists that very few individuals from the top management assigned the directors and managers and the criteria of assignment was not clear to everyone leading to t speculation. The antagonists mobilized a discourse that the staff assignments were one of the poorly handled issues of the restructuring process. One director negotiated for his role in the new department and then proposed a new re-restructuring (successfully) claiming that his interests and capabilities should have been considered:

> *"The other thing, people should be assigned based on their interests. Something I understand now is that if one is assigned without his interests and capabilities, it will create a problem. First you need to have capability and then you need to have an interest in the job because it will be perfect when you perform with interest and capabilities. If you have interest but are not capable to discharge your duties, you cannot do anything, it will be difficult to deliver. Again, if you are capable but have no interest in the job, it will be a waste of resource. If you assign him to such a position he can perform better, otherwise it will be a waste of resource" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

A manager explained how she got her assignment as quoted below. She claimed that the top management took hints from her extra-curricular activities, her physical appearance and the way she did things (which were not directly related to the job) in assigning her to a given position:

> *"This position is just totally different from operations [branch]. What they told me is…they said that they assigned me to this position because they thought that I had very good grasp of quality issues…what they thought was…you know when you just see an individual physically, it tells you something; starting from your appearance, the way you dress, the way you take care of your office and your surroundings, the way you handle things, the way you coordinate things and organize many events…I used to be involved in many things in Dashen Bank…if you ask anybody in the bank, there was nothing I didn't take part in. So, based on their observations of those things, they might have thought that 'she is fit for quality issues, she really has quality.' The position doesn't deserve me, to tell you frankly…" (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

She asserted that the way her assignment was handled was a source of discontentment for her and as a result she lost her morale to work for the bank. She did not want to stay in the bank because her new assignment did not consider her seniority and experience in the bank. Yet, the worst for her was that very 'junior kids' who joined the bank relatively recently were promoted to higher ranks and surpassed her under the new assignments.

She claimed that she did what she could for the bank in her area of responsibility, but the rest was not her fault:

> "If there are things you haven't been tried and done, you are not responsible for them because you were not given the exposure and the opportunity to do so. They put you in a given corner as if you had not done anything, contributed anything, and made a difference…you were thrown away to a given corner but that was not your fault because you had done what you could in your area of responsibility but to contribute even more, you were not given the opportunity and finally, when you became a victim of the new structure and when you started to think that it was the system that made you disadvantageous, as a human being I also felt very bad, it was painful. …" (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

In addition, many new positions were created under the new structure. Of them, Interest Free Banking and Customer Account and Currency Management are the two. The directors who are assigned to these departments explained that there was widespread resistance and discontent related to the assignments and they were not happy with their assignments. However, the two directors gave different views about their assignments. The first director explained that when a position is old, everything is known and it is possible to add to that and enhance the objectives because there is something to start with. But when it is a new position it is tricky:

> "Now onwards, if a new structure is put in place and if the position is new, I will not humbly accept the assignment anymore. … But if it is very new and you are unfamiliar with it, at least if you do not have preliminary documents as a starting point… that position should also have a description, it should have something otherwise…just the name could be something else, it could be misleading. When it says customer account and currency, they want me to perform simply by following the name. Therefore, the details must be known. You know I don't want to understand the job after accepting the assignment but before I am assigned, I have to make sure that I am clear about what I am supposed to do…" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

However, for the second director, being assigned in a new position was an opportunity:

> "At that level, I don't have any problems working in any position; as I told you, I have spent most of my years in conventional banking and therefore I believe that I can fit every position. But when it comes to my current position, I am more delighted because it is a new thing and as a result has its own challenges, in fact, I don't have any special privileges or benefits. … When I came here, I only changed a name, nothing else in terms of benefits. But I am happy with this assignment, if you ask me personally. Because a new task is always a challenge

and your life will have meaning when you encounter such challenges. And I am happy in that regard. But there are disappointments in the bank with regard to the assignments, the way they were handled" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

The antagonists mobilized different discursive practices to underline the point that the processes that were followed during the restructuring were illogical, non-scientific and odd. Hence, this paved the way for them to argue that the new structure was a total failure and resulted in different adverse consequences for the bank. The following section presents antagonists' discursive practices regarding the outcomes of the restructuring.

6.3 Outcome of the Restructuring

This discursive practice by the antagonists focused on the results of the poor handling of the restructuring process, that is, the final outcome of the restructuring. The basic argument was that the restructuring was a total failure which was depicted in its negative outcomes of the restructuring. It specifically involved the following discursive elements: the restructuring was a copy/paste of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia's model; adverse consequences of the restructuring; and succession opportunities were compromised.

6.3.1 The new structure is a copy of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

One discourse mobilized by the adversaries was that the new structure was a direct copy of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and/or from the internet. (This claim has been mentioned in the preceding chapter when discussing the counter-arguments by protagonists). The antagonists drew from different signals to argue that the restructuring team did nothing except copying it from somewhere else. The first signal that they used for mobilizing such a discourse was the arrival (hiring) of two senior management staff from the Commercial Bank as vice presidents in Dashen Bank. This move by itself was been severely criticized by the antagonists. One manager said:

> *"In fact, it is very difficult to certainly state that. The reason the new structure was associated with the Commercial Bank was that the two vice presidents were hired from there. In fact, we followed the practices of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and whether it was good or bad, it had its own impact. My personal belief is that the Commercial Bank could be successful, understand? But it became successful by following its own way, and by its own efforts. Don't we have staff in our bank who can devise their own moves? Don't we have such capacity or what is the reason?" (Manager IX, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

In addition, it is public knowledge in the industry that the Commercial Bank was the first to implement the model (and the structure) and then, different private banks including Dashen Bank followed suit. Therefore, these two vice presidents who were hired from Commercial Bank were active change agents in their former bank when the model and thereby the new structure was designed and implemented. Therefore, the coincidence of their being hired and the restructuring (as argued by the protagonists) were effectively used by the opponents to mobilize a discourse that the restructuring was nothing but a copy/paste of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and/or of the internet. One director underscored that copying from the internet or somewhere else and providing that as one's own work is common in Ethiopia and therefore, the problem for him was that it was not contextualized to Dashen Bank, even after it was acknowledged that it was taken from a given source:

> *"But after you copy, you have to go in depth (it should not be shallow and superficial) and contextualize it to your culture…this is what I believe. You know our problem is that there is a culture of 'I have done this and that', 'I have brought this' kind of culture. Okay…for that matter, we haven't done anything, you can bring any research study you like… Otherwise if you simply copy…even we tried hard to hide that it was copied, this is not a very good culture. It is not a bad idea to copy from the internet but after that what is the problem if you see it in depth, discuss it with branches, other managers, and directors? I think that hurt us a lot. I am really, really sorry, you know you have to say 'I have done it'…we don't do anything but we talk a lot, most of us are that kind of people (we want to be bold undeservedly) …you talk a lot with little clue but when you go to the details, there is nothing…" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

The other signal that the antagonists used for mobilizing a discourse that the restructuring was a copy/paste was the discrepancies and flaws in their respective departments. Their argument was, 'if it had been developed by the restructuring team by taking into account our unique situation, such silly mistakes and inconsistencies would not have been made.' For instance, a director who was assigned to the Customer Accounts and Currency Management Department questioned the relation between Fund Management and Currency Account and argued that they were totally unrelated. He stated that when westerners say currency account, the concept they attach to it was totally missed by the team as it copied the structure without scrutiny and thus, according to the director, currency account as he understood, could not be handled in Dashen Bank under the currency scenario, and that the job description for this specific part was not developed by the team:

"When the westerners say CATS, when they say customer accounts, it is not like that in our country… when they copied, they simply copied what was written there, they didn't see the devil, what they (westerners) meant when they say Customer Accounts, it is big data, customer analysis is what they need and this is what we did not explore. This is what we have to practice here, bring here, is it clear? This is the direction we should follow but when you see the structure, why did they even bring the name CATS. Because they directly copy/pasted it. They just copied it but when asked what it would do, there was no answer, nothing. The box is there but as far as I am concerned, my job is more than that … Just fund management…How on earth can fund management be together with me, how? This cannot be the work of a management professional, sorry to say this! They just simply inserted it…they just copied and pasted it… copied and pasted it but the process, the flow was not figured out" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

A number of respondents reflected that the job descriptions (the tasks) and the way the departments were organized were sometimes mismatched. For example, one manager in the IT Department noted that the department under the new structure was tasked to supervise a section which is organized under another department in the new structure, and according to the manager, this mismatch/inconsistency was the result of a 'blind' copy/paste from somewhere else. No effort was made to contextualize it to the specific situations in Dashen Bank.

"For example, it says that the director of my department, the Core Banking Department, will control 'the development' but surprisingly, they took the development section and reorganized it under a different department, so which development section is he going to monitor? Nothing, this doesn't have any answer. It says that 'it will rehab developed software' when there is a problem but in the old structure under the software support and development section, these tasks were performed and the job description was there. But now the development part has been split and taken away, so which development is the director supposed to supervise? Does it mean that they are going to establish a different (but redundant) development section? No answer! If you raise this, you will get no answer! …" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

6.3.2 Adverse consequences of the new structure (the restructuring was a failure)

As mentioned in different parts in this chapter, the adversaries evaluated the new structure negatively. As one manager commented:

"… You can study anything but what matters most is the implementation, that is, how should we go about it? If you don't implement it very well, if you are not doing well at the grassroots level, and if you don't start by collecting information from the bottom and come up and instead you dump everything from the top, you will face huge obstacle. The implementation is a total failure and it is stuck" (Manger VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Therefore, the adversaries mobilized a discourse that the new structure had led to many adverse consequences. The first was that the new structure increased staff turnover especially at the lower levels. Lower levels such as sections and supervisory posts were delayered and instead principal positions were created. Therefore, the principal level is considered equivalent to a supervisor and those section heads who were assigned to principals saw it as a demotion. Those who did not want to be assigned as principals were provided with the option of transferring to operations (branches), which was not the best choice for section heads either:

"Yes, many resigned and joined another bank due to the recent restructuring. For example, when sections were delayered, since she didn't want to apply for the principal's position as it was a demotion from her former position, one section head under my division left the bank and joined another bank as division manager on a better salary scale. Delayering the sections led to dissatisfaction…" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Adding insult to injury, it was also announced that all staff below division managers (that is, section heads, supervisors and other lower level workers) would apply and compete for the jobs and then the get hired as new staff members. This has also pushed the already desperate staff to leave the bank for other banks. Therefore, the antagonists made a discourse that the new structure created a huge mess among the lower level staff.

The other discourse that the antagonists practiced as a consequence of the new structure was that it led to severe pressure and stress on the managers. A number of antagonists made it clear that they were left alone in the middle as an island. They could not share the burden with the deputy because the deputy's position was delayered. On the other hand, they could not cascade downwards because the level below the manager, that is, the principal, was very 'far away' in terms of responsibilities and the principals were less qualified, more inexperienced and typically junior. Therefore, the new structure caused strain and pressures on the middle management:

"Now you are the final person (the final decision maker and executor) and many things will be forwarded to you and that has its own pressures and stress; ...Therefore, personally, I felt the pain even from the start and there are many unbearable things and so there is huge pressure and perhaps, the worst is yet to come. Sometimes, although I am given one week to finish a job, that may not be enough and I have to work day and night by extending my working hours as much as possible. But if that doesn't work out and if I am very busy, I don't know, I may be forced to extend the time, that is the only solution I can think of right now. I don't know, a task might take me two weeks or three. ...If you are not able to delegate or cascade downwards when you are strained, you know, it might have a negative impact on your performance..." (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

One manager noted that the new structure along with scant attention to his department by the top management caused him severe pain and pressure. When we did the interview, the National Bank of Ethiopia had ordered banks not to give any types of loans for unspecified time periods. As a result, collateral estimations were not being done and the manager was relatively free. However, he talked about the pressure he had to go through in his day-to-day activities as the manager of Property Appraisal Division in the Engineering Department.

"I am telling you to note this in case it helps you. I am not saying that for the sake of saying rather...if I do my best, you know...as I told you, after working a full day here in the office, if I tell you that I take 50-60 files home every day, I am sure you would say 'don't you have any other life?' because during the day (working hours) you spend your day being busy like this, and I work until 3:00 at night and sleep for very few hours and get to the office early in the morning, and work the same job and continue being busy like this. This is just to say that there is nothing called life. The reason is that I work here by sacrificing everything and the jobs gets done, but the job here is not appropriate and right. For example, my tasks should have been organized under different sections. As I told you earlier, if they had gone down to the lower level, you know many things could have been addressed. There could have been many options to organize this section, understand?" (Manager VIIII, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

A number of antagonists also mobilized a discourse that the new structure and the staff assignments that followed killed the morale and motivation of the managers and lower level workers. One manager, who had had been with the bank for more than ten years in one position and was then assigned as a manager under the new structure mentioned that she was frustrated with the new structure. She claimed that jobs in banks are not 'rocket

science' and it is possible to perform them perfectly with very little exposure if one has formal education. However, the way the assignments and the new structure were handled was as if it was rocket science. She felt that she was not given an opportunity to unleash her potential but later on she paid a price for something which she thought was not her fault:

> *"To tell you frankly, lately…I don't know, if you ask me the reason, I don't have an answer, but I am losing interest in many ways. Just it is not like…just I don't have a kind of feeling to sacrifice anything for the bank, I just don't consider the bank as mine, I just lost my sentiment for the bank…in short, I am not happy with my work life in Dashen…especially, since I spent many years in the last position. …Therefore, when you lose interest due to many reasons and plus when your age increases, your courage, gut, and everything goes away and you are discouraged. So, I am in this state …I am just here and I will see" (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

As mentioned earlier, the boundaries between departments and divisions were perceived as blurred, unrelated activities were merged together and related ones were split. This complicated many things. For example, one manager noted how the new structure complicated and messed-up the reporting channels, leaving staff members confused and frustrated:

> *"My staff is really frustrated, they ask me many things but I don't know what to say, I don't have anything to say … You cannot order a frustrated worker and if he/she says 'I don't know my position', what do you say? For example, I myself do not know who my boss is and if I have to report now, I have to go directly to the president because if my former boss says to me 'it doesn't concern me', I will be very disappointed. If you take a case to him and he says 'it doesn't concern me', what do you do? My staff came to me and asked me to take their case up, and when I did, there was no one who could handle it. So, such things create a gap between the staff and the bank" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

6.3.3 Succession opportunities compromised

In the new structure, some levels were delayered and the structure was made flatter (at least according to the restructuring team's discourse). The middle levels were highly affected by the restructuring as three middle levels were delayered. However, it was at the deputy level that the adversaries mobilized a discourse against the official discourse. Although the official discourse portrayed those delayered middle levels as 'pipes', and cost centers as they did not provide any value addition to the bank, the antagonists mobilized a

discourse that delayering the middle levels, especially the deputy level, was not in the best interests of the bank. One manager challenged the official discourse by using the leader of the restructuring team as a reference to substantiate allegations that the deputies were active and performed well:

> *"He [the leader of the restructuring team] himself was a deputy in Fund Management and Accounts Department, he served as deputy and after that he was promoted to director. He was in fact a division head when he was at the control department so, he knows the position very well and he worked a lot and for many years in that specific position and it was due to his efforts and performance as a deputy that he was promoted as director; this clearly indicates that deputies were strong and high performers, it doesn't mean they were idle and lazy. As far as I know, deputies were very, very hard working; they were restless and very busy and it is very difficult to think that they were idle and poor performers" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

One manager who was a deputy praised the role of deputies in the bank and felt that the delayering of deputy directors in the new structure was a misguided decision and may cost the bank a huge price. According to this manager, deputies were invaluable for the bank for two reasons: First, deputies had deep know-how about every activity in all divisions in a department and they were all-rounders. And secondly, deputies had management skills that they had learnt through vertical and lateral interaction and communication. Therefore, deputies in Dashen Bank were praised for their good managerial skills. In short, the argument was that the bank did not consider these benefits by delayering the deputy director level.

The other discourse that was mobilized in relation to the deputies was their impact on 'the succession plan'. In fact, succession plan and career development are common words in Dashen Bank. A manager explained:

> *"Succession plan is a must…if you don't have a succession plan, what does it mean? It means that there will not be any operations after some time. Anybody can leave the bank anytime, and if you don't have exposure and readiness, many inconveniences may be created" (Manager XIII, Operations Management Wing).*

The antagonists and protagonists viewed the succession plan differently. For example, the protagonists of the restructuring believed that the bank emphasized succession plans as it organized a separate section in the new structure with the name Succession Plan and Career Management. However, the antagonists put forward a discursive practice that the

succession plan was compromised due to the delayering of the deputy level. One manager below commented that delayering deputies was like delayering vice presidents because as vice presidents are potential successors to the presidents, deputies were potential successors to directors. Also, it was indicted that the division managers and lower levels aspires to be deputies in their career development and this was good motivation for the staff as aspiring for a directorship directly is difficult since there are many managers who are potential successors:

> *"If someone was a deputy, it meant that he was exercising the role of a director. Therefore, whenever the director was off-duty or if he resigned, the deputy was the one who could easily work as a director, in so doing, you were developing potential directors. Therefore, in this regard, I don't think that the presence of the deputies in the structure was that problematic. I think, the reason we can succeed presidents easily is because of the fact that there are vice presidents, isn't it? ... Even more, if you see some banks, they have deputy vice presidents in addition to vice presidents and this has its own contributions from the point of view of the 'succession plan' and developing potential successors at the highest level. And therefore, I don't see the benefit of abolishing deputies, for sure...and this is my personal view and sorry! You know...all incumbent directors were deputies at one time (Manager XIII, Operations Management Wing).*

One manager mentioned that there was no one who was promoted as director directly from the divisions in the history of the bank and he was a bit suspicious about the idea that that the top management would promote division managers as directors directly as they had announced an external vacancy to fill the post of the director of the IT Department instead of promoting an existing managers. This signal was was used by a number of antagonists to conclude that that the top management did not believe that division managers were capable of replacing directors, and yet they had delayered the deputy position:

> *"It will be a challenge to be a director directly from the divisions but if you go step-by-step by working at each level (including being a deputy), it will be easier for the staff and successors. Otherwise, they will look outside and try to hire managers, as they did when they hired two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank. Let me give you one example under the new structure, IT has been split into two and there are two directors' positions; the first director who was assigned had been working here (in the bank) and they took him from inside but the other position is still vacant. You know internally there are four divisions under IT and they could promote one of the division managers to be director but they haven't done that, they had rather announced an external vacancy. Do you*

understand that?" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

6.4 Aftermath of the Restructuring

This section focuses on 'how' the antagonists and the top management received the new structure. It indicates the actions taken and the discourses mobilized by the antagonists to further undermine the official discourse. These discourses and actions followed the felt consequences of the new structure, that is, after the new structure was put in place and the staff was assigned (although not fully). It specifically involved the following actions and discursive elements: response/reactions to the new structure; and the new structure after the new strategy. This section shows that the official discourse was effectively circumscribed by the antagonists.

6.4.1 Response/reactions to the new structure

One point is worthy of investigation is how the middle managers accepted the new structure or what action did they take when they were assigned to their new positions? As indicated earlier, the antagonists mobilized discourses that the new structure was not well-developed and failed to address many issues: the restructuring team was inept at discharging such a responsibility; it would have been better if an external party had developed it; staff involvement in the process was non-existent; and it was copied from the internet and/or the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. The adversaries put in place many discourses (and actions) that further enforced the view that the restructuring was a failure and had to be modified accordingly. Most of these discourses were mobilized in written texts and addressed to the top management and sometimes concerned authorities including the restructuring team.

To address their 'grievances' or for suggesting modifications in relation to the new structure, some antagonists tried to be systematic in their moves to signal that their concerns were for the bank's interest and well-being. For example, one manager in IT stressed that he should not be dismissive of the efforts of the restructuring team and what had been done because it had already been approved by the board and the top management:

> *"The restructuring has already come to an end, so you cannot comment on a finished business and argue whether restructuring was really important or not. ... you have to suggest that 'this thing must be organized like this, if we reorganize that task, that is much better and benefits the bank and it doesn't have*

any cost.' After doing your own study, you have to suggest that it can still be organized like this. You should not totally nullify the study on which the restructuring was based. If that is the case, it sounds like maintaining your own position and serving your own interests at the expense of the bank's interests; you yourself cannot accept it because it reverses the entire process and moreover, it was approved by the executive, the board, and all the authorized parties and therefore, if you totally nullify it, who is going to take your suggestions to the board? Do you think that those who did the study would take it back to the board based on your suggestions which are dismissive? Never. They cannot and if you place yourself in their shoes…you won't accept it either…" (Manager VIII, Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

This clearly acknowledges management hegemony and that actions should not challenge this hegemony. Moreover, the manager was very explicit about managerial hegemony when he stated that he should play in his 'territory'. However, he believed that there were some weaknesses among the staff in suggesting alternatives, especially the head of his department was not able to play his role in suggesting alternatives and a better reorganization:

"So that is what I believe, that is, let us play with what we have, let us play in our own field; we can still play well in that field, but my standpoint is that we haven't been able to play well in our own field, IT itself is very weak…it means that the department doesn't have a say. What I am saying is that the department head has not been able to exercise his powers. Unless you are able to exercise your powers, you are weak. There are many occasions where you can exercise your power. You can discuss via the phone, you can discuss in person, and you can use the written form and in so doing, you will suggest alternatives. Alternatives should not come from the viewpoint of resistance, rather you should present them as 'other alternatives.' So, with regard to doing that, I believe that our department is very 'W-E-A-K' I don't want to conclude that the problem is with them…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

However, the manager tried his best to create awareness in his own division and suggest alternatives to the vice presidents and the restructuring team.

