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What is strategy-as-practice

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What is Strategy-as-Practice?

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I. Strategy-as-Practice as a research approach

In recent years, strategy-as-practice has emerged as a distinctive approach for studying strategic management, organizational decision-making, and managerial work (Whittington, 1996; Johnson, Melin and Whittington, 2003; Jarzabkowski, Balogun, and Seidl, 2007). It focuses on the micro-level social activities, processes and practices that characterize organizational strategy and strategizing. This provides not only an organizational perspective into strategy but also a strategic angle for examining the process of organizing, and thereby serves as a useful research program and social movement for connecting contemporary strategic management research with practice-oriented organizational studies.

Strategy-as-practice can be regarded as an alternative to the mainstream strategy research via its attempt to shift attention away from merely a focus on the effects of strategies on performance alone to a more comprehensive, in-depth analysis of what actually takes place in strategic planning, strategy implementation and other activities that deal with strategy. In other words, strategy-as-practice research is interested in the 'black box' of strategy work that once led the research agenda in strategic management research (Mintzberg, 1973; Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Pettigrew, 1973), but has thereafter been replaced by other issues, not least because of the increasing dominance of the micro-economic approach and a methodological preoccupation with statistical analysis. Because of its micro-level focus, studies following the strategy-as-practice agenda tend to draw on theories and apply methods that differ from the common practices of strategy scholars. In this way, strategy-as-practice research can contribute to the evolution of strategic management as a discipline and body of knowledge with new theories and methodological choices.

It would, however, be a mistake not to link strategy-as-practice research to the broader 'practice turn' in contemporary social sciences. In fact, 'practice' has emerged as a key concept for understanding central questions about how agency and structure, and individual action and institutions are linked in social systems, cultures, and organizations (Bourdieu, 1980; Foucault, 1977; Giddens, 1984; de Certeau, 1984; Sztompka, 1991; Schatzki, 2002). This practice turn is visible in many areas of social sciences today, including organizational research (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Orlikowski, 2000; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2003). It is about time that we utilize this paradigm to enrich our understanding of organizational strategizing.

'Practice' is a very special concept in that it allows researchers to engage in a direct dialogue with practitioners. Studying practices enables one to examine issues that are directly relevant to those who are dealing with strategy, either as strategists engaged in strategic planning or other activities linked with strategy, or then those who have to cope with the strategies and their implications. By so doing, studies under this broad

umbrella promise to accomplish something which is rare in contemporary management and organization research: to advance our theoretical understanding in a way that has practical relevance for managers and other organizational members.

Like any emergent research approach, strategy-as-practice can either develop into a clearly defined but narrow theoretico-methodological perspective, or it can grow into an open and versatile research program that is constantly stretching its boundaries. A key motivation behind this Handbook is to actively pursue the latter alternative. By spelling out and elaborating various alternative perspectives on strategy-as-practice, we wish to contribute to the expansion and further development of this research approach. Although there stands a risk of eclecticism and ambiguity, we believe that the benefits of theoretical and methodological innovation and continued discussion outweigh such concerns. Our view of strategy-as-practice emphasizes the usefulness of studying 'practical reason' –the starting point in Dewey's (1938), Bourdieu's (1990), or Tuomela's (2005) analyses of social practice, for example. According to this view, we must focus on the actual practices that constitute strategy and strategizing while at the same time reflecting on our own positions, perspectives and practices as researchers. This includes a need to draw from, apply and develop various theoretical ideas and empirical methods.