Most adversaries tried to make the concerned authorities aware of the flaws in the new structure in relation to their respective departments and divisions. Different techniques and signals were used to mobilize a discourse that the problems needed attention and reconsideration. For example, one manager drew on volumes of international transactions and exchanges to argue that splitting related activities would create a mess in ensuring the

smooth functions of the transactions and thereby negatively affect the relations that Dashen had with international partners. He showed me the document that he had sent to the director (his immediate boss), the restructuring team and the vice presidents. He listed eight benefits, three drawbacks, and nine unintended consequences and side effects if different activities (highly related) under his supervision were organized under different departments:

> *"I just did that by comparing and contrasting like system section versus COD, my section is COD, and the other one is CCD so that when the two divisions go together, what is going to happen in relation to document exchange…we exchange via system and/or signed hard copy (by putting our respective signatures), nevertheless, when those divisions are in different departments, the document exchange may not be efficient since the documents could be misplaced and missed, could be delayed; …there are voluminous document exchanges recursively/iteratively, but 'how are they going to exchange documents tomorrow when the divisions are organized under different departments?'…"* (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

When they reported problems related to the new structure, most of the adversaries commented that they took maximum care for their case not to be interpreted otherwise. For example, one director mentioned that while he has reported the problems and challenges he was facing in the department due to the new structure, he did not want to interrupt the task in any way. In the new structure, activities that were under the Area Bank Coordinator and the Legal Department were organized under his department (Customer Accounts and Currency Management). In addition, the Control Department lately wrote a letter indicating/suggesting that some activities should be transferred to that department. However, in all these cases, although the department director was willing to perform the tasks, the activities were not transferred along with the manpower that performed them. Only four members of staff were assigned to the department:

> *"But in this case, what you do is you have to write a report rather than keeping silent or glossing over the case. You have to clearly and transparently show the work load and the 'incidence', either in written form and/or orally and in person. Do you know why I say this? If you gloss over it today, it will bring you problems tomorrow. You may perform it, you may perform it even by engaging yourself in the work, but you will not be successful. Therefore, what you have to do is that without stopping the work, you can ask for detailed descriptions and specifications regarding the work and its scope upwards and downwards…you have to motivate your subordinates by clarifying the issues transparently like 'we are supposed to do this but we have this and this problem, but to do the task*

certain things must be corrected and fixed, however, for the time being we have such and such resources and other things will be fixed in the meantime'…you have to do like that. Otherwise, if you wait till things get fixed, you will get in trouble" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

Finally, the director was partially successful as he managed to secure seven staff members (although a lesser number than what he had asked for).

A manager noted that he reported a problem because he did not want to 'sit idle and look when there was a mess in the bank.' He talked in person with the leader of the restructuring team, with the Human Resource Department about staffing issues, and with two vice presidents many times about problems that appeared in the new structure and which remained unaddressed.

"Therefore, concerning tasks and staff in my division, I shared my concerns with the top management and the restructuring team and I don't believe that it will be considered negatively because I did if for the good of the bank. And then they responded that 'although work related to restructuring in all other sections and wings had been finalized, your division and IT wing were yet not finalized.' … so, I never stopped, I never gave up. I even talked to the advisor and the thing is, my effort will continue until a solution is obtained. I want to support the perfect implementation of the restructuring …I don't believe that the restructuring was not timely or important" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Some adversaries tried to create pressure and discuss with their immediate bosses:

"Actually, I tried to create pressure on my bosses. 'Will my bosses create pressure or not on their bosses?' that is another question. Do you understand me? Only my boss can confront with the top management. As far as I am concerned, I will forward my questions and concerns only to my bosses. 'Will they report the pressure, the fatigue, the strain, and the mess here?', it is another question. Do you understand? As much as possible I am trying to report and make the concerned parties aware of the existing scenario. Sometimes I believe that I am making a big mistake. Do you know what, if I finish all these files, 60 files by also taking home and working at night, there is no problem, things look perfect, just the gap will not be known. But it cannot continue this way because if I leave this position and somebody who is incapable comes…you know I am driving the bank to failure myself, do you understand? I am just hurting myself and the bank as well…" (Manager IX, Resources and Facilities Wing).

A number of managers also explained that they tried to create new roles for their new positions until they were given job descriptions or their roles were known. One manager who had worked for many years in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia before joining Dashen

Bank noted that the most important thing she learned from her former organization was discipline. She did not want to wait till she was told what to do:

> *"Similarly, when it comes to this position, you know you feel as a human being— human beings do not live and get employed for the sake of money, rather at least he or she should be able to contribute something happily. So, regarding my responsibility in this new position, I discussed with my boss how we should move forward, and we devised a direction because as director of the department he has to know our intention and what we are doing. But when it comes to initiating ideas, it is my responsibility as I do have an interest and therefore, I am doing that till I get a formal job description because I have not been given a job description so far…" (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

In addition, the adversaries tried to enhance the objectives of their respective divisions and departments or repositioning their focus based on or differently from the new structure. An effort was also made to reach the top management and the restructuring team, because the implementation wing of the restructuring team was still active. For example, one director explained that although he was assigned to the Customer Accounts and Currency Management Department, his tasks were routine and he wanted to focus on fund liquidity management and customer analytics. To do so, he recommended that the cash part of his job must be reorganized along with treasury management. He questioned: "*Treasury separately out there, fund management here with me, why?*" He thinks that all information about a customer and his transactions should be recorded and analyzed so that it can be used for different purposes (to develop products and enhance selling) and for the top management to take informed decisions. Even the data could be compiled and sold to interested parties. The core banking system that the bank has implemented recently could be of much help in this. Therefore, the director wants to focus on this part rather than engaging in routine and exchanging routine letters upward and downward along the hierarchy:

> *"However, I would be more fruitful if I work on Fund Liquidity Management, just more on customers…. I am now contemplating to working more on the customer analytics part. I am trying to modify it in that way. …I am just thinking right now as to how the cash management can be modernized to be efficient. On the other hand, in this scenario what you are going to do in relation to the big data or customer analysis, from scratch in core banking… in those areas, we try to work to move ourselves to the standards by benchmarking other companies or whatever; you know, westerners have gone far on this side. That should be the direction this department should follow. …. The box is there but as far as I*

am concerned, my job is more than that. This is it, we have to go to that, you understand? ..." (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

One manager noted that the way his task/position was understood in the banking sector in Ethiopia and by the restructuring team was not up to date, rather the roles in his position have evolved and he wanted to work strategically. The way the new structure conceptualized 'treasury management' was not acceptable to the manager as it totally focused on technical rather than strategic issues. Under the new structure, the roles that are specified in treasury management are more of analyzing the bank's wealth, asset/liability ratio, analyzing its capacity to provide loans, and also following up and analyzing non-performing loans. It is managing cash inflows and outflows and this is routine. It is more of signing a report once a week prepared by the staff about the cash inflow and outflow. However, the manager believed that this role had changed internationally (and was not captured by the restructuring team):

> *"What does treasury mean? Initially…I started googling about treasury and what it should do from a currency management perspective and when I read, to begin with treasury management means 70:20:10 strategic, tactical (I am not sure here) and operational respectively. … But if you ask 'what is the picture in our case?' treasury is 100 percent technical, it was put like this as you only took treasury management. Strategy, nothing; operation, nothing! … you just have to ask 'what is that I have to do in treasury?' and you have to set standards. You have to forge a standard because the standard is not there, there are 10-15 points that are listed in the job description and nothing else beyond that. But if you are concerned, you have to ask: 'what should I do?' and therefore you have to try to expand, enrich and specialize the division, that is a must. Therefore, it depends on the person who holds the position. If you cannot work on it, you won't work, you will only continue with very minor tasks…"* (Manager XIII, Operations Management Wing).

One manager tried to participate in a trade bazaar with her team to introduce the bank's products and services, collect feedback and deliver mini-services at the bazaar for customers. In addition, she tried to place many suggestion boxes for Dashen Bank in many corners of Addis Ababa for collecting inputs regularly at fixed time intervals, compiling a report and communicating it to the concerned parties. She wanted her job description whch is yet to be developed for her position to focus on the same roles as she would like to proceed in that direction.

Another action by the adversaries was re-restructuring to redress problems that were created by the new structure. For example, one director proposed a revised structure and

thus requested more workforce than what was specified in the new structure. Although he has been trying successfully to reposition the focus of his department on customer analytics, he drew on routines to argue that more staff should be assigned to his department. His basic argument is that since the activities involve routines, there should be a head below the manager of one section, makers and checkers should be approved and for this he demanded 11 staff members along with the manager. However, the restructuring team approved seven staff, dismissed the ideas of a head but approved a maker and a checker arrangement. Thus, the structure has been modified a bit, new positions have been created, and staff members added.

One manager noted that Marketing Department was tasked with some roles that were completely related to logistics and facility. Therefore, in the new reorganization that he and his boss are working on in his department and division, facility and logistics related activities have been taken away and the department made to entirely focus on marketing. Plus, a position 'corporate communication' was created which was left unaddressed in the new structure and the roles of lower level staff ('principals', according to the new structure) were enhanced and thereby their names/labels changed. These changes have been presented to the top management and the manager is hopeful that they will get their 'blessings':

> *"Even the naming is not accommodative. For example, take audiovisual…. audiovisual expert, what does it mean…audiovisual expert? It means that it is only collecting and storing audios and videos. That means, if staff is required to carry their cameras and run whenever there are corporate functions and events, and the record and store these, we are creating idle and 'dull' staff members. Rather, what if we change their names? What if we name them creative experts? What if we label them senior creative experts? besides recording and storing audios and videos, when they are in the office (when they are not in the field), they have to work to come up with new initiatives and creativities, and therefore, their naming should be changed accordingly. Currently we along with the director are working on that..." (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

These discursive practices and actions showed different changes and modifications that have been made by the antagonists, thereby undermining the official discourse and enforcing their discourse that the new structure was poorly developed and therefore, was not a solution for the problems (if any) in Dashen Bank. A number of antagonists claimed

that they had, one way or the other, made changes in different degrees in their respective divisions and departments.

In addition to repositioning the focus of the departments or divisions, and making minor additional changes to the structure, some antagonists also tried to develop strict procedures and policies to help the smooth running of related tasks that were organized under different departments. For example, one manager demonstrated that tasks that were under his supervision (and related) were reorganized in the Customer Accounts and Currency Management Department, the Treasury Management Division, and IT Department and some continued in the E-banking Department. Therefore, according to the manager, coordinating these departments and performing the tasks would be a headache. Furthermore, the respective directors and division managers may not have the required knowledge about the related tasks in other departments:

> *"Although there are problems, at the end of the day, when we say 'how can we solve them?' the solution we proposed is that we need to tie them up with policies and procedures. If we put strict policies, the system section should discharge its duties accordingly and present this to the finance section, and the finance section should be compelled by policy and present it to another section; we put forward such kinds of solutions in case tying different responsibilities and activities with strict policies and procedures makes a difference" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

> *"I want to improve the way things are done, I want to set a clear direction and procedures. I want to draft formats and manuals" (Manager IX, Resources and Facility Management Wing).*

In addition, several antagonists mentioned 'staff development' in their respective departments and divisions as a solution to many problems caused by the new structure, especially coping with pressures and strain after the new structure was put in place. In fact, developing immediate subordinates (principals) was described as being difficult given their junior status and lesser qualifications as a requirement. However, some managers saw other best solutions rather than engaging in staff development to solve the problems. For example, the manager of property appraisal, who is responsible for evaluating the value of the collateral, stated that his pressure had been eased (due to the suspension of loan provisions) and thus, he wanted to use this time for the bank, rather than for personal affairs and would like to redress some issues that were created due to the new structure:

"Especially now after being a manager, I want things to continue in a different scenario and I have to do that. I want to assign tasks to staff members, all things should not come to me, I have to delegate. ... You have to delegate work to the staff by taking time, you have to make them feel responsible and you have to design flows, procedures, strategies and formats so that those files that you take home can be worked on here in the office within a reasonable period of time..." *(Manager IX, Resources and Facility Management Wing).*

"It is very difficult. But gradually, what I think is that we have to develop the staff. Whether they are junior or senior, the only option you can have is delegating to them and eventually developing the staff to shoulder more responsibilities. Because unless you cascade the job down, you cannot bear it, and thus to minimize the pressure, you have to empower your subordinates and then distribute the jobs to them to perform. In fact, there are competency problems and the job bounces back to you but for the time being you have no other option but to distribute the tasks among them..." *(Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

However, developing and motivating staff members is not an easy job due to some reasons in relation to the new structure. Therefore, several adversaries stressed that dealing with their subordinates was very important. Many adversaries viewed the new structure as a complete failure, stuck in its implementation leaving the staff frustrated. Therefore, signaling to staff that the managers were working to address their plight was perceived to be of paramount importance. Accordingly, one manager in the IT Department mentioned that he frequently discussed his staff with concerned authorities and based on that, he tried to make some promises that can be fulfilled:

"We have worked with my team for seven, eight and ten years and their pain is my pain, their growth and success is my growth and success. When I have something to eat while they don't have, how can I eat? Second, if their concerns and discontent are not addressed, how can I cascade tasks from the top to them to perform? Without satisfying them and creating a conducive environment for them, if I am not working towards that, at least if I do not signal to them that I am trying my very best, how can I ...I have to inform them that I am working towards that, I have to give them hope. Because if humans are in despair, it is very bad and consequential. Therefore, I have to tell them that the future is bright, the best is yet to come..." *(Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

6.4.2 New structure after the new strategy

As clearly shown in Chapters 5 and 6, alternative and competing discourses were mobilized to make the own versions of reality regarding the new structure a dominant one. Branch

managers and other 'head office' directors and managers put in place a discursive practice that challenged the official discourse (not necessarily the dominant one) which had been put in place by the restructuring team and other protagonists of the restructuring process and its outcomes. In this discursive struggle by different groups of middle managers, the role of the top management was negligible. Although the official discourse mobilized by the restructuring team can be considered as the discourse of the top management (since the restructuring team was formed and assigned the responsibilities by the top management), it was mobilized only by the restructuring team. In other words, the top management followed a hands-off approach during the restructuring and the discursive struggles. This approach was evident in the decisions that the top management took later.

Finally, the antagonists effectively mobilized a discourse that at least partially challenged the official discourse and thus, the discourse that the new structure was not well-developed and that it was a failure was accepted in the organization. Stated differently, the critical discourse becomes dominant by effectively circumventing the official discourse, which propagated otherwise. Therefore, the top management decided in favor of a new structure after the new 5-year strategy has been developed (this has been awarded to a foreign consulting company). As one director put it:

> *"All departments had problems with the new structure and as a result many things were changed in each department by the process owners and finally, when the modifications became huge and in every department, it was said by the top management that 'let us just continue with the existing structure until a new strategy is designed and a new structure will be put in place after that'..."* (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

I did a follow-up interview with the restructuring team leader about the new structure a year after its implementation. He evaluated the new structure as a success and said that he was very proud to be part of this huge project as the team leader (in line with the discourse that he and his team had mobilized earlier). However, he confessed that there was fierce resistance from all groups of middle managers, especially from branch managers whose personal interests according to him were jeopardized as a result of the new structure. He also mentioned that genuine resistance and concerns were aired by department directors and division managers. The team leader also noted that some of the resistance was because of the failure of the team to effectively communicate during and after the restructuring. Having seen fierce resistance to the new structure, the team leader raised the issue of new restructuring after a new strategy in a management meeting and repeatedly held discussions

on this issue with the top management. Finally, the top management "set a clear direction that there will be a new but modest restructuring after the new strategy is formulated, which has been awarded to a foreing consultancy company, KPMG" (Director, Project Management Office).

However, the top management's decision to go in for a new structure was criticized by protagonists and some members of the restructuring team, who argued that it will result in a huge disruption in the bank for the second time within a two-year period and this could hurt the bank's competitiveness.

Chapter 7: Rhetorical Strategies (Strategies of Persuasion)

This chapter discusses the rhetorical strategies (strategies of persuasion) that both the protagonists and antagonists applied to mobilize their own discourse and undermine each other's discourses. Five types of rhetorical strategies were identified: *logos* (based on rational arguments/reasons); *ethos* (authority-based arguments/credibility); *pathos* (emotional-morale arguments/emotion); *autopoiesis* (based on autopoietic narratives); and *cosmos* (based on cosmological constructions). The analysis shows that both the protagonists and antagonists used ethos extensively and this constituted the dominant persuasive appeal. Logos was modestly used by both the protagonists and antagonists. Autopoiesis was used slightly by both the protagonists and antagonists. Pathos was modestly used by the antagonists whereas the protagonists never made any appeal to pathos. Cosmos was slightly used by the protagonists whereas the antagonists never made any appeal to cosmos. Table 7.1 summarizes the rhetorical strategies and the respective discursive practices that were mobilized by both the protagonists and antagonists.

Table 7. 1 Rhetorical Strategies and Discursive Practices

Rhetorical strategies	Protagonists	Antagonists
Ethos	The restructuring team was the best team (members were experienced and well-qualified) The new structure was well developed.	The restructuring team was not the best (members of the team were inexperienced and lacked expertise). The new structure was poorly developed. The restructuring process was not systematic and scientific. Experienced experts and current position holders were excluded.
Logos	Compelling reasons for the new structure (it was a must) The new structure was a success	The new structure was a failure.
Pathos		Human and organizational concerns remained unaddressed.
Autopoiesis	The new structure was not a copy/paste from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. The restructuring team had minimal influence over the restructuring.	The restructuring process was not participatory. The structure should have come after the new strategy (strategy versus structure).
Cosmos	The new structure was a must (it was inevitable).	

Source: Based on the empirical study

7.1 Persuasive appeals: Ethos

Ethos is an authority-based argument in the discursive struggles of different groups for and against the restructuring. The restructuring team and the other protagonists extensively used appeal to ethos to make their point and dominate the discursive struggle. For instance, the restructuring was always associated with the top management to get the buy-in of the antagonists. A number of protagonists mentioned that it was the top management or/and the board that took the initiative for a new structure. For example, the leader of the restructuring team said:

> *"The idea of restructuring did come from the top management, you can say from the board" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

It was not only the fact that the idea of the new structure came from the top management, but the protagonists also mentioned many times that the top management took part in each and every phase of the restructuring. They indicated that the top management acted as a steering committee during the restructuring so that it was briefed at every stage, drafts were always submitted to it for comments, and its guidance was perceived as very helpful and was strictly followed. The head of the restructuring team noted that the top management was really important for reducing resistance to change among the staff members:

> *"There are teams that the top management was a member of because there would be different obstacles…. if you want to implement without any disruption since it is very likely that there will be resistance, obstacles, and foot dragging in different sections" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

The above points illustrate how appeals to ethos were made by the restructuring team to mobilize the official discourse. It was not only stated that the idea for a new structure emerged from the top management or/and the board and the restructuring team only executed orders, but also that the top management was effectively used as a symbol for fighting any resistance from staff (a different and competing discourse by the antagonists). It was frequently mentioned by the restructuring team that "it was decided by the restructuring team", "there was clear guidance on this issue from the top management", "it was approved by the top management", "the top management had seen that", and "it was presented to the top management."

A further appeal to ethos came in the form of expertise and experience. As indicated in the previous chapters, one of the discourses that was mobilized by the restructuring team and the other protagonists was that the restructuring team was fit for the job (of restructuring). This is a typical example of appealing to ethos (Erkama and Vaara, 2010; Gauthier and Kappen, 2017). The leader of the restructuring team claimed that the team was composed of experienced individuals:

> *"We had our own experience, we were high level personnel, we had different exposure as a team, and there was our strategy too…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

One of the members of the restructuring team and the only manager among the members mentioned that the other members of the restructuring were members of the senior management team (directors) and had ample experience in the banking sector. Therefore, an appeal to ethos and thereby the credibility of the restructuring team was made by emphasizing the qualifications, experience, and the level of the members of the restructuring team:

> *"As members of the senior management, they were involved in different organizational affairs starting from the first strategic plan for the bank. Plus, they had a very rich and long—more than ten years—experience in the banking sector and they knew the nuts and bolts of the industry. Therefore, I think that they were the main input in the restructuring and it ended successfully because of the fact that they had very big things and a track record in banking…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

In addition, another appeal to ethos was presented in the form of "we are not alone", and "others also have done the same" to gain credibility on many issues, that is, to justify these issues in line with the official discourse. For example, such an appeal to ethos was made to justify the fact that a restructuring at such a grand scale was not only being done by Dashen Bank but others too had done it, and the restructuring was not a direct copy/paste from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (contrary to the discourse mobilized by the antagonists). As indicated in the previous chapter, the antagonists claimed that the idea of restructuring came from two vice presidents who joined Dashen Bank from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and as a result, the Dashen Bank implemented the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia's model, demonstrating that its structure was copied and implemented in Dashen Bank without adaptation. However, one of the members of the restructuring team argued against this appealing to ethos as a rhetorical strategy:

> *"But if you ask whether it is only the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, it is not. First, like us, if you take Wogagen Bank, Abyssinia Bank very recently, Awash Bank and other banks, they all got their processes studied by foreign companies and joined the club. Second, even before all that, Dashen Bank without consulting the commercial banks, was a pioneer and took its own steps, for example, it organized district offices very early. Thus, such kinds of things were not started after vice presidents from the Commercial Bank joined Dashen, rather, the new structure and organizing district offices preceded these vice presidents as they were taken up before theyjoined Dashen Bank" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

One director used "it is the international model" as an appeal to ethos to bring credibility to the change. Also, "we benchmarked other similar banks and took best practices" is an appeal to ethos which rendered credibility and seriousness to the process:

> *"Thus, the approach was that we started from the customer and moved to product development rather than vice versa. This is an international model and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia implemented the model first. But following the Commercial Bank, there were other banks which had already implemented the model such as Wegagen Bank and Abyssina Bank, and others were also planning to do so like Hibret Bank. Probably, our bank was the fourth or the fifth in implementing this model. But regarding its effectiveness, we had a latecomer's advantage and we benchmarked other similar banks and took their best practices" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

On the other hand, one protagonist appealed to ethos by drawing on phrases like "professional and scientific" and "experienced foreign consultancy" to justify the restructuring but "witnessing the fruits of the restructuring" was an appeal to logos. The foreign consultancy company was expensively used as appeal to ethos and autopoiesis:

> *"Because the restructuring was done on the basis of a professional and scientific study by an experienced foreign consultancy, I believe that it was a right move and we are witnessing the fruits of the restructuring" (Manager II, Grade III Branch).*

As indicated in the previous chapters, the restructuring team and the other protagonists had to mobilize their own discourses and at the same time justify their actions in the face of their adversaries' discourses. The same appeal to ethos was made by the restructuring team to justify that making the Program Management Office (the leader of the restructuring team was assigned to it in the new structure) directly accountable to the president had nothing to do with pursuing self-interest, rather it was a "common practice" was thus an appeal to ethos:

> *"The reason the head of the position was made accountable to the president was not due to his ability to influence/power. But to run a project, someone with ultimate power is necessary, for sure. Wherever you go, someone who is determined to take timely decisions and is accountable to the president will be assigned as head of projects, I think that is a common practice wherever you go, isn't it? Is it not the same in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia? It is!" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

One director who was also a member of the implementation wing of the restructuring team said "it is normal" to appeal to ethos to undermine any resistance to change:

> *"I think resistance to change is natural. You have to expect it all the time when you deal with change, and that is the major issue in change management, no question about it" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

A further appeal to ethos was made to mobilize a discourse that the process was done well. The leader of the restructuring team mentioned that the team visited different similar companies to gain an understanding of how they were structured. Therefore, an appeal to ethos was made by mentioning phrases like "grasp the experiences of different companies", and "identify the weaknesses and strengths of their structures" which is a very common way of assessing phenomena (SWOT analysis), "incorporating their processes" and in some cases, the processes of Dashen Bank were much "better":

> *"In selected areas, we tried to grasp the experience of different companies through interviews and discussions. We tried to see how they were structured and organized, how they were undertaking their activities, and identify the weaknesses and strengths of their structures. With regard to some processes, we considered incorporating their structures and, in some processes, we found that our structure was better. ...we tried to take their best practices in some areas and processes. In fact, it was a little tough exercise" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

In a further appeal to ethos, one of the members of the restructuring team also noted that there was not only back and forth movement between the top management and the restructuring team to discuss the draft structure until the final one was produced, but the two vice presidents who came from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and who had ample experience with the model in their ex-bank also gave invaluable comments. Therefore, appeals to ethos were made in such a way that the members of the restructuring team were well-experienced, frequent discussions and deliberations were done with the top management, and the two vice presidents who came from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia with ample experience of the model were an asset:

> *"We first studied and produced the first draft and then presented it to the top management. Then after, people in the top management have put their maximum effort to it and enriched it. Plus, surprisingly and luckily enough, we had two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, which had implemented the same model before Dashen, and they shared their experience as they had worked with the model and enriched it. I don't take this as the team's work and achievement. For that matter, I could say that it was a group effort with the top management." (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Self-criticism was another form of appeal to ethos. Self-criticism was an effort to admit past mistakes or wrong deeds or things that should have happened but did not happen and therefore it positioned the restructuring team and other protagonists as trustworthy in their claims. Self-criticism was frequently used as an appeal to ethos by the restructuring team. For instance, one member of the restructuring team mentioned her discontent about the timing of the restructuring:

> *"As I told you, the only thing that disappointed me was the timing, we were not able to revise our structure in the mid-term of the strategy as clearly articulated in the strategy itself…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

An appeal to ethos in the form of self-criticism was also extensively made by the restructuring team with regard to communication during the restructuring period. They admitted that most of the observed resistance to the new structure came from lack of adequate communication. For instance, there was huge resistance from the branches to the new structure since loan provisions and foreign currency allocations were centralized. However, one of the members of the restructuring team mentioned that the real intention of the centralization was not communicated to the branches in the required quality, frequency, and seriousness and this left managers free to speculate and raised suspicions. He noted that it was still not too late (since the restructuring was still a very hot issue in the bank) and branch managers and others who had doubts and skepticism could be talked to:

> *"We worked a little bit on communication, but it is difficult to say that the communication was intensive and matched the expected resistance to change. Yes, true because you can only break the observed resistance with detailed communication, you have to learn from feedback, modify the structure accordingly and show them that their inputs have been considered, in so doing you can overcome the resistance… It was a communication gap…" (Director III, member of the restructuring team).*

The restructuring team and the other protagonists also used appeals to ethos along with intersecting persuasive appeals to logos. This is a strategy that combined credibility with arguments and rational appeals. For instance, one director who was also a member of the implementation team drew on the consulting company as an appeal to ethos and argued that the bank was reaping the benefits listed by the consulting company as objectives, strengthening its 'competitive positions' and maintaining its 'leadership positions':

> *"In general, the change was very important for the bank and in the study, the consulting company provided a list of benefits that we would get if we reworked our structure and we are realizing those benefits. ...especially we will be able to strengthen our competitive position and leadership in the market" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

One branch manager used the phrase 'systematic and scientific study' as an appeal to ethos to gain credibility and also mentioned branch expansion as an appeal to logos to justify the change. Again, performance improvements after the new structure were presented as evidence that the new structure was not a wasted effort; this was also an appeal to logos:

> *"The restructuring was driven by a systematic and scientific study; the bank didn't get into that randomly or speculatively. These days, we are trying to implement the structure which was developed based on a study and its tangible findings…. look, after the structure, there are visible indications that we are working better and thus, the restructuring is very important. It was absolutely necessary because Dashen was expanding rapidly; earlier we opened five branches every year, but currently we are opening 70-80 branches every year and to manage this large number of branches, establishing district offices and expanding the number of departments [as a result of the restructuring] were very important…" (Manager II, Grade III Branch).*

In addition, an appeal to ethos was used by the protagonists along with intersecting appeals to autopoiesis. Autopoiesis appeals are linked to the narrative of purpose and identity and are mostly associated with 'strategy' and other auto-communication in an organization. Appeals to autopoiesis are always presented as a logical and necessary step in a given process. Accordingly, an appeal to autopoiesis was made to justify the fact that the restructuring was part of a 'resource modernization management project' by which the process of the bank was thoroughly studied by a foreign consultancy company. An appeal to ethos was also made when a director mentioned the study of the process. His statements 'end to end', 'the top management accepted the study and was signed off', 'an implementation team was established', and 'aligning with business reality and technological capability', allude to the credibility of the entire restructuring process:

"When we see the process, the study was conducted by Ernst and Young, a foreign consultancy firm and we called it a 'resource modernization management project.' It was about modernizing our resource (deposit mobilization) efforts and the project tried to examine the process from end to end especially its credit operations, credit administration, and credit recovery and the findings (output) were tabled in front of the top management. After thoroughly seeing the results and considering the functions of the bank, the top management accepted the study and signed it. In fact, we didn't accept it as it was and when it comes to implementation, an implementation team was established [he was part of the team], and we tried to revisit and rework what they had studied and align it with our business reality and technological capability, consider the country's stage of development and practical scenario, and benchmark the main actors in the industry; and based on that, we revised its study and got into action…" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).

An appeal to ethos was made along with intersecting appeals to cosmos by the restructuring team and the other protagonists. An appeal to cosmos is an argument of inevitability. For example, a director below commented that the restructuring was a must as an appeal to cosmos. However, he substantiated his claims with intersecting autopoiesis such as 'the process was well-studied by a foreign consulting company and the restructuring was a consequence of their study' and ethos such as self-criticism that the strategy was not followed and 'best practices' was taken from the industry:

"When we think about it, the restructuring was a must for at least two reasons. First, to update its processes and increase its asset optimization, the bank got its processes studied and documented by Ernst and Young. So that document affected all processes in the bank, whether it was credit, international banking, whatever and when these processes were updated/changed, it affected the structure. Second, although we had a strategy, it was difficult to say that the strategy was comprehensive. Therefore, although we could not follow the strategy, there were best practices that the others had achieved. Thus, either by following the best practices in the market or putting the process studied by Ernst and Young into effect, it was a must to rework the structure. I believe that these two points were the springboard of the restructuring" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

An appeal to ethos was used by the antagonists of the official discourse to mobilize their own alternative and competing discourses. A number of antagonists drew on their own experience and knowledge as a rhetorical strategy to argue against the official discourse. For instance, one manager mentioned his experience in many different companies before

joining Dashen Bank thus giving him experience of change. He challenged what happened at Dashen as 'odd':

> *"Before I came to Dashen Bank, I worked in a lot of companies. I worked in the FAFA Food Complex and I was head of the Corporate Planning Department and I worked there for almost five years. Then, I moved to Bekelcha Transport, a transport company, and I have experience in the transportation sector as well. I also worked in the cement sector, I worked in the Mugar Cement factory for two years in a management position…you know I haven't worked as an ordinary worker throughout my experience, I only worked for six months as non-management staff, otherwise I have spent most of my years as a manager. So, I have a lot of experience, I have worked in different change initiatives, I read a lot of theories about BPR and BSC and thus what I saw here regarding change implementation was a little odd for me (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

One manager in the IT Department appealed to ethos to argue that he was the right person and not the members of the restructuring team (as they did not have an IT background) to comment on how his department and other related activities in other departments should have been organized. He mentioned that for the sake of maintaining autonomy, some related tasks were erroneously reorganized in other departments and this might have dire consequences. Therefore, he drew on his experience and IT background to undermine the work done by the restructuring team:

> *"For example, when I say that I need those people in my division, when I stress that first-line support should be delivered by my division, I have grounds to say this. Because first, it must be someone who knows core banking very well. Second, it must be someone who knows IT infrastructure very well. And thirdly, he should be able to understand the bank's interfaces. Therefore, I believe that these would enable my division to give first-line support. When I say this, I don't want to view it separately from core banking (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Another manager made an appeal to ethos by stating: "I am happy to know the science [of change]" to undermine the official discourse that the restructuring was well-developed:

> *"I told you earlier that when I was head of system planning in one company and head of the Corporate Department in another company, different change initiatives were taken up under my supervision and as a result we went through them very exhaustively and extensively. I am happy to know that science. Look, at least you need to have some sort of training, you need to have awareness."* *(Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

The other thing that was severely criticized by the antagonists was the effort by the restructuring team to undertake all activities regarding the restructuring on its own. A number of antagonists mobilized a discourse that checks-and-balances were lost during the process since everything was taken care of by the restructuring team. For instance, one manager argued that different teams should have been organized to maintain specialty and for using their expertise. Therefore, he appealed to ethos when he argued that the restructuring team could not be experts in everything:

> *"… it must be done by experts and after they produce a document and reach a consensus on it, other teams should take over the job and evaluate it. …" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

A further appeal to ethos was made by the antagonists of the official discourse in the form of an argument: "the way the restructuring process was handled was defective." For example, one director appealed to ethos to argue that the real scenarios were not taken into account when the restructuring was developed and only boxes were developed without the details. He drew on 'literature or science' as an appeal to ethos to argue that the restructuring was unscientific. He also mentioned the restructuring team's dishonesty when it pretended that the new structure was their own work when it was clear to everyone in the bank that it was copied, thus appealing to ethos:

> *"You know restructuring is not like that… they had to do it by seeing left and right and contextualizing it to our unique scenario. What I am saying is that they only copied the boxes and thus they didn't consider the details … I am sorry but from what you see in literature or science, it is totally contradictory. You know…information nowadays is a resource that you can find everywhere, if you want to do something, just reading and seeing is what is expected of you. Then, just be transparent, you have to say that I just got it, read it from this (the source), that is it. It is only talk, you know everything was done in secret and it damaged the entire process" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

By appealing to ethos, one manager also mentioned that the restructuring team handled the restructuring poorly. He recalled that the team did not reach each unit to collect data, and therefore, the new structure failed to address their problems; rather, it created strain and pressure on the managers. He appealed to ethos when he argued that this was a result of 'lack of attention' to the department on the pretext of 'support':

> *"Had they gone into each unit and seen practical scenarios during restructuring, many things would have been addressed and fixed. Such kinds of issues and pressures would have been eased and … Was it because it was*

considered support or our bosses did not sell the department and our profession very well, I don't know but there were problems. One way or the other, the department was not given due attention. I believe that the problem lies in the lack of attention from the top management and it might cost us a lot" (Manager IX, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

Another manager appealed to ethos by mentioning that there was unfair and partial treatment of some departments and what was exhibited in the new structure was an extension of that:

"The IT Department has not been exploited to unleash its potential, it has been marginalized; it has been sidelined not to stand on its feet and develop on its own when it could have contributed to the bank's efficiency and productivity…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

Nepotism and favoritism by the top management to its cliques were among the most contentious issues by which the antagonists mobilized a discourse using different rhetorical strategies. One director mentioned the lack of fairness during staff assignments. By appealing to ethos, he mentioned that those who were a part of the cliques and closer to the top management were assigned to directors' positions. To argue that there was nepotism in the bank, he appealed to ethos as: 'I don't have their mind-set and personality' (to distance himself from the top management which was unfair), or 'the policy of the bank' as a standard to expose law-breaking by the top management:

"Sorry to say this, I don't have their mindset and personality and I don't want to consider my friends, relatives and cliques for a professional task. Let me tell you my feeling, if my relative wanted to apply for a job in Dashen Bank, I would say 'no' because first, it is the policy of the bank and second, this should not be something you do based on an acquaintance" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

One manager, who claimed that unfit people were assigned due to their intimacy with the top management appealed to ethos by arguing that 'things will be redressed' and 'there was unfairness in staff assignments':

"Nevertheless, in the coming 'review' the bank will do, I am hopeful it will be fixed and those unfit people will be found out and kicked out). If we had another round of interviews, you will see that … They will be promoted as directors from somewhere else, and they will get benefits and get car facility, be shareholders…this will only make them wealthy when their contribution to the bank is meaningless…and this is the only concern I have. 'Are appropriate individuals really assigned in the structure?' is under question for me" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

A number of antagonists appealed to ethos along with intersecting logos to undermine the official discourse used by the restructuring team and the other protagonists. The antagonists carefully combined arguments of rationality with arguments of credibility to point out that the process was ill-performed and was not logical. The discourse that the process was not participatory was extensively used by the antagonists by appealing to ethos and logos. An appeal to logos is evident in the argumentative statement of a manager that "*if you had involved different stakeholders, you know full support would have been obtained.*" An appeal to ethos was made when science was mentioned by a manager to seek credibility, that is, he equated his view with what science recommends:

> *"Why didn't we involve stakeholders? Why didn't we collect comments? They should have involved people when it was still in progress. ... Otherwise, if you simply develop it yourself and came to me after it is over and ask my views, that is meaningless. I should have been asked what my thinking and views were earlier. I have to know when you add or subtract anything to the structure ... plus, if you had involved different stakeholders, you know full support would have been obtained and the result would have been very fruitful. ...I am just telling you my view… Even science recommends this…" (Manager, Property and Contract Administration).*

In addition, a number of antagonists undermined the official discourse regarding the way the job descriptions were developed by carefully and tightly combining an appeal to ethos with an appeal to logos. For instance, one manager who had an IT background appealed to logos when he stated that concerned individuals were not allowed to participate in the job descriptions in their respective departments and divisions and appealed to ethos when he asserted: 'I am the one who is capable to state', and 'no one has that expertise to do so.' In doing so, he argued that the restructuring team did not have the necessary expertise and managers like him who were experienced and experts in their areas were not involved:

> *"However, the major problem in my view is that when those job descriptions were compiled, the managers should have been involved in the process… This is [job description] something that helps you answer the question 'who is going to do what for me', 'What kind of people with what experience do I need', and 'how many sections this department can be divided into and how many specialties can be derived out of it.' Therefore, I am the one who is capable to state 'I will have many specializations and I will have one specialty in this area, another specialty in that area, and third specialty in another area; and this specialty will be concerned with this area, and that specially will work on this and this area', no one else has that expertise to do so (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

One manager in the Logistics Department appealed to ethos along with logos, that is, providing evidence-based arguments to undermine the official discourse. He made it clear that the right sequence was not followed when the job descriptions were developed. In other words, he said that the job specifications should have come after the job descriptions were defined. He appealed to logos when he argued that the move was not logical, rather it was randomly done. Plus, he appealed to ethos when he questioned the expertise of the restructuring team in designing job descriptions and specifications: 'That is professional, you need to know the data, you have to be immersed in it…it is a profession and needs a professional.' Similarly, by drawing on his department as an example, he undermined the official discourse by making a perfect combination of appealing to ethos and logos. The entire quote is an argument that the process was poorly handled by the restructuring team and he even recommended a modification (appeal to logos). Moreover, he appealed to ethos when he suspected the honesty of the restructuring team – 'if they do deliberately or not' and drew from his experience to make his argument – 'I am telling you from my experience and exposure' as a change agent in different companies. He also implicitly mentioned the prevailing nepotism by saying 'you should not depend on very few people whom you know very well' as an appeal to ethos:

> *"Even I am not clear how they graded and categorized jobs. For example, just split logistics and facilities and see how it goes, see if other functions will be successful I just recommended being modified. By its very nature, which department involves in every department and branches' activities as a catalyst or as an agent? How are we going to see and grade the jobs? Which department provides support and facilitates things for the bank to be more successful, to collect more deposits? I don't know how we grade jobs. Do you understand? I don't know but I am not sure if they do that deliberately or not, but I believe that we need to put in place such kinds of things. …I am not telling you from nothing, but from my experience and from the exposure I had under different changes previously… what I see here is just odd for me. You know, to even collect inputs and comments regarding the job, you need to approach different people who are doing the job…you should not just depend on a few people whom you know very well…" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

A number of antagonists appealed to ethos in combination with appealing to logos and autopoiesis. Autopoiesis was related to feelings of nostalgia in the antagonists' discourse. That is, 'good old times' which were way better than what they were experiencing currently in Dashen Bank. Appeal to ethos was made when a manager stressed, "it is not only me but many people also believe like that" and how things should have been done

whereas the appeal to logos was apparent from argumentative explanations. Moreover, appeals to autopoiesis was made as: "when I was working in even government organizations, everything was discussed transparently" which was not the case in Dashen Bank.

> *"You know you have no chance because we were assigned with a single letter after everything was done, although you felt that there were certain unaddressed things. Plus, if you raise such kinds of things (improvements/modifications), nothing can be done because they say that that stage has passed and it is in the implementation phase now. ...by the way this is not only my interest, but many people also believe this. ... Rather than seeing the document when it is sent for implementation, if they had discussed with us right from the start, from identifying the gaps, I would be happy; as a strategic move, what is it that the bank is contemplating? What are the alternatives? If we had discussed on these issues, it would have been better..." (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

An appeal to ethos along with an intersecting appeal to pathos was extensively made in the antagonists' discourse. Pathos as an emotional appeal was used by the antagonists to mobilize a discourse against the official discourse. By appealing to ethos, the antagonists first wanted to establish credibility for their argument and then stir emotions by appealing to pathos in combination with the former. An appeal to pathos in Dashen Bank was always associated with 'human' concerns, fears and the like. One director, for instance, mentioned that the whole process was unfair as assessments of different kinds were not done, which is an appeal to ethos; however, he also made it very clear that the 'human resources' should have been considered, and he articulated his fears in the question: 'what if something happens?' which is an appeal to pathos:

> *"Based on the assessment and your strategy, you have to incorporate the things you have to do like this and this will be done. Not only that, you have to see the human and other resources that you have; you have to see the development, then there is the risk element ... What if' something happens....do you understand? I don't think those issues were addressed. At least when you get into the job, when you are assigned, it should be a little bit clear..." (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

One manager mentioned that a major source of the problems with structure was the biased belief held by the restructuring team, that is, overconfidence. He argued that their 'I-know-all-attitude' is what led to the problem and thus, the entire staff outside the restructuring team was undermined and sidelined. He made persuasive appeals to pathos, logos, and

ethos to make his point. He appealed to ethos when he mentioned that he was confident that things would be resolved and redressed in the near future. He appealed to pathos when he stressed that overconfidence in the restructuring team led to underestimation of the staff and their ingenuity. And he appealed to logos when he put forward his point in an argumentative form and said 'unless they are ill', 'how can…', and 'my personal opinion.' But the manager also appealed to pathos to justify that the restructuring team could not purposely move to destroy the bank, to damage the bank, and although what happened was problematic and not in the best interests of the bank, it was done in good faith:

> "Unnecessary overconfidence is very bad. I believe that the problem was caused due to unnecessary overconfidence. Otherwise, I don't believe that they purposely moved to destroy the bank, no I don't think so. This is my personal view. In an institution where they earn a living, send their children to school, start a family, own a house...the bank bought us a house with low-interest loans…, have health coverage including for the family, and get a bonus, so, unless those guys are extremely evil, I don't think that 'they broke the plate win which they dine'. …Unless they are ill, they cannot create a mess. Because "I-know-all" is misleading and that is the main reason for the mess and I don't believe that it cannot be corrected. This is something that can be corrected" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

In addition, antagonists appealed to pathos by discussing what they personally felt about the change. By mentioning their experience and the resulting emotions, they tried to undermine the official discourse. This appeal was tightly and smartly combined with an intersecting appeal to ethos. They gave credibility to their argument and then they expressed their emotions and personal concerns. For instance, one manager said that he was disappointed when he got to know that the restructuring team didn't have any appetite to solicit his comment on his tasks, for which he claims to have ample experience and expertise. He appealed to ethos by stressing 'as a professional or manager' and the lack of fairness when he mentioned 'this undermined the department' whereas he appealed to pathos when he reflected on the emotions he felt like 'I consider it as a disrespect' and he mentioned his frustrations at not being able to do anything as he didn't have authority, this is also an appeal to pathos:

> "When the new structure was developed, I personally didn't participate … But as a manager of the tasks, no one asked me for my comments and opinions about 'what do you think the impact will be if we split up the tasks? How should we go about it?' no one approached me. In my view, I consider this as contempt/disrespect. We will see the impact of this 'undermined' department in the future" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

An appeal to ethos was also made along with an intersecting appeal to autopoiesis. This was usually done to argue that the structure should have come after the strategy was developed because the strategy was in its final year before it expired. Therefore, the antagonists appealed to autopoiesis along with other rhetorical strategies to question the timing of the restructuring. But an appeal to autopoiesis was made by the antagonists to argue that the timing was not right (as the right sequence was not followed), an appeal to ethos was implicit in any appeal to autopoiesis because in the antagonists' discourse, autopoiesis talked about the flaws in the logical order and thus stressed illogicality. For instance, one manager appealed to ethos in combination with an appeal to autopoiesis:

> *"The structure is a tool for implementing the strategy, it is a means to execute the strategy, nothing else. The structure should not precede the strategy. In fact, it is controversial. The structure cannot be a solution for the problem of the process, rather we should first be able to define our problems and threats and then ask 'do we have a strategy to resolve our problems and minimize threats?'; after we design a strategy, we can resort to the structure, and ask 'do we have an appropriate structure in place to implement the strategy?'" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

The director of Interest Free Banking appealed to ethos in combination with autopoiesis, and logos as a rhetorical strategy. Autopoiesis was evident in his assertion about the order of events (strategy versus the structure). However, he started at the good side of the restructuring to position himself as credible and rational, that is, to send a signal that he was not obsessed with the weak side of the restructuring. This an appeal to ethos. Plus, the point that other departments also had the same concerns is an appeal to ethos. In addition, an appeal to logos was subtly presented in that it was proven that the implementation had problems as human concerns remain unaddressed:

> *"The new structure is good. Let me start with its strengths before I move to its weak side. Its strong side is that it was developed in-house. The undeniable fact is that they did a very good job. Of course, it has been revised frequently by the departments and divisions and that was very good…. however, I believe that the organizational structure is a tool for implementing the strategic plan. That means our strategic plan was ending, and we had already started developing a new strategy. Therefore, according to me it would have been better to get the structure after the new strategy was developed or along with/in parallel to the development of the new strategy. …Or without radical restructuring, it would have been better if holes and problems were addressed and closed until a new strategy was developed. But I don't know when you see its implementation, there are many things you hear including the inability to address people's concern*

and questions. ...for example, as far as I am concerned, when I think about 'where do I want to see my area?', 'what objectives and aspirations do I want my area to achieve?', there is a model I want to apply. The same is true for digital banking, and IT and others. Therefore, in this regard, I don't believe that the timing was right, it was developed at the wrong time" (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

An appeal to ethos along with an intersecting appeal to cosmos was made by one antagonist as a rhetorical strategy to undermine the official discourse. In fact, the antagonists never used an appeal to cosmos in any of their discourses and in this specific case it was done to render credibility and objectivity to the director. In other words, to make a strong appeal to ethos, and thereby undermining the official discourse, the director appealed to cosmos that made him appear as a very rational being who could see left and the right. Cosmos is an argument of inevitability. An appeal to cosmos was made by stressing that 'change was inevitable.' Also, strong appeals to ethos were made in the form of arguments such as 'there is no problem with team members' and 'what happened was expected' which gave the director credibility. In addition, he mentioned his experience and that he had some trainings when he was leading a large project and that helped him a great deal, which is an appeal to ethos. However, the assertion that the restructuring team lacked project management skills was an appeal to ethos:

"As I told you previously, there is no problem with the team members individually but what happened was unexpected, although change is inevitable the way you handle it...what I learned from the change, what we learned from the change was that technical knowledge...yes there are situations where technical knowledge will be decisive because it is banking. ... If someone who has technical expertise leads the project but if he is also equipped with project management skills, it will be a plus. If you come to my department for example, you need technical knowledge just like there is conventional banking part, however, in relation to the Interests Free Banking...Islamic Banking, I just took some training and courses at the expense of the bank to upgrade my technical knowledge..." (Director VI, Operations Management Wing).