This Handbook is the leading collection of ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological perspectives on strategy-as-practice, as written by leading scholars in the field. When compiling this volume, we as editors had three specific goals in mind. First, as explained above, we wished to open up and not limit the ways in which people think about and conduct strategy-as-practice research. This is shown in the multiplicity of approaches presented in the different chapters, complementary to each other in various ways. In this endeavor, we emphasize the need to study both concrete instances of organizational strategizing and broader issues, such as the institutionalization of strategy as body of knowledge and praxis. Second, we were determined to promote critical thinking. This is important to make sure that strategy-as-practice research does not dissolve into a restricted study of top management, but includes analysis of how others contribute to strategizing and how they at times may resist strategies and their implications (McCabe *in print*). Moreover, reflection on strategy as a body of knowledge (Knights and Morgan, 1991) and praxis (Whittington, 2006) that has all kinds of power implications must continue. Third, unlike most Handbooks, we emphasize the future. Thus, the chapters included in this book not only provide overviews of what has already been done in this field but also spell out theoretical or methodological ideas for the future.

The rest of this introduction is organized as follows. First, there is a brief overview of the practice turn in social science, followed by a review of strategy-as-practice research. We will then introduce the contributions of this Handbook, starting with ontological and epistemological questions and proceeding to the various alternative theories. Finally, several methodological choices are laid out, along with exemplary studies of strategy-as-practice.

II. The practice turn in social sciences

The purpose of this section is to highlight central ideas in the so-called practice turn in social sciences. A comprehensive review of the various perspectives is however beyond the scope of this introduction (see e.g., Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and von

Savigny, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002). To begin with, it is important to note that representatives of several schools of thought have contributed to our understanding of the central role of practices in social reality. These include philosophers (Wittgenstein, 1951; Foucault, 1977; Dreyfus, 1991; Tuomela, 2005), sociologists (Giddens, 1984; De Certeau, 1984), anthropologists (Bourdieu, 1990; Ortner, 2006), activity theorists (Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, Miettinen and Punamäki, 1999), discourse analysts (Fairclough, 2003), feminist scholars (Martin, 2003) and many others.

Although there is no single motive behind this collective interest, three things should be emphasized. First, a focus on practices provides an opportunity to examine the micro-level of social activity and its construction in a real social context or field. Thus, a practice approach allows one to move from general and abstract reflection on social activity to an increasingly targeted analysis of social reality. This is not so say that all practice-oriented research would have to engage in ethnographic, discourse or conversation analysis, or activity-theory, or any other type of micro-level empirical study. On the contrary, a key part of the practice literature has been very theoretical in nature. Nevertheless, the advantage a practice approach brings to areas like strategy lies predominantly in its ability to elucidate the micro-level foundations of social activity in a particular setting – either in theoretical or empirical studies. Furthermore, the flexibility in the notion of practice makes it possible to analyze activities from multiple angles. Activity can be studied as more or less intentional action, cognition, embodied material practice, discourse, or text – and the list does not stop here.

Second, the practice approach breaks with methodological individualism by emphasizing that activities need to be understood as enabled or constrained by the prevailing practices in the field in question. Thus, a practice approach to strategy should not merely focus on the behaviors or actions of managers but seek to examine how these behaviors or actions are linked with prevailing practices. A fundamental insight in practice theories is that individual behaviors or actions – however they are defined – are always related to the ways in which social actors are supposed to think or feel or communicate in and through language in a given situation. Moreover, most practice theories emphasize the latent connection to material aspects of social reality. That is, practices are embodied and specific behaviors or actions are closely linked with or mediated by material resources.

Third, the notion of practice allows one to deal with one of the most fundamental issues in contemporary social analysis: how social action is linked with structure and agency. Although views on the linkage of practice and activity differ, most scholars emphasize the potential of the concept of practice to explain why and how social action sometimes follows and reproduces routines, rules and norms and sometimes doesn't. For example, Giddens's (1984), Foucault's (1980) and Bourdieu's (1990) seminal work all focus on 'practice' as a key theoretical concept when dealing with social activity. For Giddens (1984), structuration is the key issue; practices are reproduced and at times transformed in social action, thus reifying social structures. For Foucault (1977, 1980), the point is that we are all constrained and enabled by discursive practices that include all kinds of social practices in addition to pure discourse. And for Bourdieu (1990, 1994), practices constitute an essential part of all human activity; they are part of a grammar of dispositions (inculcated in habitus) that defines what can and will be done in social fields.