The rhetorical strategy of ethos and the themes used by protagonists and antagonists are summarized below in Table 7.2.

Table 7. 2 Appeal to Ethos and the Themes (protagonists and antagonists)

Rhetorical strategies	Protagonists	Antagonists
	Themes	
Ethos	The top management. Expertise and experience.	Experience and knowledge. Process.

	Industry practice/international practice. Professionalism and science-International consultancy company. Common practice. Process. Self-criticism.	Injustice and unfairness. Nepotism and favoritism.

Source: Based on the empirical study

7.2 Persuasive appeals: Pathos

Pathos deals with emotional appeals and therefore it tries to trigger intensive emotions when such a rhetorical strategy is deployed (Erkama and Vaara, 2010; Gauthier and Kappen, 2017). It involved identifying with the staff and subordinates in the bank and was mostly based on concerns for the bank and employees. In Dashen Bank, concern for the staff in general and own subordinates in particular triggered intense emotions. Surprisingly, appeals to pathos were only used by the antagonists whereas the protagonists never appealed to pathos as a rhetorical strategy to mobilize the official discourse. Therefore, this section deals with the antagonists' use of appeal to pathos to mobilize their discourse.

Antagonists expressed their emotions when mobilizing their own discourse and undermining the official discourse. In other words, they drew on the emotions that they felt about the restructuring and the new structure as a rhetorical strategy. For example, a number of antagonists discussed emotionally about the intent of the top management and the restructuring team with regard to the new structure. Many expressed suspicions about the top management and believed that there was mistrust between the top management and the staff except those who were part of the top management's clique. One manager expressed his emotions about the top management as:

> "The goal of the army is to prevent the state from aggression, to keep the border safe. Our mission as well is the same, our 'everything' is the same. We are here to grow the nation, we don't have any other aim. It is to grow Dashen, to see Dashen become even bigger. Therefore, we don't have a different objective…" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

One manager who thought that she was abandoned after serving the bank for many years (since the position she was assigned to did not match her qualifications) explained that she was negatively touched. She explained that very junior staff were promoted to higher

positions while she had been stuck at the same level for many years. She explained her emotions as:

> "*As I told you earlier, I lost my confidence and morale…I don't know how many years I will stay in this position at this bank, but as far as I am concerned, it will be short but as God's wish, it could be different. Maybe with the time that I am left with, I want to contribute what I can and praise to God, I am good …"* (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

One director appealed to pathos when he stated what he would do in the future if he faced a similar scenario. He thought that unrelated activities had been brought together in his department under the new structure and as indicated earlier, he also believed that this was caused due to copying from the internet. He tried to reposition the focus and the role of his department, and modestly reorganized his department. However, he appealed to ethos when he stated what he planned to do in the future. His emotional appeal was evident when he stressed that he would not assume a new position anymore unless the role was well-explained to him and the job description was handed over to him immediately on the assignment. In other words, he vowed that he will not make the same mistake again. He argued that when one was assigned an already existing and established position where everything was known and everyone was familiar with what was expected, the assumption would be that he/she should introduce fresh ideas and thereby enhance the position and register better results. But when the position was new, it was a mess:

> "*When it comes to our culture, in our country what I am used to it is that if I am assigned to one position, the first thing I will do is I will ask them to clearly describe the position. … The first thing I have to ensure is whether there is something clearly written about the position, then you start from that, it can be used as a stepping stone and then based on that foundation and minimum requirements, you will try to examine things, benchmark similar positions in other banks and companies to enrich the job further, you will try to enhance the objectives to deliver even better, that is my view. …First of all, people should know the positions and what they are supposed to do"* (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

A number of antagonists talked about their resilience in the midst of the mess and the troubles in the new structure. For example, one manager appealed to pathos in explaining her determination that she would do whatever she could. She had not been provided the job description and was trying to undertake some roles based on her division's name. Although her speech was dominated by an appeal to pathos, she also appealed to logos. Her appeal to pathos was evident in statements such as 'I don't want to wait until I am

told', and 'I know my job.' However, she also wanted to be a positive thinker by rationalizing that there was only one Human Resource Department and the new structure was radical and beyond its capacity, and that the bank did not want to hide the job description from her. This was an appeal to logos. She wanted to think positive for as long as possible.

A further appeal to pathos was used in the form of 'pressures and strains' on the managers due to the new structure. One manager explained that his department (Engineering Department) was not given due attention by the top management because of the assumption that it was support department and as a result, many things including a digital photo printer (to print photos of events in the field) that should have been easily fulfilled were not fulfilled. Adding insult to injury, the new structure messed up everything and the entire pressure came on him. While explaining his situation, he could not hide his anger (appeal to pathos):

> *"This is nothing when compared to my pressure and stress, you just came when I am relatively relaxed, I am serious. I don't know if you have the information, it has been five days or a week since loans were suspended. If you had come when the loans had not suspended, I cannot tell you in words, it was a very tough job. The reason I a explaining this to you is that it shouldn't be like this. Such pressure and a huge risk, our task is very risky. It shouldn't be like that these days. ...we should not have to work like this in such a big and relatively modern bank..." (Manager IX, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).*

Another manager explained that he was already feeling the pain and the pressure due to the new structure. As the deputy level has been delayered, there was no chance of sharing tasks and since section heads had also been delayered, cascading downwards was very unlikely since the subordinates (that is, principals in the new structure) were very junior and less-experienced to comfortably share tasks with. Appeals to pathos in the form of 'fear', 'confusion', and 'uncertain future' were implicit in his statements such as 'the pressure might have its own impact on your performance', and 'the task that should be over in one day might take three or four days':

> *"And even more pressure ensues when there is no one below to whom you can cascade tasks. In the same way, if you are not able to develop the potential of staff and cascade down, there will be ups and downs until you come to know who can do what; there will be some problems in that regard. The task that should take one day might instead take three or four days, do you understand? The pressure might have its own impact on your performance. I am feeling the*

pressure now…" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

In addition to their own felt emotions and frustrations, antagonists also noted their subordinates and their experience of the new structure. It was repeatedly explained by the antagonists that lower level staff members were affected a lot and that their disappointments were even more severe than what the managers and directors felt. For example, one manager explained that since many positions were delayered, lower level staff members were downgraded. The level of section head was delayered and a 'principal position' was created instead, and consequently section heads were made to apply for principal positions and some of them had left the bank because of this. Moreover, there were no assignments for the lower staff, instead vacancies were announced and they applied and passed through the normal recruitment process to get employed. The appeal to pathos by the manager is quite evident at least from the statement that 'the highest dissatisfaction is created among staff members and positions below us:

> *"Not surprisingly, the highest dissatisfaction is created among staff and positions below us, that is, division managers. Because those below us were hired like new staff by applying for vacancy announcements, unlike us who were assigned. …So, there are such kind of things, I am just telling you what the staff feels about it, I am telling you the real scenario …." (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

A number of antagonists tried to manage the emotions of their subordinates by giving them hope and making attainable promises. For example, one manager explained that he talked to the leader of the restructuring team, discussed with vice presidents about the staff and he was nagging all concerned authorities about his subordinates. In the meantime, he tried to engage with his subordinates and manage their emotions until a solution was got from the concerned authorities:

> *"Thus, I just contacted them, I talked to them because I have to, … Because you can be sure that those promises will be fulfilled …you don't have to lie to them if you are not sure about it, and hence, regarding the new structure, I have tried to frequently discuss with the concerned authorities … I even need more staff let alone cutting the number I have had and their positions and grades will be intact, and they may even grow level up, you have to give them such kinds of hopes…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Similar tactics were extensively used by the antagonists to send signals to the top management that everything had turned upside down due to the new 'defective structure'

thereby trying to get its attention. Thus, by appealing to ethos in relation to staff members, the antagonists effectively undermined the official discourse regarding the new structure.

The other point that triggered intense emotions was the delayering of the deputy level as all deputies were assigned as managers in the new structure which they considered a demotion, although the benefits, salary scale, and job grade remained unchanged. Hence, the antagonists used the delayering of the deputy level effectively to undermine the official discourse. For example, one manager's appeal to pathos could be inferred from his regret expressed as 'they were involved in different strategic issues':

> *"Under the new structure, we don't have deputies. They were involved in different strategic issues, that is, if the manager was not attending, the deputy would go and vice versa…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Mostly, the appeals to pathos regarding the delayering of deputies were combined along with intersecting appeals to either ethos or logos to undermine the official discourse. For instance, one manager appealed to pathos in combination with appealing to logos to refute the protagonists' justification. His appeal to pathos was implicit in his argument that the succession plan will be compromised whereas his appeal to logos was evident in his argumentative explanation that 'it is like saying the vice presidents are not needed':

> *"It is also important for the succession plan…this is something you aspire to be, just there could be a position you may aspire to be at and as a division manager, you aspire to be a deputy and then you aspire to be a director and in such a way, you can develop many directors, you understand? … The same is true, it is like saying 'vice presidents are not needed', understand? Therefore, every level has its own importance, and deputies and vice presidents are very important…" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Another manager, who was a deputy in the old structure, commented that delayering the deputy level compromised the succession plan and that managers' career development will be adversely affected, both indicating an appeal to pathos. His appeal to logos was apparent in his attempt at being rational by pointing out that delayering had both advantages and disadvantages:

> *"When the deputy is there, there will be some overlap in some places. If one is present, whether the other is present or not doesn't matter. When you go to the manager, the manager has been empowered. When you have many managers, the succession plan will be ineffective because they will specialize in a particular area. It will be like promoting someone who has worked in a specific area and*

thus is a specialist to oversee all areas. For example, when you promote a manager who has worked only in the accounts division to supervise treasury, finance and accounts, at least for some time, it will affect the areas in other specializations. …it will create some mess in the succession plan when you only have managers. It has just advantages and disadvantages as I told you but the biggest thing is it will have a huge impact on the succession plan…in fact, you can say that, a little is enough and if he knows one wing, then he learns the rest with time but instead if there is automatic succession, I think it is better…" (Manager VIII, Operations Management Wing).

One manager put forward the example of how the top management had not been able to promote managers directly to directorship in a recent case. This is an appeal to logos as this was presented as evidence that delayering of the deputy level damaged the succession plans. Plus, an appeal to ethos was made as he questioned the transparency and openness of the top management in handling such issues. An appeal to pathos was manifested in his doubts about the top management and his worry about the succession plan in the future, specifically his statement 'if the top management was transparent and open, I wouldn't have any problem' which reflects his frustration and emotions and is an appeal to pathos:

"But if there had been deputies, they could have easily promoted him/her to be director and fill the vacant positions but unfortunately, they couldn't do that, and they announced external vacancies. But I am of the opinion that if there had been a deputy in the department, they could have easily filled that position. Therefore, by assuming that the staff is not capable for the position, external vacancies have been announced and applicants are competing for the job right now and therefore, I believe that this is the prime source of the problem. Plus, if the top management was transparent and open, I wouldn't have any problem but I don't think, I have doubts…'do they promote division managers to be directors?' I have a little doubt. I would be happy if they were able to promote division managers to directorship but I don't think they have that mentality" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

A number of antagonists also noted that organizing unrelated activities together cost them a huge price in terms of human resources as some of their staff members were forced to work in some unrelated activities for which they did not have the qualifications and experience. For instance, one manager combined appeals to pathos and logos to argue that the new structure had created a mess since some staff members were forced to undertake purchase related activities:

"So, this staff is wasted because they are not doing related tasks and thus, we are working with an inadequate/deficient workforce, to tell you honestly. … to

meet the expectations of our internal customers, when two staff members are sacrificed here, and those boxes are not properly filled, how can we be effective? It is very difficult to meet the expectations … these expert staff members had studied marketing management and done their master's degree either in marketing or business administration" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

Finally, appealing to pathos along with ethos was used in the form of 'concern for the bank.' Different antagonists wanted to emphasize that they were really concerned about the bank's future. For example, one manager submitted a written comment to the restructuring team and other concerned authorities regarding the way his department was organized. He appealed to ethos by appearing to be rational by pointing out the benefits of the new structure. An appeal to pathos was made in his point about the 'unintended consequences' of the new structure and this can be taken as warning them that danger was looming. In addition, an appeal to ethos was evident in the fear that he expressed regarding the bank's relations with external foreign partners because the commitments to foreign partners were serious matters and were punishable in foreign currency and could spoil the image of the bank if it failed to fulfil them. The manager argued that those commitments were in real danger under the new structure since there was role ambiguity as to which department would handle them due to the fact that related activities had been split:

"All transactions with external and foreign partners, which I was talking about earlier, could be mismanaged and cost the bank a great deal in a foreign currency…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

The rhetorical strategy of pathos and the themes used by the antagonists are summarized in table 7.3.

Table 7. 3 Appeal to Pathos and Themes (antagonists)

Rhetorical strategies	Protagonists	Antagonists
	Themes	
Pathos		The intent of the top management and trust between staff and management. Pressures and strains. Lower level staff. Delayering deputy and the status of deputies. Succession plan.

		Concern for the bank.

Source: Based on empirical study.

7.3 Persuasive appeals: Logos

The restructuring team and the other protagonists made a strong appeal to logos as a rhetorical strategy to mobilize the official discourse. An appeal to logos is a rhetorical dynamic that deals with rational arguments and stresses logic and appeals to reason (Erkama and Vaara, 2010; Higgins and Walker, 2012). The restructuring team and the other protagonists appealed to logos to justify the reason for the restructuring. A number of protagonists claimed that the 'customer base was expanding' as an appeal to logos. For example, one of the members of the restructuring team made the following appeal to logos:

> *"As I told you, customers demand is expanding and the number of customers is increasing. Thus, with the earlier structure, it was very difficult, if not impossible, to serve and satisfy the ever-increasing demands and number of customers thereby benefitting the bank" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

The number of branches imposed by the National Bank of Ethiopia was also extensively used as an appeal to logos by the restructuring team and the other protagonists to justify not only that the restructuring took place at the right time but also to stress that waiting a little longer would have cost the bank a lot. The National Bank of Ethiopia came out with a directive that all commercial banks were required to expand their branch sizes by 25-30 percent every year forcing them to double the number of branches every four or five years. This information was used by the leader of the restructuring team to justify the restructuring. He stressed that when the old structure was put in place, Dashen Bank had about 50-60 branches and compared this with the current branch numbers as an appeal to logos:

> *"So, with this level…for example, three years ago, Logistics and Facility Department…logistics, materials and human resources were under one department, it was called the Logistic and HR Department." As per your plan and thinking, and scale in the old times, you cannot function now because at that time, we had 50-60 branches but currently we have about 240 branches and thus your support will be diluted and inefficient…and thus, 'Do we have a structure in place that can support our branch expansion?' We were forced to see it from that angle" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

One branch manager commented that at this rate of branch expansion (by which the number of branches will be doubled every four years) imposed by the National Bank of Ethiopia, it would be impossible to run full-fledged branch services and therefore centralizing some of branches' activities to the head office (as a result of the new structure) was a right move. His appeal to logos can be discerned in what he said:

> "*If you are supposed to give full-fledged services, the manpower you need to deploy and office rent will not be viable after sometime because the expansion is not something that you have undertaken as a result of your plan and model… expansion is important but it is not a matter of choice, it is a necessity…you are required to open 25 percent of the number of your branches every year so that in less than four years, your branch size will have doubles" (Manager XIV, Grade IV Branch).*

Another appeal to logos was presented in the form of 'efficiency.' The restructuring team and the other protagonists appealed to logos by stating that the new structure had become 'slim', and thus efficiency would be achieved. For instance, the leader of the restructuring team made an appeal to logos by comparing and contrasting the old and the new structure and he stated that maker-checker arrangements were introduced in the new structure to bring efficiency:

> "*You know previously there was no maker-checker mode of thinking, the thinking was that the boss will be involved in every activity and it was more of hierarchically oriented. But now it must be 'smooth', it must be 'flat' as far as possible so we are able to assign professionals, and as far as possible we are able to bring efficiency…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

One director who was also a member of the implementation team used 'efficient service to high-value customers' as an appeal to logos. He argued that under the old structure, all customers regardless of their deposit amounts and foreign currency generation capacity, were treated equally which was unfair. Under the new structure, customers were segmented and a different department which served high-profile customers had been organized:

> "*The reason behind this, as I said earlier, is to deliver more customer focused, tailored and efficient services to our high-value customers…" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

The new structure greatly affected the middle management positions as it delayered four levels in the middle. However, the restructuring team appealed to logos to argue that the new structure had empowered the remaining middle managers while cutting unnecessary lines. Appeals to logos were evident in what the leader of the restructuring team said when

he used statements like the middle line was a 'pipe', 'nothing tangible or value added', and 'structural cost is very huge':

> *"In particularly, the new structure tried to cut off supervisory posts at the lower end of the management hierarchy…it must be a flat organization and the responsibility should directly meet the work to be done or appropriate delegation of power must be done in proportion to the job, otherwise, we should not centralize and move on at that level…the restructuring had such a philosophy … Whenever your structure is very hierarchical, those management posts which we call the middle become a 'pipe'…you see drafts will come to them from below, the middle personnel will comment on them and pass them to their bosses, there is nothing tangible and no value added. … So, this middle management post was really problematic, its structural cost was very huge… it was only a pipe." (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

Moreover, the leader of the restructuring team appealed to logos along with intersecting appeals to ethos to argue that cutting the middle level lines and making the structure slim should not be surprising. He stressed, 'banking job is straightforward' and it is like 'one plus one is two' and added that the environment that "it is strict", to make an appeal to ethos.

> *"Since banking is a financial activity, it is straightforward. It is just like 'one plus one is two.' Positions that need your analysis and subjectivity are very rare in a bank. They function under strict procedures and the environment is very strict and hence, when positions are not judgmental and do not need qualitative elements, you will notice a tendency to transfer responsibility upwards. Thus, you can cut off such things by making the structure more 'slim'" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

As indicated earlier and also in the previous chapters, the delayering of the deputy level in the new structure was one of the most contentious issues in which competing and alternative discourses were mobilized. The restructuring team and the other protagonists argued that an enabling environment was created as a result of the new structure. In particular, the leader of the restructuring team appealed to logos to argue that delayering the deputy layer was the right move to create an enabling environment.

> *"We tried to create an enabling environment for them (managers) by redefining their roles. We revised almost all job descriptions for the managerial positions. Because the manager will be the final person regarding implementation in his/her respective role. Under the old structure, there was a deputy level which has three sections under it. It used to be fragmented roles. …when the manager*

was absent but when the manager was present and doing his normal duties, the
deputy was redundant" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

An appeal to logos was also extensively used by the protagonists to argue that the new structure was a success and it was bearing fruits. For instance, the director of the Customer Relationship Management Department an appeal to logos to justify that the new structure was successful by mentioning performances regarding loan and service quality:

"Thus, under the current model, we are successful and I strongly agree that the
current model is much better than the old model. In addition, performance wise,
we are very close to our loan targets and it is obvious that we will surpass our
targets at the end of the term. So, this clearly shows that the current model has
helped us a great deal in achieving our targets. Regarding quality assurance, it
is something we will work on later. Output wise, we are successful and the same
holds true about the quality aspect. I also believe that service quality is
dependent on and directly related to the quality of the inputs such as quality of
service efficiency. Therefore, in this regard, our quality is excellent according
to customers' feedback and we are seeing tangible results" (Director IV,
Operations Management Wing).

An appeal to logos was also used to justify different issues that were raised by the antagonists. As indicated in the previous chapter, the antagonists mobilized a discourse that the restructuring was a copy/paste from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and that the restructuring was not done well and it had failed. However, one of the directors who was also a member of the restructuring team appealed to logos to stress that the model had been successful in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and there was no reason why it would not succeed in Dashen Bank:

"The benefits that the Commercial Bank gained as a result of implementing the
model were huge and visible. If I tell you their achievements from the view point
of the credit wing (this is what concerns me more), under the new model, the
Commercial Bank of Ethiopia's performance in every parameter such as
process efficiency, non-performing loans (NPLs), and loan growth is very
impressive. And I don't think that the story is different in other wings either"
(Director IV, Operations Management Wing).

In addition, this director also regarded that the centralization of some activities to the head office from branches was for the sake of efficiency since they would wholly de devoted to deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation. In other words, their efforts will be focused. As an appeal to logos, he tried to compare and contrast the old and the new structure where in the former, 'the efforts of branch manager were fragmented and fuzzy',

and 'the process takes longer' while in the latter 'clear checks and balances' had been created:

> *"Before the change, loan facilities, international banking and deposit mobilizations were all under the responsibility of the branches. Thus, the effort of the branch managers was fragmented and fuzzy. Plus, the end-to-end process was incoherent and at one time, it came to me, and at another time it went to somebody else and as a result it took longer. The process time could also be easily manipulated. But the new model has clear checks and balances; tasks which I do will be checked by another party; what marketing does will be checked by sales and as a result it is effective. So, I don't see any problem, though we could have some problems here and there but this is something that is expected during a change process" (Director IV, Operations Management Wing).*

one branch manager appealed to logos to counter the discourse mobilized by the antagonists that the restructuring team did not have the best composition and its members were not experienced and lacked expertise. He appealed to logos when he argued that all members of the team had a master's degrees and those who complained were the ones who had the least achievements in terms of formal education:

> *"We have to admit they are better, you know, most people do not confess, you understand? Most of them do have more than two master's degrees (second degree), and there is no one among the assigned who does not have a master's degree. Those who complain are the ones who have the least achievements in terms of formal education, and that is not fair. Although he/she is my junior, he can excel based on the criteria set, and become my senior. Only being senior is not important unless you qualify in terms of education, qualifications and experience. So, I think the solution is that we have to upgrade ourselves, we have to be more educated … it is mandatory" (Manager II, Grade III Branch).*

An appeal to logos was also used by the antagonists to undermine the official discourse and for mobilizing their own discourse. A number of antagonists appealed to logos in order to undermine the official discourse used by the restructuring team about the team's composition, that is, the restructuring team had the best composition that the bank could have and its members had the necessary experience and expertise. However, antagonists undermined this discourse by appealing to logos. For instance, one manager from the Logistics Department argued that all members of the restructuring team had the same background, that is, the business wing, ignoring the technical wing and branch operations:

> *"If there had been some sort of diversification, unconventional thinking and those who think out-of-the-box, and are out of the system (that is, not part of the*

bank), those who have the necessary experience and expertise, and those who are interested in restructuring had participated, it would have been better, but unfortunately that didn't happen" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

In addition, a number of antagonists claimed that there was injustice and partial attention to some in the bank. As indicated earlier, the business wing is more influential (as all the restructuring team members were from the business wing) and it was claimed that the top management gave exclusive attention to the business wing. Therefore, an appeal to logos was extensively used to argue that the unfairness in the restructuring was an extension of the unfair and differential treatment of departments in Dashen Bank. The antagonists argued that it was a trend, rather than something that happened and got manifested during the restructuring. A manager from the IT Department argued by appealing to logos, that IT was very important for the bank. His statements like 'When it comes to the core banking system, unless they purchase off the shelf' (in other words, the department developed an in-house core banking system while other banks purchased off the shelf) and 'very decisive for efficiency and productivity' are appeals to logos:

> *"The IT Department is very much important for the bank. For example, I don't know if other banks have implemented it or not, but when it comes to the core banking system, unless they purchased it off the shelf, I am sure they didn't internally develop and implement it but Dashen did that. This was very decisive for efficiency and for ensuring productivity and effectiveness" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

By appealing to logos, one manager explained that the top management was under the influence of the board and was not free to do whatever it wanted for the bank unless it got a 'green card' from the board. The manager's effort to link the bank's performance with pressure and influence from the board was an appeal to logos, as it clearly showed cause-and-effect reasoning:

> *"Had it not been this pressure and influence from the board and the top management had been free to do as per its wishes, you know Dashen Bank was very strong and had a lot of potential as compared to the other banks in Ethiopia. Dashen Bank could have grown even more and achieved a lot of things. You know, sometimes you saw fear among the top management and they were reserved most of the time, and I don't believe that the top management was free and did its job with 100 percent confidence. Do you understand? That might have had its own impact on the performance of the top management…" (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

A number of antagonists also appealed to logos to argue that the restructuring was a copy/paste from the Commercial Bank and/or the internet. One manger appealed to logos when he mentioned as evidence 'I could download…and show you', and other standards such as 'based on your practical scenario' and 'that can really drive you to success':

> *"It was a copy/paste, I could download the new structure from the internet and show you; but when you copy/paste, you have to contextualize it. … However You have to do and organize things based on your practical scenario, you have to do things that can really drive you to success and productivity" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

Similarly, appeals to logos were extensively used by the antagonists to argue that the restructuring was not well-developed. One director believed that making two departments (Program Management ffice and Office of Strategy) directly accountable to the president was a clear example of personal interests that were advanced by the restructuring team, as both positions were later assumed by members of the restructuring team. Going further, he alleged with evidence why that was not in the best interests of the bank appealing to logos. 'Impose strategy on the president', 'the impact of vice presidents was totally abolished' [on the strategy development], and 'people at the vice president's level could be idle' weree unambiguous appeals to logos:

> *"On the contrary, the strategy must be developed with everybody's participation whereas the president will be more influential but if the Office of Strategy is made accountable to the president, you see these guys, the vice presidents, cannot participate, so you see the difference? It creates some gap … It can assist the president and you can work on your own duties, and that doesn't mean that that would exclude you from strategy affairs. But now, if it is needed, they can impose a strategy for the president. The impact of vice presidents has been totally abolished…" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

Another manager commented on the job descriptions that were developed for his division and put forward the argument 'the job description must be something that can be done in your frame', as an appeal to logos:

> *"I have seen the job descriptions and although they were correct to some extent, job descriptions must be something that can be done in your 'frame.' If there are elements that cannot be performed under your frame, you cannot accept them even if they look very interesting. Do you understand? For example, if we want to make use of a computer a measuring element and put it in the job description, that should not be used to measure your performance. Right? Plus, if it needs other departments' involvement, this could not be something that challenges you*

and puts you in pain…" (Manager V, Resources and Facilities Management Wing).

As a next step to the claim that the restructuring was not well-developed and was instead defective, an appeal to logos was used by the antagonists to argue that reorganization was a must in their respective departments and divisions. In this case, an appeal to logos was put forward in the form of argumentative statements. For instance, one manager in the Marketing and Corporate Communication Department put forth an argumentative reasoning to justify the fact that he, the other manager in his department, and the director were reorganizing the department and they were in the final stages before presenting it to the top management for endorsement. 'Even the naming is not right', 'who should be the owner?' are typical examples of an appeal to logos:

> *"Now we are reorganizing to present to the top management. Even the naming is not right and some other things must be corrected. For example, who should lead corporate communication which is separately organized? Who should be the owner? Because it should be owned by a head. Who should lead corporate communication, it is very difficult, and I have you a tough example because promotion and brand management can handle the marketing. But there is a something after 'and', that is, corporate communication, who will handle that? There is nobody…" (Manager I, Marketing and Business Development Wing).*

One director appealed to logos to justify why a reorganization of his department was necessary. His justification was an appeal to logos and that was evident when he mentioned 'since these things are routines' as a justification for one more position as head. Moreover, by showing me the structure given by the restructuring team and what he proposed as a modification, he clearly presented the case of the Customer Relationship Management Department and compared and contrasted this with his department to justify his demand for more positions and workforce:

> *"What he should do is he has to manage rather than engaging with routines…if you see in credit, the relationship manager will be right here, they are very new and they are not pressurized, they have room to relax, you understand? Because the application will be there and then a cluster analysis will be done…you will have some time to process the case in a relaxed manner but here you don't have time because it is on-demand and therefore it must be administered by the head. … for example, here I requested for five staff members, here three and in this place, I requested eight. Like this, four makers, one checker and the head above them, thus in total I recommended the task to be performed by 11 staff members, anyways… But what they said was that 'if we add a head here, what will the manager do?' they said that the manager should perform what I suggested*

should be performed by the head" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).

An appeal to logos was also used by a number of antagonists to claim that the new structure was a failure. For instance, one manager put his department into perspective and argued that although the restructuring was finalized on paper, it was not possible to put it on the ground. This was an appeal to logos as he put forward evidence that 'until this moment, till this interview, the tasks were still with me.' He also compared the restructuring in his department with other departments as evidence that things couldn't move in his department as they should:

> *"When will the tasks be taken to their respective departments, when? It has been approved on paper and everything has been finalized but until this moment, until this interview, the tasks are still with me. However, the structure has been approved and other departments have reorganized tasks and got into action and are normally leading their operations, and in the same way, there are many internal processes in our department as well…" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

A number of antagonists appealed to logos to directly refute the words and ideas of the restructuring team and the other protagonists. Similarly, the restructuring team and the other protagonists also appealed to logos to provide counter-arguments. Such appeals to logos were expressed in the form of 'defense and justification.' For example, as indicated earlier, the restructuring team and the other protagonists mobilized a discourse that delayering some middle management positions, including deputies, was a must given that they did not have any strategic role or did not add any value and their structural cost was very huge. That they were 'pipes' was a common word used by the restructuring team to justify why they needed to be removed. However, as indicated in the previous chapters, this faced fierce resistance from the antagonists who counter-argued. For example, one manager, who was a deputy, appealed to logos in the form of a defense and justification to undermine the official discourse: 'since he [the restructuring team leader] had a very prominent role during the restructuring…' and 'he may have had to use many things to justify and rationalize…':

> *"Since he had a very prominent role during the restructuring, he may have had to use many things to justify and rationalize and that is the reason he portrayed the deputies [and other middle managers] as 'pipes' without any value-adding role (Manager X, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

As indicated in previous chapters, the antagonists tried to reposition the focus of their departments and divisions, and they got into action on their own, a bit defiantly and moved from the official structure and job descriptions. Some of them also believed that the job descriptions did not reflect the current trend and they modified them accordingly and enhanced their objective and the focus. Some others were not provided with job descriptions when they were assigned to their new positions and nor were told what to do and where to focus. They tried to develop their own roles and focus based on the trend, naming of the departments, and other factors. Some others appealed to logos to justify that what they had done was remarkable and was bearing fruits. For instance, one manager who was not provided any job description and also not given any direction on how to move, appealed to logos to justify that what she did was effective. She, along with her team, participated in different bazaars and trade fairs representing Dashen Bank, and they tried to collect feedback and comments from the customers, they distributed brochures introducing Dashen Bank's services and benefits of working with the bank, and they provided mini-services like foreign currency exchange and ATM services. In addition, compiling reports from suggestion boxes placed in different locations was another activity that they embarked on. She explained how she felt: 'in general, it was fantastic.' This is an appeal to logos as she framed her feelings in a way that justified her deeds. In addition, the assertion that 'it is bearing fruit' further reinforced her justification that she was moving in the right direction:

> "Thus, activities that can go with our naming, for example, the suggestion box is something even customer relations used before and therefore, we collect suggestions from boxes, we read them and organize them… Therefore, when it comes to the question 'what can we contribute?' based on the trend and based on our naming, we are trying to selectively focus on some activities and it is bearing fruit…" (Manager IV, Marketing and Business Development Wing).

The rhetorical strategy of logos and the themes used by the protagonists and antagonists are summarized below in Table 7.4

Table 7. 4 Appeal to Logos and Themes (protagonist and antagonists)

Rhetorical strategies	Protagonists	Antagonists
	Themes	
Logos	Customer base. Branch expansion and size of branch network. Efficiency. Customer services.	Composition of the restructuring team. Injustice and differential attention to departments.

	Empowerment of the middle management. Enabling environment. The restructuring was a success.	The new structure is a copy/paste. The new structure is not well-developed. Need for reorganization. The new structure was a failure.

Source: Based on empirical study.

7.4 Persuasive appeals: Autopoiesis

Autopoiesis deals with s narrative of purpose and identity. It is linked with mythopoesis, historical construction, and other auto-communication in the organization (Erkama and Vaara, 2010). Restructuring is often presented as a necessary step in implementing a strategy. As shown in different parts of the empirical chapters, the strategy clearly outlined that there would be a new structure at the mid-term of the strategy and this was used by the protagonists to argue that the restructuring did not come from nowhere and it was not a surprise, rather it was indicated in the strategy. They also argued that the new structure was a part of the process of strategy implementation. This, however, faced fierce resistance from the antagonists when they said that the timing was not right by mentioning the order of strategy versus structure. The leader of the restructuring team commented that the restructuring was one of the strategic issues that the bank had identified for executing. His appeal to autopoiesis was evident in the statement: 'if you see the restructuring, it was one of the basic strategic issues that the bank identified':

> *"In order to reach where it aspired to be, the bank says that these are my strategic issues and those strategic issues…it could be restructuring, or new system implementation. … For example, if you see the restructuring recently implemented which I was talking about earlier, it was one of the basic strategic issues that the bank identified…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

Appeals to autopoiesis were also made by the restructuring team and the other protagonists in a way to show that the restructuring was necessary and was a logical continuation of the 'resource modernization management project' which was studied by the foreign consulting company, Ernst and Young. Sometimes, the restructuring team and the other protagonists appealed to autopoiesis to shift the blame to the foreign company by saying that "they did nothing except implementing the process that was studied by the foreign company" (Manager II, Grade III Branch) so that any wrong doing and flaws could be attributed to the consulting company. Similarly, the leader of the restructuring team noted that the

restructuring team only put in place the recommendations of the foreign company. His appeal to autopoiesis was apparent in statements like: 'so when it comes to the process we followed…there was an assessment that was conducted previously':

> *"So, when it comes to the process we followed…there was an assessment that was conducted previously. The bank as a whole got its processes researched/assessed. By using a very big professional company on-board, we captured many processes. Then, the gap at this point was that… the boxes in the redesigned/redefined process were not aligned with the structure" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

An appeal to autopoiesis was also used by the restructuring team and the other protagonists to defend the antagonists' allegation that the restructuring was a copy/paste from the internet and/or of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. The process study by the foreign company was extensively used by the protagonists to argue that the restructuring was well-thought out and was based on a scientific study. One director, who was also member of the restructuring team, said that the role of the restructuring team was minimal as the whole process was studied and new processes were recommended by the foreign consultancy company. She explained that the consulting company proposed options on how to organize activities that were critical for the success of the bank, that is, critical activities could either be organized at the head office or they could be handled by very few, bigger, and special branches. However, the basic issue was that those critical activities should be undertaken by highly-skilled and well-experienced individuals. Her appeal to autopoiesis can be inferred from statements such as 'There is no any discrepancy between Ernst and Young's recommendation and the new structure' and 'what we did was we just cascaded that a little downward …otherwise it is them who did that':

> *"There is no discrepancy between Ernst and Young's recommendations and the new structure. Let me tell you two things: one thing, they developed the IT strategy for us. Thus, what we did was we just cascaded that a little downwards (we just cascaded that to the lowest grassroots level), otherwise it is they who did all of it. And the second one, as I told you, they reviewed our process and thus we needed to do a new structuring to enable the reviewed process, to put the reviewed process into effect. … After all, the bank had incurred many million Birr for the revision and assessment by Ernst and Young and thus, we had to reap the benefits by revising our structure accordingly, isn't it? Thus, neither did the bank copy from other banks nor did it start restructuring because other banks did it" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

The leader of the restructuring team appealed to autopoiesis along with intersecting logos to argue why the new structure should be organized if the process study was taken as an input for the restructuring. He noted that the restructuring was 'an unfinished project' since the process study and the resulting recommendations by the foreign consulting company were yet to be used in the form of a new structure and his appeal to logos was implicit in his argumentative statement that if loan processing was taken to the head office from the branches, the capacity of the head office to effectively and efficiently process the loans must be enhanced, thereby necessitating a new structure:

> *"Plus, when it comes to loans, previously loans could be processed in the branches, but loan processing has now been centralized in the district offices and the head office. So, when you bring the loan processing to the head office or district offices, you have to expand the capacity of the head office and district offices in such a way that they can effectively handle such loan processing. In this regard, we have a broken-link, we have an unfinished project…" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

The antagonists also appealed to autopoiesis to undermine the official discourse and mobilize their own discourse, mostly that the restructuring was poorly-developed, and that those who had deep knowledge about the task were not involved in the process. The first appeal to autopoiesis was made in relation to the strategy. A number of antagonists pointed out that the problems with the strategy led to a lot of trouble in the restructuring. For instance, one director argued that the problems in the new structure is partially in relation to the strategy:

> *"You know such kinds of things happen when there is a problem with the strategy, by the way. This means, that if you are supposed to do something but if the resources are not there…you see, the details are not worked out and that is the problem with the structure for me. This is what we are facing practically" (Director VII, Operations Management Wing).*

An appeal to autopoiesis was also presented in the form of feelings of nostalgia for the good old times. A number of antagonists effectively mobilized autopoiesis in the form of nostalgia as a rhetorical strategy to undermine the efforts of the restructuring team by comparing and contrasting how similar tasks were handled by the foreign consulting company. An appeal to autopoiesis was effectively used to assert that participation during the restructuring was possible and would have yielded better results. For instance, one manager who was deeply touched (see pathos) when he was not asked to comment on the restructuring at least for his division, recalled his experience with the foreign consulting

company through in feelings of nostalgia. His statements like 'we just did it together' and 'this is how we do it' shows that he felt belongingness as 'we' indicates and he missed this feeling in the restructuring:

> *"When Ernst and Young was studying the process, we did it together, I was engaged. We discussed in detail about the nature of the job even by taking notes and as a result, they recommended the finance part of the task to go to the Finance Department, since the bank has a Finance Department and similarly, they recommended that cash related activities should go to the Treasury Department, so this is how we did it…" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

In addition, many antagonists mentioned that their participation in the process study with the foreign company was not fake, rather it was authentic as their recommendations were taken into account. Unlike the restructuring team, Ernst and Young sent a signal that no one knew the job better than those who were doing the task and the employees felt that their knowledge and experience accumulated over the years was acknowledged and effectively used by the consulting company. For instance, one manager from the IT Department recommended to the foreign company that 'silent' and 'non-silent' systems should not be organized together, and they should be organized as different divisions so that 'non-silent' systems did not suffer from lack of proper attention and resources. In other words, similar activities at the branch and the head office should be organized separately so that the head office's systems were not denied attention. This recommendation was effectively taken by the consulting company and recommendations were made accordingly in its final report to the bank:

> *"The process study was done by Ernst and Young. When it was studying the process, I was involved in my division. …. Branches have a dedicated workforce, for example, if a critical process stops, the deputy can handle that. But at the center, regarding central infrastructure, if there is no dedicated person who can monitor it, it would be very difficult. Therefore, I recommended that this section must be separated from the others and similarly, other areas must be treated in the same way. So, I had a huge involvement during the study. Most of the communications was done with me, since I was responsible for the jobs…" (Manager VI, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).*

The rhetorical strategy of autopoiesis and the themes used by the protagonists and antagonists are summarized in table 7.5.

Table 7. 5 Appeal to Autopoiesis and Themes (protagonist and antagonists)

Rhetorical strategies	Protagonists	Antagonists
	Themes	
Autopoiesis	Strategy. 'Resource modernization management project' undertaken by a foreign consulting company.	Strategy. Process studied by the foreign consulting company.

Source: Based on empirical study.

7.5 Persuasive appeals: Cosmos

Cosmos is an argument of inevitability (Erkama and Vaara, 2010). The restructuring team and the other protagonists made a discourse that the restructuring was not only mandatory but was also unreasonably late and this could cost the bank a huge price. For example, one director who was also a member of the restructuring team said:

> "The new structuring was mandatory, in my opinion. Otherwise, the bank would have exploded by now and things would have deteriorated even more" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).

Changes in the external environment were presented as evidence of inevitability of a new structure. The prevailing fierce competition, which was sometimes perceived as unfair, and strong pressure from the regulatory body (for example, directive regarding branch expansion by 25-30 percent every year) were used as justifications for the inevitability of a new structure. The leader of the restructuring team used the market dynamics as an appeal to cosmos:

> "In addition to that, the market dynamics were one big push factor behind the new restructuring" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).

A further appeal to cosmos was framed in the form of a 'success trap.' A number of protagonists mentioned that Dashen Bank was the biggest private bank till two years ago and it was currently the second biggest private bank. However, this fact had been a trap for Dashen Bank, and it undermined its competitiveness and it was overtaken two years ago and other smaller banks had come closer to it in terms of profits, number of branches and other parameters. Therefore, according to the protagonists, if Dashen Bank had not engaged in a new structure, the worst would have happened:

> "Since Dashen Bank had amassed the largest profit among private banks and was very proud of its achievements, it didn't try to change in response to the market but eventually, the market share of the bank eroded and it declined steadily and it finally reached this predicament. Whether you like it or not,

change nowadays is a must or else you will be kicked out of the market…"
(Director II, member of the restructuring team).

However, the fact that Dashen Bank is still making a very huge profit and remains the second largest bank (it was even claimed that the biggest bank engaged in illegal activities) was effectively used by the antagonists to undermine the official discourse and put forth a discursive practice that a new structure was not urgent, at least the bank could have stayed one more year till a new strategy had been developed.

Protagonists also appealed to cosmos along with other intersecting rhetorical strategies. For instance, the leader of the restructuring team carefully combined logos with autopoiesis and cosmos to justify that the restructuring was a must, if already not too late. Autopoiesis is evident in the statement, 'Because one of the major inputs for the restructuring was the strategy' as it underlines the fact that the restructuring was clearly depicted in the strategy and was necessary if the strategy had to be implemented. The statement, 'external environmental issues that pushed us into emergent strategy' clearly emphasizes the inevitability of the restructuring as an 'emergent strategy' and indicates the unplanned, non-deliberate nature of the strategy. It instead portrays the restructuring as a reality that the bank confronted because of different factors. Furthermore, the figure of 30-40 branches was presented as evidence that the old structure was not in a position to accommodate the rapid and increasing branch expansion:

> *"Because one of the major inputs in the restructuring was the strategy. In the strategy, when you state that I want to reach there, is there any separate responsible body that plans and performs the day-to-day activities? This was the main issue which we took into account, in line with the growth scenario of the bank, especially since recently in the marketing strategy, there had been many external environmental issues had pushed us into adopting an emergent strategy. Like expansion, in the older days, we the banks did not grow at this fast a pace. For example, in the last two or three years, we are opening 30-40 branches per year. Thus, you could not serve these 30-40 branches which are opened every year with the existing narrow structure. The back-office support and other support would not be adequate. Therefore, a new structure for the head office was a must and unquestionable" (Director I, member of the restructuring team).*

One director who was also a member of the restructuring team, used cosmos along with logos and autopoiesis to argue that the restructuring was not a matter of choice but was a necessity. An appeal to autopoiesis was again associated with Ernst and Young and its strategy and the director claimed that the restructuring was part of a given project and/or

strategy. An appeal to logos was presented in the form of branch expansion and business growth. And, an appeal to cosmos was made when the director claimed that a situation had been reached where it was impossible to stay for one more year unless a new strategy was developed.

> *"As I told you earlier, the first reason is that it was done to implement Ernst and Young's recommendation. Second, as clearly stated in the strategic plan, the structure should have been revised at mid-term but for many reasons it was delayed. These are the two main reasons I know. Plus, the environment and the situation forced you to consider restructuring and if you didn't do that… when I say environment, the bank had grown bigger, it had opened many branches and thus, it was unable to effectively and efficiently manage them. All those branches were led by one vice president. Thus, when a bank, which opened five-six branches per year, started opening 30+ branches per year, could we proceed by making all those new branch additions accountable to one individual, could we continue like that? Thus, the growth of the business itself pushed us tremendously. That is the reason we lost our appetite to even stay one more year till the strategy came to an end. Therefore, there is a logical reason for the restructuring…" (Director II, member of the restructuring team).*

Although cosmos was used extensively used by the restructuring team and the other protagonists, a few antagonists also used cosmos along with logos to argue that the change was necessary but later they used the same rhetorical strategies to criticize the way the process was handled thus undermining the official discourse. For instance, one of the fierce critics of the official discourse initially admitted that the change was necessary and timely by appealing to logos and cosmos. The manager was part of the team when his department, the E-banking Department, was established and initially, it was necessary to organize the cash section, the technical section and the systems section together under one department to maintain efficiency. But he explained that this was impossible under the current scenario and he supported the decision to split these activities and organize in different departments. His appeal to logos was presented in the form of figures that contrasted the number of ATMs and POS machines at different times and his appeal to cosmos was evident in his argument, 'our competitors are becoming strong and this might have its own impact.' However, his criticism was carefully depicted at the end when he argued that highly inter-related activities were separated into different departments:

> *"In fact, I don't have any discontent about what happened to this department because when this department was established, the card system was new for the bank. … Therefore, at that time the bank operated very few ATM machines, not*

more than 10 ATMs. ... But now, the bank has 220 and ... 900 POS machines. All these machines operate and make transactions. So not only the machines, but when you also consider their transactions ...plus, our competitors are becoming strong and this might have its own impact ... therefore I also believe that the job must be split. ... But when these two teams are divided and organized in different departments, how are those related tasks going to be managed? The future will tell us" (Manager VII, Information Systems and E-banking Services Wing).

The rhetorical strategy of cosmos and the themes used by the protagonists and antagonists are summarized in Table 7.6.

Table 7. 6 Appeal to Cosmos and Themes both by protagonist and antagonists

Rhetorical strategies	Protagonists	Antagonists
	Themes	
Cosmos	Changes in the external environment. Market dynamics. Success trap.	

Source: Based on empirical study.

Chapter 8: The Analytical Level of Social Context

This chapter empirically documents the analytical level of the social context, based on Fairclough's (1993) framework, that is, societal level discourses that were appropriated into the organization as resources in the discursive struggle. The preceding chapters discussed the remaining levels of discourse analysis, that is, the analytical level of the discourse practices (Chapters 5 and 6) and the analytical level of the text (Chapter 7).

Fairclough's analytical level of the social context is concerned with how the discourse at the societal level affect the discourse in an organization (that is, in Dashen Bank) (Fairclough, 1993; Phillips et al., 2008). This section discusses how the societal level discourses constrained and facilitated the actors in their discursive struggles to 'fix' meaning in a way that established preferred social relations (Mumby, 2005). However, the major challenge in this level of the discourse is exploring the societal level discourse and identifying how the societal level discourse was imported into the organization to establish inter-subjective meanings. According to Phillips et al. (2008: 782), one way of overcoming this challenge is, "to establish the extent to which strategies align with external norms of rationality and progress." To do so, I draw on texts of external constituencies in the environment such as regulatory bodies, government documents such as the Growth and Transformation Plans I & II, business newspapers (*Addis Fortune, Capital Ethiopia, and Ethiopian Reporter*), and other secondary documents. I explain the societal level discourse (that was captured through primary and secondary documents) and its impact on the discursive struggles as constraints or facilitators. Table 8.1 shows the societal discourses that were imported into the discursive struggle along with the themes (the discursive practices).

Table 8. 1 Societal level discourses imported by the protagonists and antagonists and their themes

Societal level discourse	Protagonists	Antagonists
Professionalism	Professionals were assigned. Restructuring was a must for a professional company like Dashen Bank. The process was studied by a professional company.	The new restructuring was substandard and such a work cannot be expected from a professional company and management professional. Copy/pasting is unprofessional.
Neo-liberal discourse/globalization	Ethiopia's accession to WTO. Efficiency, customer services, international practices, and a knowledge-based economy. Competitiveness and cost-cutting measures. Dependable long-term customer relationships.	
Corruption	Corrupt practices in foreign currency allocations and loan provisions by the branches. Unnecessary personal benefits at the expense of the bank.	Intimacy as base for staff assignments. Plagiarism.
Changing environment	Paperless transactions. Creating a cashless society. Fostering digital banking. Branch expansion. 5-year government plans and grand projects in the country.	
National culture	Negative thinking. Jealous. Uncooperative. Footdraggers. Undemocratic.	Versus 'white people' Smart. Clever. Sophisticated. Rich. Well informed.
Science	Systematic. Universal. Unambiguous. Inevitable (adopt or die). Logical/normal (e.g. resistance).	Random. Not-literature based. Deviates from change principles and formulae. Not systematic, or research based and well-designed. Not justifiable.
Macro economy	Poor saving habit. Acute foreign currency shortage.	Poor saving habits. Acute foreign currency shortage.
Justice/CSR	Community development. Tackling injustice.	
Ethnic-based federalism		Nepotism based on cliques, ethnicity and networks. Autocracy. Illusionists. Agents of interest groups.

| | | Anti-peace elements, terrorists. |
| | | |

Source: Based on the empirical study.

8.1 Professionalism

The first societal discourse that was imported into the organization by actors to support their position was 'professionalism.' Professionalism was used in different forms by both the antagonists and the protagonists to promulgate their own discourses and undermining the other's discourses. For instance, the protagonists of the 'official discourse' (the restructuring team) argued that the restructuring was undertaken in such a way that professionals were assigned to each position thereby making Dashen Bank an even more professional company. They invoked the discourse of professionalism in their discourse to argue not only that a major restructuring was a must for a professional company like Dashen Bank but also that the process study was undertaken by a 'professional' international company (Ernst and Young) which was renowned for its experience and effectiveness in such endeavors. On the other hand, the antagonists of the official discourse invoked the discourse of professionalism to undermine the efforts of the restructuring team and to argue that the new structure was sub-standard. They claimed that unrelated activities were grouped together, and related activities were dispersed into different departments and divisions and this was something that was not expected from the management or banking professionals while referring to the restructuring team. Also, the allegation that the 'restructuring was a copy/paste' was used to show that the process was unprofessional.

8.2 Neo-liberal discourse/Globalization

The other societal discourse that was invoked in the discursive struggle in Dashen Bank was the discourse of neo-liberalism or globalization. This was basically used by the protagonists to underscore that the restructuring was a-must-have and timely. It was also one of the most widely mentioned discourses among the protagonists is Ethiopia's potential accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Ethiopia's accession to WTO is a very hot issue in the country and Ethiopia was scheduled to join WTO by 2015, but this did not materialize. It was expected and announced by the government that Ethiopia would join WTO in the coming few years. Therefore, it was argued that the financial sector and the telecom sector would be the most affected by Ethiopia's membership to WTO because these sectors were protected by law from foreign competition. However, once Ethiopia joined WTO, those sectors would be exposed to foreign competition. As a measure to strengthen their competitiveness, the government issued a decree that all banks should undergo automation by implementing a 'core banking system.' Currently, all banks in

Ethiopia implemented such core banking systems and are introducing many electronic-based products and services for their customers. Moreover, the government forced the banks to increase their paid-up capital to 5 billion ETB from 2 billion ETB and those which could not meet this criterion were to merge with other banks. This societal discourse was been invoked by the restructuring team and the other protagonists that the restructuring was another step to strengthen the competitiveness of the bank—to make Dashen Bank a world-class modern bank so that it would be in a good position to compete with big international banks that would enter the Ethiopian market when Ethiopia joined the WTO and the protection the bank was being afforded was lifted. In addition, 'efficiency', 'customer service', 'international practices', and 'knowledge-based economy' were widely used terms in arguments in favor of the new structure. For instance, it was argued that cutting many middle levels and creating a flat structure was necessary for fostering efficiency by ensuring a smooth flow of information and materials. Delayering was seen as a cost-cutting measure that would increase Dashen Bank's competitiveness. Similarly, creating effective and dependable customer relationships (based on the principle of CRM) was considered to be key in Dashen Bank's journey to success. In other words, preferential customer treatment based on customers' value to the bank in terms of deposits and foreign currency generation would be established. Therefore, restructuring was a must to achieve all this and thus the bank undertook restructuring. Some of the 'temporary' pain that was caused by the restructuring should be considered a necessary evil as this was miniscule compared to the benefits that the bank would garner.

In addition, some of the measures were justified as common international practices. For example, CRM, branch arrangements and roles were portrayed by the restructuring team and the other protagonists as engineered in line with an 'international practice' which Dashen Bank had no option but to follow suit.

8.3 Corruption

The other 'Grand Discourse' (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000) or Fairclough's analytical level of social context is corruption and bribery. From many print and electronic media documents, government publications, other secondary documents, and Dashen Bank's documents, it was found that corruption is a widely discussed topic in Ethiopia. The government established an anti-corruption commission with the aim of creating awareness about and fighting corruption by prosecuting individuals who committed corruption

especially in the public sector. The commission indicated that corruption was highly prevalent in the country and it was going out of control, and that the construction and financial sectors in particular were highly vulnerable to corrupt practices. In short, it can be argued that corruption is a very hot societal discourse in the country. Even government reports indicate that loan provisions, collateral estimations, and foreign currency allocations involved very high corruption. This discourse was imported to the bank by both the antagonists and the protagonists in their discursive struggles. For instance, the restructuring team and the other protagonists mentioned that branch managers were highly corrupt when it came to foreign currency allocations and loan provisions. Therefore, centralizing these activities in the head office from branches was found to be necessary for two reasons. First, corruption in the long-run will hurt the competitiveness of the bank and had to be fought. Second, the emphasis on deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation (two critical resources in branch operations) was poor due to the fact that the branches focused on loan provisions and foreign currency allocations. This had been concretely felt as Dashen Bank was outperformed by a rival bank and other banks were coming close. In addition, the protagonists mentioned that much of the resistance that was observed among eth antagonists, especially among branch managers, was because of the loss of unnecessary personal benefits at the expense of the bank because the new structure cut those corrupt practices and refocused branch activities on resource generation (in terms of deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation).

The antagonists also used corruption as a resource to undermine the official discourse and propagate their own discourse, especially in relation to staff assignments and benefits. They criticized the way in which the restructuring team was organized and the staff assignments were done after the restructuring as being totally corrupt. A number of antagonists claimed that incapable individuals were assigned to lucrative positions because of their intimacy with the top management. In addition, those who were assigned as members of the restructuring team were not only close to the top management, but all of them were later assigned as directors of key departments. Some antagonists noted that they were demoted in the new structure because they had exposed the top management's corruption. For instance, one manager who was assigned as a Grade I branch manager in the new structure saw this as a demotion since he had publicly questioned the service contract agreement between Dashen Bank and another engineering company for the maintenance of ATMs, POS and other machines, where the engineering company had not

only failed to deliver as per the agreement but the payment was also made in a foreign currency (which is illegal under Ethiopian law which states that payments for local companies need to be made in local currency). These cases exemplified how the societal discourse of corruption was used in the discursive struggles by both the protagonists and antagonists in a way that supported their own discourses and undermined the 'other's' discourses.

Another grand discourse related to corruption and which was frequently invoked by the antagonists to undermine the official discourse was plagiarism. According to different electronic and print documents of different stakeholders, plagiarism was a major challenge, especially in academic institutions, which occupy a central place in a societal discourse. The government underlined that plagiarism in many forms such as producing fake documents, producing copied work as one's own work, and cheating in exams at different levels had become common practices. In addition, the Ministry of Education frequently released advertisements on state media and in different private print and electronic media that student cheating hurt the country and other related messages aimed at discouraging student cheating and other forms of plagiarism. At the time of writing this chapter, the Prime Minister's PhD document and other academic credentials were investigated by different whistleblowers who argued that it was copied and produced within an unreasonable period of time. In addition, his interview with an African journalist was criticized for plagiarism of prominent personalities such as Henry Kissinger, Noam Chomsky, and Russell Brand. This was brought to the public's attention by the Prime Minister's critics and whistleblowers. For instance, among others, the *Horn Post* on-line newspaper published a piece regarding the Prime Minister's plagiarism titled 'Abiy Ahmed [the newly elected prime minister] Cribbed from Russel Brand and Henry Kissinger' on Feb. 27, 2018. This shows that plagiarism is a dominant discourse in political, academic, and other institutional fields. This societal discourse was frequently invoked by the antagonists to underscore that the restructuring was a copy/paste from the internet and from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

8.4 Changing environment

A changing environment at the international and national level, is another Grand Discourse that is imported to the organizational discourse around the restructuring. The 'changing environment' discourse was used by the protagonists to underscore the fact that the

restructuring was not only a must but was also imposed. These changes were represented as beyond Dashen Bank's control and the only option that the bank had was to respond to them. As discussed earlier, globalization led changes such as severe competition, technological advancements (paperless transactions, technology-based operations/automation), creating a cashless society, and fostering digital banking were frequently invoked in the discourses of the restructuring team and the other protagonists. Change and turbulence in the national environment was also frequently imported to substantiate the protagonists' discourses. These jolts to the national environment can be classified into two: rules and regulations by the regulatory body, the National Bank of Ethiopia, and national development plans and projects undertaken by the government. The National Bank of Ethiopia came up with many rules and regulations in the financial sector and those were seen as a changing environment which required change in the structure of Dashen Bank. Especially, the '30 percent branch expansion' regulation was frequently and effectively used by the protagonists as a justification for the restructuring in which branch arrangements and their roles were reorganized. According to this regulation, Dashen Bank's branches had to more than double every fourth year making a focus (in terms of resource generation) on the branches' operations important for the long-term health of the bank. In other words, running full-fledged branch operations were neither economical nor effective.

The second grand discourse of the changing environment that was imported into Dashen Bank and used by the protagonists, related to huge government projects and national plans. The Growth and Transformation Plans (I and II), which aim at transforming the country's economy into an industrialization one (hence, the name transformation) are widely discussed and debated by different groups in society. The financial wing of the GTP plans aims at increasing savings in society thereby making saving a habit and increasing foreign currency reserves and alleviating the chronic foreign currency shortage in the country. This discourse and the government's plans to transform the economy into industrialization were used to justify the restructuring, which reorganized branches' focus on deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation instead of loan provisions, foreign currency allocations, and other banking services. It was argued that the current restructuring would help Dashen Bank make a contribution to the country's transformation by generating ample resources and channeling them where it is appropriate, that is, manufacturing and exports.

In addition to the GTP plans, there is also a discourse at the country level around mega projects such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which will be Africa's largest dam when completed. The GERD project has also debated in the international media given that it is being built on the river Nile, which is claimed by Egypt as its life line. Then there are also sugar projects (10), cross-country railway projects, and fertilizer plant projects which too were imported and used by the protagonists to support their discourse and undermine the antagonists' discourse. These projects, especially GERD, have been a highly influential discourse in Ethiopia since the first GTP which started in 2011. The economical, geo-political and societal benefits of GERD and other mega projects are reported almost on a daily basis by the private and state electronic and print media. For example, in addition to the voluntary bond purchase for GERD (by every citizen and institutions in the country), the national bank requires each private bank to purchase bonds which is equivalent of 27 percent of the loan amount that they provide to their customers. This is criticized by the banks as it will dry up their capital. Hence, refocusing the activities of branches on deposit mobilization, as argued by the restructuring team and the other protagonists, was not only a must for the bank's sake but also for the sake of supporting the country's ambitious transformation plans.

All the above societal discourses in the country on ambitious growth plans which will lead to transforming the structure of the country's economy were imported to the discourse in the bank in a way that supported the protagonists' discourse that Dashen Bank should not lag behind when the country and its economy were transformed.

8.5 National culture (Habesha People versus the White People)

Another grand discourse or Fairclough's analytical level of social context that was brought as a resource to the discursive struggle is national culture or value or Habesha-ness (Ethiopian-ness). The discourse that habeshas (Ethiopians identify themselves as habeshas) are negative thinkers, jealous, uncooperative, foot-draggers, and not conducive to many things is a widely held belief and is part of the day-to-day discourse among individuals. For instance, in criticizing the in-house development of restructuring, one manager from the IT Department noted the following in an interview: "you have to keep in mind that we are habeshas (Ethiopians) and even studies show that we are not good in many aspects. Just many…what they know is that we habeshas are not good. You know had it been externally developed…" (Manager VIII, Information Systems and E-banking

Services Wing). The discourse on the habesha culture or value was used by both the protagonists and antagonists. The protagonists invoked the discourse of 'habesha culture' in defense of the overt and covert resistance that it was expected from habesha people. For example, 'habeshas cannot work together, but eat together', 'habeshas are comfortable with their status-quo', 'habeshas are footdraggers', 'habesha people understand coercion more than dialogue', 'habeshas are side-talkers and backstabbers', and 'habeshas cannot be trusted' were frequently raised by the protagonists during the interviews. In other words, according to the protagonists, the restructuring was not full of flaws which made the people resist it, but they resisted it because they are 'habeshas' who cannot see anything positive and are not born to praise and give constructive comments.

On the other hand, the antagonists used the 'habesha culture' in their discursive struggle by comparing it to 'white people' or 'westerners.' Contrary to the societal discourse on habesha people, the image of 'white people' as 'smart', 'clever', 'sophisticated', 'all-knowing', 'rich' and 'well-informed' is a widely held belief in society. Therefore, the 'habesha people' (referring to the restructuring team) versus 'white people' (referring to people in Ernst and Young, which studied the process) was invoked many times by the discourse of the antagonists to undermine the protagonists' efforts (such as it was poorly done, was not participatory, and was not knowledge-based) and their discourses. Consistently, the antagonists argued that 'white people' were careful when undertaking similar projects of restructuring, went into every detail, collected as much information as possible, involved different stakeholders, and systematically grouped and isolated tasks. The discourse of 'white people' and their context was invoked to argue that the restructuring was a copy/paste which could not fit the local culture and financial context. The concepts of 'customer account' (CATS), treasury, or digital banking as used by western people was argued to be different from 'our' definition and understanding and therefore, this was not considered when the new structure was copied from the internet. In short, the 'habesha people' versus the 'white people' argument was invoked by the antagonists to suggest that the restructuring should have been undertaken by a foreign company (as the 'enterprise modernization project' undertaken by Ernst and Young) and the restructuring (new structure) should have been contextualized before implementation as it was copied.

8.6 Science

Another grand discourse that was used by both the antagonists and protagonists in their discursive struggles was science. The protagonists used it to portray the change program as something which was the result of a systematic and scientific study rather than something randomly or speculatively undertaken. The 'resource modernization program' which was studied by Ernst and Young and on which the restructuring was based, was mentioned as evidence that the whole program was scientific. In addition, the protagonists portrayed the bank itself as scientific and professional and it had to frequently update itself with latest scientific developments. For instance, the application of CRM based on a Pareto analysis (20 percent of the profits from 80 percent of the customers and 80 percent of the profits from 20 percent of the customers) and other techniques were regarded as universal in the modern financial world and not applying them in a timely manner was considered as not only being unscientific and traditional but also suicidal. Therefore, the grand discourse of science was used by the protagonists to send a message that either 'adapt or die' (Phillips et al., 2008). In general, the grand discourse of science helped to picture the change program as natural, universal in the financial world, and unambiguous as change was inevitable.

The discourse of science was used for explaining the resistance that was observed. The protagonists argued by that 'resistance to change' is normal and unavoidable in any change program. According to change science, protagonists and the restructuring team argued, whenever there was change, some saw it indifferently, some resisted it, and some galvanized and eagerly waited for the change. Therefore, the driving factor in the resistance was not genuine concern as the antagonists claimed and instead was the very characteristics of the change itself. Stated differently, change was natural and unavoidable and therefore those who resisted it wre irrational and driven by personal benefits at the expense of the bank.

The antagonists drew on the grand discourse of science to undermine the official discourse and to promulgate their own discourse. This took two forms: first, they argued that the way the change program was undertaken in Dashen Bank was contradictory to both the science and literature on change. A number of antagonists mentioned that BPR and BPI, and radical change and evolutionary change were confused, and this is also what happened in Dashen Bank. The restructuring team and the other stakeholders were not well-read on the science of change and related literature, and thus everything was a mess and was randomly done. Second, the discourse of science was invoked to argue that the whole endeavor was not

research-based, well-designed and principled. According to this view, science is all about principle, formulae, and being systematic. Therefore, the restructuring team was accused of not being systematic, and the formulae or the principle by which the change was undertaken were not known; instead, intuition and gut feeling dominated the endeavor. In other words, every action and decision in relation to the restructuring was not justifiable. As one manager mentioned, issues such as 'why five persons are needed?', 'why those jobs were combined together and others separated?', and 'why a given position was organized at the department level instead of the division level?' were not justified. In addition, some antagonists used the discourse of science to undermine the staff assignments and the way activities in Dashen Bank were viewed by the restructuring team, the top management, and the board. According to some managers, some were given an opportunity to serve in different positions and levels (while others were denied this) and later this became the criteria for assignments. This was considered to be unjust because financial activities, or any activities in a bank for that matter, were not 'rocket science', 'space science', or 'nuclear physics' and any individual who had passed college could effectively and efficiently perform them.

8.7 Macroeconomic problems (foreign currency shortage and poor saving habits)

As indicated earlier, two major macro-economic problems that are hurting many sectors is shortage of foreign currency and low saving levels. Acute foreign currency shortage forced some mega projects to be delayed, investments to slow and key items not being imported. This affected many citizens and is one of the top issues in the Ethiopian political and economic agenda. Plus, poor savings are hurting investments as there will not be enough to fund new economic projects. This major macroeconomic societal discourse is directly linked to banks and was used differently by both the antagonists and protagonists in their discursive struggles. The protagonists argued that the restructuring made the branches focus on deposit mobilization and foreign currency generation (resource generation) which are a national problem. The branches became much more important than before as they generated a critical but scarce resource. According to the protagonists, if viewed from the interest of the nation and the bank, the current arrangement of branches was much better because it made them focused and efficient.

The antagonists and mostly branch managers, undermined the official view by stating that the relation between branches and customers (especially, high profile customers) had become a 'tit-for-tat' or a 'give and take' one in that the branches allocated foreign currency and provided loans to mobilize deposits and generate foreign currency. Hence, when loan provisions and foreign currency allocations were centralized under the new structure, the bargaining power of branches declined and, as a result, they were not being able to achieve their targets in terms of deposit mobilizations and foreign currency generation. They argued that under the new structure the branches were forced to focus on low profile customers (with very small deposits) to mobilize deposits and remittances to generate foreign currency which severely hurt their performance. Hence, the grand discourse of macro-economic challenges, foreign currency shortage, and poor saving levels, was invoked by the antagonists, mostly branch managers, to undermine the official discourse.

8.8 Justice/Community Development/CSR

The other grand discourse that was invoked by the protagonists and the restructuring team was 'justice', 'community development', and 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR). The discourse of justice and community development was invoked in relation to the new branch arrangements. Dashen Bank had a sub-branch arrangement where the role of the branches was confined to mobilizing deposits and generating foreign currency without allocating foreign currency and providing loan facilities. Hence, complaints regarding sub-branches were not only coming from sub-branch managers but also the community in which the sub-branches were operating because first, branch managers were not effective in mobilizing huge deposits as high-profile customers were not willing to deposit their money without foreign currency or a loan in return. Second, since sub-branches did not provide loans, this meant that they could not support the development endeavor of the communities, cities, or towns in which they were operating. Therefore, the protagonists noted, that this was unjust as sub-branches did not support community development. In other words, it was a weakness from the view point of CSR. Hence, cancelling sub-branch arrangements and maintaining a uniform branch structure by centralizing foreign currency allocations and loan provisions and repositioning the branches' focus on resource generation was a must. Therefore, the new structure/restructuring also had an immense contribution in redressing injustices and supporting community development and

implementing CSR. This shows how grand or societal discourses such as those on 'justice', 'community development', and 'CSR' were imported to the organizational discourse in such a way that supported the discourse of the protagonists.

8.9 Governance System: Nepotism or Ethnic-based federalism

The other grand discourse that was frequently invoked in the discourse was the country's governance system, federalism. After the downfall of the socialist military regime, Ethiopia followed a different governance system based on an ethnic-based federalism. This ethnic-based federalism was adopted in 1991 to supposedly entertain the nation's ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and other diversities which the previous governance systems had failed to accommodate as they allegedly promoted the values, culture and language of one ethnic group. This grand discourse was imported to the organization basically by the antagonists of the restructuring to undermine the official discourse. They accused the top management, the board, and the restructuring team of engaging in ethnic-based nepotism in staff assignments. 'Clique', 'ethnicity', and 'network' were frequently used terms in their discourse. Other individuals who could have contributed to the bank were systematically marginalized because they were not close to or kin of the top management. As one antagonist underscored: "you might have witnessed that in other companies and offices, whatever your worth, whatever your intelligence, whatever your potential to change even the country, unless you are part of a clique, it is very difficult. To your surprise, many individuals who can change even a nation have been sidelined. Cliques is the nation's problem."

Some antagonists mentioned EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front), the ruling coalition, as an example to highlight that the reason for the recent political crisis was because of the party itself. Following the principle of federalism, the ruling party searched not only its own people but 'fair representation' was the guiding principle in assigning individuals and this gave precedence to people's ethnic makeup instead of their merit or intelligence. This led to a political crisis which lasted for more than three years, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister. This discourse was raised (when the interviews were done, the political crisis was at its peak) frequently by the antagonists to argue that the top management and the restructuring team had engaged in the same practice.

In addition, the discourse that the country was led by an autocratic system which denied freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and other democratic freedoms to citizens was imported by the antagonists to substantiate their argument that the top management was autocratic with coercion as the base of its leadership style. For instance, the cancellation of the Progress Review Meetings (PRM), a forum in which the top management and the branches and other stakeholders met in the new structure was seen as lack of appetite by the top management to entertain diverse and dissenting views. In addition, it was highlighted that those who spoke facts which were contrary to the views of the top management, were targeted in the new structure and assigned to Grade I and II (lower grades) branches outside the capital. Moreover, those who were considered supporters of the previous president were not only not considered in the restructuring process but later, they remained unassigned for long and were then assigned to branches outside the capital. One former manager said that he was forced to resign because he had criticized the top management in a general meeting.

The antagonists also drew on the government's political discourse during the peak of the political crisis in the country. A number of antagonists coined terms from the government's discourse during the political crisis such as 'anti-peace elements', 'terrorists', 'those who are detached from reality', 'illusionists', and 'agents of a given interest group' to characterize the restructuring team and the other protagonists. For instance, one manager who claimed to have been victimized since he exposed corruption by the top management, labeled the leader of the restructuring team as 'Jawar of Dashen Bank', after the name of a prominent politician (who lives in exile) from the opposition camp who orchestrated and led different protests, uprisings, and boycotts in some parts of the nation. Similarly, one branch manager mentioned Habte-Selassie Tafese, the father of Ethiopian tourism who coined the Ethiopian tourism slogan 'Thirteen Months of Sunshine' for the first time. He is celebrated as a hero and an icon in a discourse on Ethiopian tourism. The branch manager regretted that they did not have such a hero or role model who was selfless and had committed his entire life for the cause of others (and the nation in general). By invoking this discourse, the branch manager noted that people both in the top management and in the board were not self-less and committed to the bank's cause. These points highlight how the grand discourse around the governance system and the political crisis in the country was imported to the bank and applied in the discursive struggle by different groups of middle managers.

8.10 Unfair trade practices and unfair competition

Unfair trade practices and unfair competition was another grand discourse that was brought to the discourse in the bank, especially by the antagonists. This grand discourse was invoked in relation to foreign currency allocations to undermine the official discourse which stated that centralization of foreign currency allocations was in the best interests of the bank and prevented corrupt practices by branches. For example, the National Bank of Ethiopia has different rules and regulations regarding priority sectors in foreign currency allocations (manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and export trade), buying and selling rates of foreign currencies, and interest rates for loans and deposits. These rules and regulations were not respected by competitors when Dashen Bank's branches were not only forced to respect those rules and regulations but also key activities such as foreign currency allocation was centralized, putting them into disadvantage in the competition. Outside the priority areas, the National Bank of Ethiopia dictates that foreign currency should be allocated based on the first-come-first-served principle regardless of the deposit amount and also regardless of whether the customer in need of the foreign currency, is the bank's customers or not. However, competitors or branches in the same location allocate foreign currency only to customer and also to those who have attractive deposits regardless of the rule. Dashen Bank's branches cannot allocate foreign currency to anybody after the restructuring. According to the antagonists, the new structure crippled their competitive position and put them under severe pressure in the face of unfair competition in the industry by other banks' branches.

Besides these grand discourses many other discourses were frequently invoked both by the antagonists and the protagonists in their discourses. 'Bureaucracy', 'industry practices', 'empowerment', 'religion (Islam in relation to Islamic banking), and 'humanity', are some of the grand discourses or Fairclough's analytical level of social context which were frequently drawn on in support of or against the official discourse.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter outlines the conclusion of the thesis. The next section presents the brief findings of the thesis. Then, the contribution of this thesis to different literatures and theories will be discussed. Limitation and future research direction bring this chapter to an end.

9.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to provide an integrated and comprehensive account of organizational change from the middle management perspective. To achieve this purpose, this study formulated and answered the following research questions: How do middle managers struggle to fix meaning around restructuring? What are the texts (rhetorical appeals) that different groups of middle managers employed in their discursive struggles (in their discursive practices)? What were the influential societal and contextual factors that were appropriated for the discursive struggles (in their discourse practices)? And finally, how did discourses at different levels influence each other? To answer these research questions, I investigated the reactions of middle managers in a change context in Dashen Bank.

The first research question is related to the agency of middle managers during radical change. Contrary to existing research which mostly paints passive picture of middle managers during change (Balogun, 2003; Dopson and Stewart, 1990; Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994; McCann et al., 2002), this study showed middle managers' active role during organizational change by negotiating meaning around the restructuring and the new structure. Hence, this study restores agency to the middle management, which is a major gap in middle management literature (Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

In addition, in line with the first research question, this study also shows the discursive practices of different groups of middle managers, which links specific texts with broader societal and institutional discourses (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips et al., 2008) by using Fairclough's three-dimensional approach. The analytical level of the discourse practice is concerned with the production, dissemination, and interpretation of texts and it is at this level that a textual analysis is a discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1993; Richardson, 2007). In this dimension of a critical discourse analysis, internal discourses are developed in an organization by different actors by drawing on

external discourses (societal or grand discourses). Therefore, discourses around the restructuring by the protagonists and antagonists as presented in Chapters 5 and 6 are Fairclough's analytical level of discourse practice. At this level, identifying the subject positions provides insights about the texts produced, disseminated, and interpreted in the discursive struggle. As explained in detail in the previous chapters, there are three subject positions in the discursive struggle: the restructuring team and the other protagonists of the restructuring; antagonists of the restructuring; and the top management. Although the idea of restructuring originated in the top management, which organized the restructuring team and assigned its members thereby allowing for the discourses of the restructuring team to be the official discourses and representing the top management, the findings show that the top management followed a hands-off approach and distanced itself from the discursive struggle. In other words, the top management was not producing, disseminating, and interpreting texts to gain hegemony and maintain control over other members of the organization. Hence, the two subject positions that were involved in the discursive struggle were the restructuring team and some other protagonist individuals (as protagonists) and antagonists, and both subject positions were significantly involved in the production, dissemination, and interpretation of texts to 'fix' meaning in a way that maintained preferential social relations. In addition, both the antagonists and the protagonists of the restructuring were middle managers who were either branch managers, or department directors or division managers. By identifying the two subject positions that were engaged in the discursive struggle over the restructuring and the new structure, this study not only restores the agency of middle managers, but also shows diversity among middle managers (that is, middle managers are not alike). It can be summarized that the discourse around the restructuring constituted (produced) the following categories of beings: the theory of restructuring (concepts); top management, antagonists, and protagonists who contested the concept of the restructuring (subject positions); and social and material relationships (the flatness of the hierarchy, the reporting relationships, number of positions and levels, the slimness of the structure, job configurations and arrangements, employment conditions, performance appraisal mechanisms, locations and work places, salary scale, and so on) (objects) (cf. Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips and Hardy, 1997). Stated differently, different groups of middle managers who occupied social spaces and thus warranted a voice (subject positions) struggled over the questions of 'what', 'how', 'when' and 'why' about the restructuring (concept) to create preferential social and material relations (objects).

As shown in the societal practice dimension of CDA, both antagonists and protagonists drew on many grand discourses as resources in their discursive struggles. External discourses (including some well-established ones) were imported to the organization by both the antagonists and protagonists in a way that supported their discursive practices in the bank and undermined the discursive practices of the others. The discursive practices of the restructuring team and the other protagonists and the antagonists are summarized in Table 9.1 along with the other levels of the discourse.

Table 9. 1 Summary of the three dimensions of discourse in Dashen Bank

Societal level discourse	Discursive practice	Rhetorical appeals (text)
Professionalism Neo-liberal discourse/globalization Corruption Changing environment National culture Science Justice/CSR Governance system Unfair trade practices Bureaucracy Religion Humanity	The restructuring team and the other protagonists	
	Rationalization of the new structure and problematization of the old structure. The restructuring was well-done and well-studied. Fixing (defending) the observed resistance (in relation to formation of the restructuring team, assignment of team members as directors, cancellation of progress review meetings, and priority of strategy versus structure). The change (new structure) was successful.	Ethos Logos Autopoiesis Cosmos
	Antagonists	
	The timing of the restructuring was not right. Outsourcing of the restructuring to the foreign consultant would have been better. There was differential attention and unfairness in the bank. The restructuring team did not have the best composition and its members pursued personal interests. The process (the restructuring) was not participatory. The restructuring was not well-developed, staff assignments was poorly handled. The new structure was a copy of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Adverse consequences of the restructuring. Succession opportunities were compromised. Response/reactions to the new structure. New structure after the new strategy.	Ethos Logos Autopoiesis Pathos

This study also showed the different rhetorical appeals that the middle managers used in their discursive practices (the focus of the second research question) and this is related to an analysis of text. This level of analysis involved an examination of the content, structure, and meaning of the text at the micro level. Content analysis can be regarded as an analysis of text (Fairclough, 1993; Grant, Oswick, Hardy, Putnam, and Phillips, 2004). Chapter eight of this study can be regarded as Fairclough's analytical level of text as it focuses on the content analysis of the texts (rhetorical/persuasive appeals) that the protagonists and antagonists applied to produce and disseminate credible and influential texts in their discursive practices (representing Fairclough's analytical level of discourse practice). The analysis showed that *logos* (rational argument/reason), *ethos* (authority-based arguments/credibility), and *autopoiesis* (autopoietic narratives) were used by both the protagonists and the antagonists although with different intensity. However, appeals to *pathos* (emotional-morale arguments/emotion) were exclusively applied by the antagonists whereas *cosmos* (cosmological constructions) was solely used by the protagonists. In addition, the findings also show that the following link between Fairclough's analytical level of the text and social practice (that is, between rhetorical appeals and discursive practices) can be made: mostly, appeals to ethos were used by protagonists to mobilize the discourse that the restructuring team was the best team, that its members were experienced and well-qualified, and that the new structure was well developed whereas the antagonists appealed to ethos to mobilize the discourse that the restructuring team was not the best, its members were inexperienced and lacked expertise, the new structure was poorly developed and was not systematically/scientifically handled, and those who had experience and expertise in their respective divisions and departments were not consulted.

An appeal to logos was used by the protagonists to mobilize a discourse that there were compelling reasons for the new structure, and the new structure was a success and was bearing fruits. On the other hand, an appeal to logos was used by the antagonists to mobilize a discourse that the new structure was a failure. An appeal to pathos was used by the antagonists to argue that human and organizational concerns remained unaddressed stirring strong emotions. An appeal to autopoiesis was used by the protagonists to argue that the new structure was neither a copy/paste from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia nor from the internet and that the restructuring team had a minimal role since the process had been studied by the foreign consulting company Ernst and Young that had recommended the basics. On the other hand, an appeal to autopoiesis was used by the antagonists to argue that the new structure was not participatory, and the structure should have

come after the new strategy. Finally, an appeal to cosmos was used by the protagonists to argue that the restructuring was a must, that it was inevitable.

Finally, this study also showed the discourses that existed outside the organization and were appropriated into the discursive struggle (this is the focus of research question three) by using Fairclough's analytical level of social context as the framework. This level is concerned with how discourses at the societal level affected the discourse in the organization (that is, in Dashen Bank) (Fairclough, 1993; Phillips et al., 2008). Both the antagonists and protagonists imported the following external/societal discourses to their discursive struggles in a way that supported their views and discounted their adversaries' view: professionalism, new-liberal discourse/globalization, corruption, changing environment, national culture, science, macroeconomy, justice and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethnic based federalism.

This study also showed how textual level rhetorical appeals inform and justify the discourse practices of middle managers and how this in turn was shaped and affected by societal level discourses (the focus of research question four). In the following section, I discuss the contributions of this study to middle management literature, change management literature, and organizational discourse.

9.2 Contribution to Middle Management Literature

One of the contributions of this study is to the literature on middle management. Although interest in the state of middle management has increased over the last couple of decades, the way middle managers are researched remains somewhat problematic. As argued by Thomas and Linstead (2002), the research stream on middle management was framed by the question 'what is happening to middle management?' which led to an unnecessary dualism of positive/negative and either/or. For example, in the first half of the question, according to Thomas and Linstead (2002: 73) "'what is happening to…?', managerial work is presented as a natural set of activities and change is seen as impacting on middle management, with middle managers being reduced to phenomena that are structurally and empirically determined. Therefore, this is a privileging of structure over agency, and an overall neglect, lack of recognition and general ignorance over the role of middle managers themselves in the restructuring process." On the other hand, in the second half of the question 'middle management', middle managers are depicted as a 'single, univocal, homogenous entity.'

Owing to these limitations, different authors on middle management (for example, Thomas and Linstead, 2002) have called for studies with different epistemological and ontological underpinnings that restore agency and diversity to the middle management. This study is one attempt to restore agency and diversity to middle managers in an organizational restructuring. The findings clearly show the discursive struggle between different groups of middle managers to 'fix' meaning around the restructuring (Mumby, 2005), rather than being passive translators or implementers of change processes initiated by the top management (Laine and Vaara, 2008). As my study found, middle managers were not only mobilizing discourses to challenge the official discourse around the restructuring that was propagated by the restructuring team and the other protagonists, but they also effectively reversed the official discourse as the top management later decided to go in for a new restructuring after a new strategy has been developed (which has been awarded to an international consulting company, KPMG). The delayering in the new structure mainly affected middle managers (as a number of middle management levels were delayered) and as a result they felt increased pressure as they could not able to delegate duties downwards or share tasks with their deputies (McCann, et al., 2008). So, a group of middle managers (antagonists) effectively mobilized a discourse against the new structure which later dominated the meaning production thereby leading to the 'fixing' of meaning around the new structure, which eventually led to its nullification. This clearly shows that although the middle managers were significantly affected by the new structure (as objects), by engaging in a discursive struggle (as subjects), they were able to reverse the impact the new structure had on them. Therefore, this study contributes to middle management literature by not only restoring the agency of middle managers but also by illustrating how they can affect the restructuring in such a way that it becomes perceived as irrelevant, a-contextual and poorly developed, and as a result they can push for a new restructuring instead which will serve (or at least, maintain) their interests.

However, the question 'how will the discursive struggle proceed around the new strategy development which has already been awarded to an international company and then, around the new structure which follows the strategy?' is yet to be answered and needs to be investigated further. Plus, 'how will the new structure be handled?', 'will the new structure create preferable social relations for the antagonists?', and 'what will the subject positions that will be discursively constituted in the new structure look like?' also need to be investigated in the future.

Another contribution of this study to the middle management literature is its restores the diversity of middle managers. By using a discourse approach, this study delineates that middle managers are not similar or homogenous entities and are diverse. As clearly shown in the empirical chapters, at least two subject positions (antagonists and protagonists), that were struggling to fix meaning (Mumby, 2005; Phillips and Hardy, 1997) to the new structure and its processes, were constituted. In addition, the diverse subject positions that were taken by middle managers constructed different identities for themselves and for 'others.' Therefore, agreeing with Thomas and Linstead's (2002), this thesis shows that middle managers not only took different subject positions (Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips and Hardy, 1997) but they also constructed different identities that helped them in the discursive practices to 'fix' meaning in the bank.

In addition, as clearly shown in the different chapters, the main actors in the restructuring were fully middle managers (acting either as antagonists or protagonists), which is contrary to most studies on change in which the top management is the main actor and architect of the change program. In my case organization, the top management followed a 'hands-off' approach (except for organizing the restructuring team and discussing and deliberating on the proposed structure at certain milestones), and thus, the restructuring was initiated by the top management (as argued by the protagonists) and undertaken by the restructuring team (composed of middle managers), and the ardent opponents of the new structuring were also middle managers. Finally, when the antagonists' discourse became strong and created pressure, not only did the top management decide in favor of a new structure but the leader of the restructuring team demanded a major revision of the 'new structure' after the new strategy is developed. Hence, the top management distanced itself from the discursive struggle, except for deciding in favor of the antagonists' discourses at the final stage. This shows that the positivist debate of whether middle managers make a strategic contribution or not (Thomas and Linstead, 2002) is irrelevant; rather, 'how are 'realities' created in organizations and how middle managers create realities or struggle to create realities?' that could put them in advantageous or disadvantageous positions or that could place them in strategic or non-strategic roles are the important points. In other words, the debate whether middle managers have a 'strategic role' or not by virtue of being part of the middle management is misleading. For instance, Mantere and Vaara (2008) argue that alternative and competing discourses regarding strategy have fundamentally different implications for participation in strategy work, and by investigating 12 organizations they found out that the dominant strategic

discourses in organizations determined participation or non-participation in strategy work. Therefore, strategic discourses that involve 'mystification', 'disciplining' and 'technologization' are associated with a non-participatory approach to a strategy work. On the contrary, strategic discourses such as 'self-actualization', 'dialogization' and 'concreatization' promote participation in strategy. However, in their study the discourse on strategy seems to have an almost deterministic role as it denies agency to different groups of managers and employees. Hence, by using a discursive struggle perspective (cf. Laine and Vaara, 2008), this study shows that different groups of middle managers can struggle for meaning, to shape concepts on which subject positions and objects are formed (Phillips and Hardy, 1997), and as a result, ensure their participation (Mantere and Vaara, 2008) and create preferable social relations.

9.3 Contributions to Change Management Literature

This study also attempts to contribute to the literature on change management. Although the idea that discourse and change are inter-related is not new (Grant and Marshak, 2011), this study empirically documents the mutually constitutive nature of change and discourse. As shown in the empirical chapters, the implementation of a new structure was initiated by the top management and the board, and a restructuring team to implement a new and modern organizational structure that could increase the competitiveness of the bank was put in place by the top management. Then, the restructuring team (in collaboration with and through discussions and deliberations with the top) developed a draft for the new structure which was presented to the middle managers and branch managers in a workshop. This signifies an introduction of change that was unilaterally developed by the restructuring team and this action triggered many discourses (that were partly complementary and partly contradictory) (Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Laine and Vaara, 2008), marking the beginning of a discursive struggle between different groups of middle managers.

The discursive struggle finally led to the undermining of the official discourse that was propagated by the restructuring team and the other protagonists as dramatically the top management later decided that the new structure would be void and another new structure would be developed immediately after the new strategy had been developed, for which a foreign consulting company (KPMG) had already been assigned. Therefore, this study clearly supports the fact that discourse and change are mutually constitutive: A change was introduced, and that triggered an alternative and competing discourse (thereby marking a discursive struggle) and then, the official discourse

in relation to the new structure was effectively undermined by the antagonists, resulting in a new decision that the new structure would be totally revised or an altogether new structure would be developed based on the recommendations and outcomes of the new strategy. Although a number of prior studies have empirically documented discursive struggles around a change program (Brown and Humphreys, 2003; De Cock, 1998; Doolin, 2003; Laine and Vaara, 2008), the ability and effectiveness of the alternative discourse to undermine the official discourse and to fix meaning in a preferable way has hardly been explored so far. Hence, my study contributes to this stream of literature by clearly demonstrating the effective reversal of the official discourse by the antagonists through their alternative and competing discourse. Thereby, the study answers Grand and Marshal's (2011) call for research that investigates the plurivocality of organizations (that is, regarding changes and other phenomena). They assert that "[t]he view of organizations as inherently plurivocal, even when a dominant discourse may exist, highlights the need for further research on concepts and theories of plurivocality and how it may impact on change in organizational settings. This would also include inquiry into how latent, coexisting, or counterdiscourses are dismissed, or can be appropriated and deployed in change situations [and]… given that power dynamics are involved in maintaining or 'overthrowing' a dominant discourse, more inquiry into how political processes are involved in the way alternative discourses are defeated or deployed in change efforts would advance our understanding of plurivocality, power, and change" (Grand and Marshak, 2011: 225).

One of the major problems in relation to research on change management is that there is a tendency to focus on one level of the analysis (Hardy and Phillips, 1999; Phillips et al., 2008). Grant and Marshal (2008) argue that a great deal of research on change management focuses on one level of analysis, implying that change in an organization occurs in isolation. Therefore, they call for "(…) More multilevel research to determine the degree and extent of discursive linkages and how they reinforce or sometimes challenge the status quo are needed. Such research might also include consideration of the processes by which discourses are established, maintained, or changed at different levels as well as how different levels of discourse interpenetrate, influence, and inform each other" (Grant and Marshal, 2011: 224). Therefore, one of the contributions of this study is that it shows the interplay of different levels of the discourse in constituting change in an organization, by following Fairclough's three-level approach to a critical discourse analysis, that is, the analytical level of the discourse (practice) (Chapters 5 and 6), the analytical level of the text

(Chapter 7) and the analytical level of the social context (Chapter 8). In other words, in their discursive practices, both the protagonists and antagonists imported different external discourses to their discursive struggle in a way that supported their view and discounted their adversaries' views and used different rhetorical appeals to justify or convince their points of view (their discursive practices). Hence, both rhetorical appeals and external discourses were used as inputs in the discursive practices (in the discursive struggles).

Regarding how different levels of the discourse interpenetrate and inform each other in such a way that affects the restructuring, the following link can be made as an example. The societal discourse of corruption was imported by the protagonists to their discourse that the restructuring was a must to show the corrupt practices among branch managers in relation to loan provisions and foreign currency allocations (the new structure centralized loan provisions and foreign currency allocations in the head office). Similarly, the antagonists' used the grand discourse of governance system (ethnic-based federalism) to undermine the way the restructuring team was organized and staff assignments were done in the new structure. Both the antagonists and protagonists produced different persuasive appeals (texts) to support the discourse practices either in favor or against the new structure. For instance, cosmos was uniquely used by the protagonists to underline that organizations nowadays must either change or perish. On the other hand, the antagonists uniquely applied the rhetorical appeal to pathos (as an appeal to emotion) to underscore that the human factor was totally ignored during the restructuring.

This study not only identified discourses at each level, but also demonstrated how each level influenced the others, as the discourse at a given level was appropriated to support/reinforce or undermine the discourse at the other levels. To sum up, by showing how change affected or triggered a discourse (as a discursive struggle over the how, when, why, and what of restructuring), which led to a change within the 'change' and by showing different levels of the discourse influencing each other, I argue that this study fulfills Grant and Marshal's call (2011) that "change orientations need to be not only discourse-based but also multilevel, plurivocal, reflexive, iterative, recursive, and power sensitive."

9.4 Contributions to Discourse Theory

Although rhetoric and discourse are sometimes seen synonymously (Green Jr., 2004; Higgins and Walker, 2012), the two are different as the former is distinguished by its focus on persuasion. Rhetorical studies are concerned with, "how language and other symbolic forms influence the way an audience thinks, feels or acts" (Higgins and Walker, 2012: 197) and in doing so, fill a deficiency of the discourse theory, that is, "it is not clear why stakeholder groups, citizens, governments and other organizations accept discourses and alter their thinking and behavior accordingly" (Higgins and Walker, 2012: 197). In other words, rhetoric analyses are in harmony with a discourse analysis and can help in understanding some of the reasons for the underlying social effects of the discourse. Similarly, Erkama and Vaara (2010) explain that the 'new rhetoric' links rhetoric with broader discourses. For instance, in their investigation of struggles over legitimacy in global organizational restructuring, they say, "it allows us to connect specific rhetorical strategies with the overall discourse of global organizational restructuring and to focus on how exactly this discourse affects rhetorical strategizing" (Erkama and Vaara, 2010: 818). Unfortunately, they regret that "only a few studies have examined these dynamics" (Erkama and Vaara, 2010: 818). Therefore, this study adds to the very scarce literature on the relation between rhetorical and discourse analyses. It tries to show how different subject positions applied different rhetorical strategies to mobilize their discourse and undermine their opponents' discourse. The analysis showed that appeals to ethos (as authority-based argument) were extensively used by both the protagonists and antagonists, and thus, it was the dominant persuasive appeal. Whereas, logos (as a rational argument) and autopoiesis (as an autopoietic narrative) were modestly and slightly applied by both the antagonists and protagonists. Cosmos was slightly and exclusively used by the protagonists whereas pathos was modestly used by the antagonists. Therefore, this study sheds light on an analysis of text by showing that different groups of individuals had different use patterns of persuasive/rhetorical appeals in the discursive struggle.

In addition, as shown in the multilevel analysis of change, this study empirically documents how persuasive appeals (that is, rhetorical strategies), or a discourse analysis of text, were used to mobilize the organizational discourse (or the discourse practices) in a persuasive manner. In line with this, the following points can be established: Mostly, an appeal to ethos was used by the protagonists to mobilize a discourse that the restructuring team was the best team and its members were experienced and well-qualified, and the new structure was well developed whereas the antagonists appealed to ethos to mobilize a discourse that the restructuring team was not the best;

its members were inexperienced and lacked expertise; the new structure was poorly developed and was not systematically/scientifically handled; and those who had experience and expertise in their respective divisions and departments were not consulted. An appeal to logos was used by the protagonists to mobilize a discourse that there were compelling reasons for the new structure, and the new structure was a success and was bearing fruits. On the other hand, an appeal to logos was used by the antagonists to mobilize a discourse that the new structure was a failure. An appeal to pathos was used by the antagonists to argue that human and organizational concerns remained unaddressed and stirred strong emotions. An appeal to autopoiesis was used by the protagonists to argue that the new structure was not a copy/paste from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia nor from the internet and that the restructuring team had a minimal role since the process was studied and the basics were recommended by a foreign consulting company. On the other hand, an appeal to autopoiesis was used by the antagonists to argue that the new structure was not participatory and the structure should have come after the new strategy. Finally, an appeal to cosmos was used by the protagonists to argue that the restructuring was a must, it was inevitable. In general, by applying rhetorical strategies in the discursive struggle around organizational restructuring between different groups of middle managers, this study answers Erkama and Vaara's (2010: 834-835) call for "a need to examine other cases in different socio-political and cultural contexts to be able to distinguish and compare rhetorical dynamics in more nuanced ways."

However, the following caveat must be kept in mind as far as the impact of rhetorical appeals on the discourse practice is concerned. Although it can be roughly stated that the rhetorical appeals of the antagonists were effective as the their discursive practice effectively undermined the official discourse (which was propagated by the restructuring team and the other protagonists), and it became dominant, which lead to the nullification of the new structure; to be certain, the top management must be investigated as to why it decided in favor of the antagonists' discourse and was against the discourse of the restructuring team and the protagonists regarding the new structure, in which the top management itself was partially taking part. This can be a subject for further investigation in Dashen Bank itself or in other similar cases.

Finally, this study also adds to infant literature on discourse and power by empirically documenting the relation between power and discourse. In line with the conceptualization of power in discourse, this study shows that no one enjoys 'sovereign power' (Phillips and Hardy, 1997), rather, power

is embedded in the network of discursive relations that identifies the advantaged and the disadvantaged. This study also clearly shows that there are multiple and alternative (contradictory) discourses that constitute different concepts, objects, and subject positions. Hence, by joining one of the subject positions, that is, either as an antagonists or a protagonists, different middle managers were able to mobilize a discourse and thereby exercise power including challenging the power of the protagonists, who represented the official discourse. In other words, being in one of the subject positions provided an opportunity for getting their voices heard which empowered the agents (middle managers). The opportunity to exercise power through alternative discourses provided the means/potential to change the discourse, or to reverse or circumvent the official discourse. Therefore, when the discourse changed, the concepts and the objects also changed which constitute preferable social relation. In addition, this study shows that discourse provides disadvantaged actors a way to circumvent their lack of formal power (traditional power sources) and resources to influence the processes and the results. Although the protagonists, including the restructuring team that was organized by the top management, had access to different resources at their disposal, had frequent access to the top management as compared to the other middle managers, visited different organizations in and outside the country frequently and assessed them, and thus secured a better opportunity for voice than other middle managers (antagonists), the antagonists were able to overcome this challenge and circumvent the official discourse by mobilizing different discursive practices. This study empirically documents how alternative discourses struggle for dominance, which results in the dominance of the critical voice. Hence, the bank was forced to go for another restructuring in less than 2 years. Therefore, this study also shows that middle managers' resistance to the official discourse is not always futile. Rather, by mobilizing power through discourse, the disadvantaged came out being victorious which led to preferable social relations (objects).

9.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although secondary data was collected from the organization and from outside (the latter mainly to identify societal level discourses), it must be borne in mind that this study is primarily based on interview accounts, and this may have its own limitations as interview accounts reflect what is said in an interview situation (Laine and Vaara, 2007). Future studies may generate data from 'naturally occurring talk' through observation and participation in forums and meetings and by collecting internal communications between different groups of employees such as memos, email exchanges

and other documents to gain a deeper understanding of the discursive struggles around the restructuring. For example, more apparent power play and identity negotiations can be identified in email exchanges between the restructuring team and other managers and directors who were mostly antagonists. Plus, the restructuring document and the related study and assessment outcomes may give a clearer picture of the discursive struggles. Therefore, it is recommended that if more data regarding 'naturally occurring talks' is collected, interesting and deeper insights can be gained.

As the findings of this study show, the antagonists' discourse effectively undermined the discourse of the restructuring team and the other protagonists and came out as being dominant. Hence, the top management (as was recommended by the leader of the restructuring team in the general meeting) nullified the restructuring and decided for a wholly new restructuring after the strategy was developed (which has already been awarded to foreign consulting company, KPMG). However, it will be even more interesting to investigate what happens next? Will there be a different restructuring team (as the leader of the restructuring team argues that any project and program will be handled by his department, which is the Program Management Office so, he will be at the forefront again)? How will the discursive struggle proceed in the upcoming new restructuring? Will different subject positions be created? How will the identities and power elements play out? Will the antagonists of the current discursive struggle maintain their interest and forge preferable social relations in the coming new structure as they are the current winners of the discursive struggle? Therefore, the next investigation can be a logical continuation of this study and hopefully, it will be my next project.

This study also investigated planned change that was initiated by the top management and the board. This, planned change triggered discursive struggles and identity construction in the bank and different subject positions were created that were in favor of and against the restructuring. However, investigating an unplanned change or emergent change would be interesting to compare and contrast the results with planned change. Will there be a discursive struggle during emergent or unplanned change in the first place? Because it can be intuitively taken that when the change is emergent, it may not trigger sensemaking and discursive struggles to the same degree, since it will not be a surprise to anyone and there will not be any disruption. However, even if there was no discursive struggle, investigating how the dominant discourse (which privileges and empowers

some at the expense of others) maintains its dominance would be interesting and insightful to study. For instance, Vaara et al. (2004) investigated strategizing around strategic alliances and pointed out five discursive practices that led to the objectification, factualization and naturalization of airline alliance strategies. Future studies on unplanned change or emergent change could follow the same techniques to yield fruitful results. Will marginal voices emerge when a new change happens emergently in an organization? Investigating unplanned change or emergent change in relation to discourse would thus be an interesting complement to different studies on planned change (Laine and Vaara, 2007; Phillips et al., 2008).

To have an integrated and comprehensive account of change, different authors suggest that different levels of discourse should be examined and linked together (Grant and Marshak, 2011; Phillips et al., 2008; Phillips and Hardy, 1999). For that purpose, Grant and Marshak (2011) identified different levels of a change-related discourse such as 'intrapsychic level', 'micro level', 'meso-level', 'macro level', and 'meta level' (mega/grand discourses). However, the intrapsychic level (internalized stories and introjected beliefs that an individual tells himself/herself) still remains untouched as this study examines Fairclough's (1993, 2001) three-dimension approach to CDA (texts, discourse practices and societal level discourses or context). In this framework, the 'micro', 'meso', and 'meta' (ground) discourses are examined (as the societal level combines both the 'macro' and 'meta' levels of the discourse). Hence, future research can usefully examine the intrapsychic level discourse and show how it is related to the other levels of discourse.

This thesis is research on middle management and has a strong justification for why this is so. However, investigating other members and management levels in the bank would be interesting to gain a complete picture about the restructuring and the role of discourse in its entirety. As they are the ones who initiated the restructuring, organized the restructuring team, had frequent deliberations and discussions with the restructuring team throughout the course of the restructuring, and were also called 'the sponsor', investigating the top management is invaluable in gaining deeper insights into the restructuring. Why did they decide to revise or reverse the new structure? Why did they initiate the structure in the first place? Plus, it is possible to anecdotally claim that the role of first-line managers, and non-management workers both in the head office and branches was minuscule. The reasons for this could be fruitfully investigated. For instance, the lack of formal power could be one reason that deterred non-management workers from taking

part in the discursive struggle (it must be taken into account that both the antagonists and protagonists are middle managers, peers and there is no formal power gap as such). Or, they may have a different discourse (perhaps marginalized or silenced) than the discourses practiced by the antagonists and protagonists. Also, there was high staff turnover of first-line managers (section heads) and non-management workers. Therefore, this will also be interesting to investigate, for example, did not being able to engage in the discursive struggle either as an antagonists or a protagonists lead to resignations? Because it can be argued that if they had participated in the discursive struggle, they could have built their identity and thereby secured a sense of purpose and justification. In general, future studies can fruitfully examine the top management, the first-line management, and non-management workers and their discourses and roles in the restructuring.

The findings of this study show that organizational change triggered discursive struggles, but the question remains what other factors could trigger discursive struggles? For example, change in policy by the government regarding foreign currency allocations and loan provisions triggered a subtle discursive struggle (an uproar) between branch managers and the National Bank of Ethiopia in different forums, and some banks ignored this change and bent some of the policies as a form of resistance. Such issues can be investigated fruitfully to shed more light on our understanding of discourses.

Another limitation of this study is that it investigated a single organization (a private bank) and the findings cannot be transferred to other organizations and contexts. Therefore, investigating other organizations of differing sizes would be interesting. For instance, it was found that the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, by far the largest commercial bank in East Africa which is state-owned, has a profound role in shaping at least institutional-level discourses (Hardy and Phillips, 1999), if not some societal-level discourses. In fact, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia is considered as one of the two 'policy banks' (the other is the Development Bank of Ethiopia) that are helpful in regulating the institutional field. Therefore, investigating the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia will be very fruitful to gain an understanding of how organizational level discourses affect societal-level or field-level discourses. In this study, although the subject positions drew on societal and field-level discourses, their influence is one way rather than being mutual. Hence, by investigating the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, I suggest that the mutually constitutive character

of societal and field level discourses on the one hand, and organizational discourses on the other hand, could be unpacked.

In addition, in some instances the official discourse may become overwhelmingly dominant. Hence, the following points can be usefully examined: how does the official discourse become dominant? What are the marginalized or silenced voices and discourses? What was the role of formal power in making the official discourse the dominant discourse? What are the constructed identities in line with the official and the dominant discourse? And what role do the identities of different subjects serves? (for example, Alvesson and Willmott, 2002 argue that identity regulation serves as an organization control technique by producing an appropriate individual).

Finally, although this study shows how rhetorical strategies were used in discursive practice, their effectiveness needs further investigation as suggested by Gauthier and Kappen (2017). For that purpose, future studies may build on and empirically examine Green Jr.'s (2004) propositions who argues that the sequence of rhetoric matters for its effectiveness. He claims that for any discursive practice to be effective, it should start with pathos, followed by logos, and end with ethos justifications. In addition, he proposes that ethos will have a slow rate of adoption and rejection; logos will have a medium rate of adoption and a medium rate of rejection; and pathos will have a fast rate of adoption and a fast rate of rejection. Therefore, those patterns and the resulting effectiveness in legitimizing a given discourse (or in this case, one discourse against the other) can be fruitfully examined. In addition, consistent with Gauthier and Kappen's (2017) finding of different rhetorical logic for different discursive intents, the finding of this study shows that different subject positions used different patterns of rhetorical appeals (slightly). For instance, the protagonists never appealed to pathos whereas the antagonists never appealed to cosmos. Although this study provides some answers as to why ('how much the rhetorical appeals support themes in the discursive struggle?'), future studies can fruitfully examine the drivers of differences in rhetorical appeals among the discourses of different actors or subject positions by taking examples of different organizations.

Chapter 10: Epilogue: New Structure after the Discursive Struggle

It was learned that following the discursive struggle, Dashen Bank overhauled its organizational structure effective 1 January 2019, which aimed at broadening the top management team. The reorganization brings nine new chief officers (seven chief officers and two deputy-chief officers) who will be accountable to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Hence, the new structure labels the president as the CEO and the vice presidents (four) in the previous structure, which was implemented in 2016 and that triggered the discursive struggle, are totally removed and replaced by chief and deputy-chief officers. These nine officers are divided into three areas: front office, middle office, and back office. The front office includes the chief Retail and MSME Bbanking officer, deputy chief Interest Banking officer, and chief Corporate Banking officer. The middle office includes chief Transformation and Customer Experience officer, chief Information officer, director Alternative Channels Department and chief Shared Services and Central Processing officer. The back-office incudes chief Corporate Services officer, chief Finance officer and deputy chief Human Resource officer. People from within have been assigned to all chief officer and deputy chief officer positions. Three of the four vice presidents in the previous structure are assigned as chief officers while the remaining vice president is appointed as an adviser to the CEO. Six directors from within are promoted to chief officers (four) and deputy chief officers (two). In other words, six middle managers are promoted to the top management team in the new structure. It is to be recalled that the appointment of two vice presidents from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia in the previous structure was one of the most contentious issues in the discursive struggle in Dashen Bank. Hence, appointments and promotions from within are highly emphasized in the press releases regarding the new structure.

There are directors under chief officers and deputy chief officers while there are managers below the directors. However, the assignment of directors and managers is not yet finalized, and the bank is working on this. By taking lessons from the previous restructuring, according to one executive who was recently assigned as chief officer in the new structure, three committees have been organized which will be responsible for identifying, assigning and approving possible candidates.

A number of official reasons were given for the new structure. The first reason, according to one director, is "the paradigm shift made in the bank's strategy" (Director, Marketing and Corporate Communications). Last year, Dashen Bank appointed KPMG East Africa to design a ten-year strategic plan. In addition to this long-term plan, KPMG will also develop a one-year operational plan, a five-year strategic plan, and an organizational structure. The consulting company will also help the bank in implementing the performance management system. Hence, unlike the previous structure which was implemented two years ago, this new structure has been developed by an international consulting company. It should be recalled that the antagonists severely criticized the in-house development of the previous structure. Another reason for the new structure, according to one chief officer, is addressing the grievances with the previous structure. The last official reason is an aspiration to join the African market by opening branches in other African countries as clearly specified in the vision statement of the newly developed ten-year strategy: "To be Best-in-Class Bank in Africa." Hence, developing a structure that could enable the bank to achieve its vision was found to be very important and pressing.

However, it was learned that part of the previous structure which related to branches has not been revised. The reporting relationship of branches with the head office and districts and the levels within branches remain as they were. However, since performance evaluations were implemented anew bank-wide, job descriptions and job specifications in branches have been changed/modified.

From this anecdotal information, it is possible to conclude not only that the antagonists effectively circumscribed/reversed the official discourse propagated by the protagonists (the restructuring team and others), resulting in a new structure, but also that the new structure is mostly being undertaken in line with their arguments (their discursive practices), that is, appointing and promoting from within; undertaking restructuring with international consulting companies rather than in-house; and maintaining transparency and checks-and-balances in staff assignments (as three different committees that will identify, assign, and approve potential candidates have been organized; hence, staff assignment and restructuring will be totally separate). In addition, as one director commented, the leader of the restructuring team who was accused of pursuing personal interests, nepotism and many malpractices was not promoted as he has not been assigned to the chief officer and deputy chief officer positions. His fate is not yet known but since he will not be held accountable to the CEO (all positions that are accountable to the CEO are filled), wherever

he is assigned, it will be a demotion to him. However, the antagonists' discursive practices in relation to branches seems to have had no effect on the official discourse. Therefore, future studies should build on this thesis and provide insightful accounts regarding the discursive practices in the new structure that has been developed following the discursive struggle.

Figure 10. 1 New Organizational Structure after the Discursive Struggle (from 1 January, 2019 onwards)
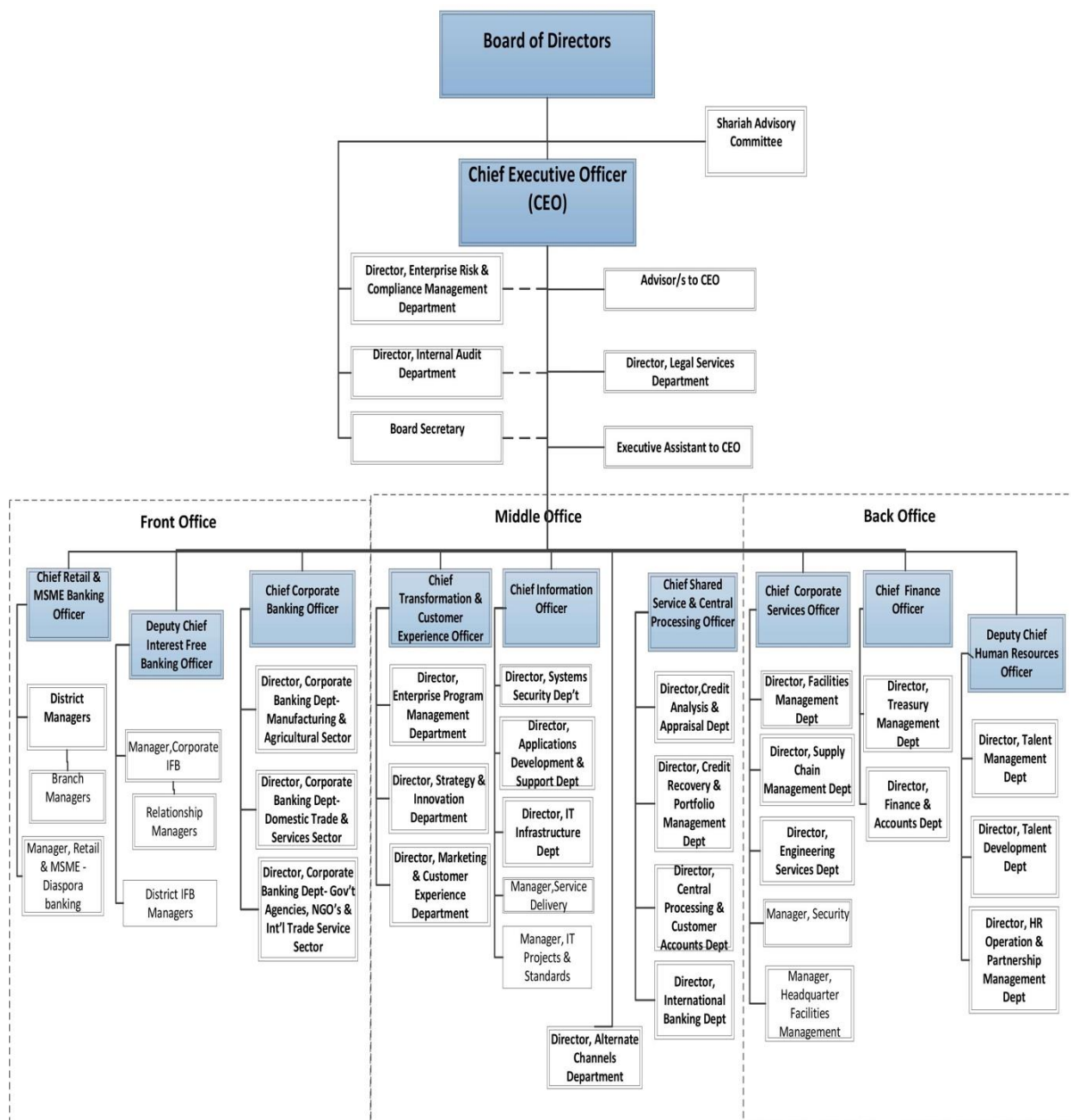
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