This all may give the impression that a meta-theory of social practice exists that could be applied to areas such as strategy research. The fact remains, however, that a closer look at the various perspectives referred to above reveals fundamental epistemological, theoretical and methodological differences. This multiplicity of perspectives does not, however, have to be seen as an impediment in the development of practice-based approaches, but a richness that can help us to better understand various aspects of social activities and practices in contexts such as strategy-as-practice.

III. Overview of strategy-as-practice research

Strategy-as-practice research developed from several sources. Classics of strategy process research (Bower, 1982; Pettigrew, 1973; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Burgelman ,1983) and various attempts to broaden and renew strategic management (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Knights and Morgan, 1991; Johnson and Huff, 1998; Langley, 1989; Oakes et al., 1998) can be seen as its intellectual roots. However, despite its many important predecessors it has only been within the last few years that strategy-as-practice has established itself a clearly defined sub-field in strategy research, bringing together like-minded colleagues whose ideas might otherwise have "remained marginal and isolated voices in the wilderness" (Johnson et al., 2007: 212). Since the publication of the seminal special issue on "Micro Strategy and Strategizing" (Johnson et al., 2003), which defined the strategy-as-practice research agenda for the first time, we have seen more than fifty journal articles in leading journals, five special issues, four foundational books and numerous book chapters, not to speak of the wealth of conference papers presented every year since. In the following we will provide a short overview of this research stream (see Table 1). We will first focus on the contributions that have aimed at developing the strategy-as-practice research agenda and then turn to important themes within this area.

Development of the research agenda

Important efforts have been made to define and develop the strategy-as-practice approach per se. This includes analyses that have focused on *the role and characteristics of strategy-as-practice research in relation to other sub-fields of strategy*. The first paper to do so was Whittington (1996) who positioned strategy-as-practice with reference to the policy, planning, and process approaches as the major perspectives on strategy. Given the affinities of the strategy-as-practice approach with the process approach it is not surprising that others have elaborated on the similarities and differences between the two (Johnson et al., 2007; Whittington, 2007; Chia and MacKay, 2007). In addition, there are several works that show how strategy-as-practice can be understood as a complementary approach to the Resource Based View in general (Johnson et al., 2003; 2007) and Dynamic Capabilities in particular (Regnér, 2008).

Strategy-as-practice research has included explicit publications that have *developed the research agenda and offered explicit frameworks*. This includes the seminal paper by Johnson et al. (2003) in which the strategy-as-practice approach – at that time labeled "activity-based view of strategy" – was introduced for the first time and characterized as concern "for the close understanding of the myriad, micro activities that make up strategy and strategizing in practice" (p. 3). This characterization was

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refined by Whittington (2006) who emphasized that the strategizing activities needed to be understood in their wider social context: actors are not working in isolation but are drawing upon the regular, socially defined modus operandi that arise from the plural social institutions to which they belong. Based on this, Whittington proposed an overarching framework of "practitioners" (i.e. those who do the actual work of making, shaping and executing strategy), "praxis" (i.e. the concrete, situated doing of strategy) and "practices" (i.e. the routinized types of behavior drawn upon in the concrete doing of strategy) as the three building blocks that make up strategizing.

This framework was further developed by Jarzabkowski et al. (2007) who argued that due to pragmatic reasons, empirical works would do well to focus on the relation between any two of the building blocks while (temporarily) bracketing out the third. In their review of the strategy-as-practice literature of the time, they show how all papers can be placed within this framework, identifying particular gaps from which they develop a research agenda for future work. Johnson et al. (2007) proposed another overarching framework which positions different research projects according to the level of analysis (the level of actions, the organizational level and the field level) and according to whether they are concerned with content or process issues. The authors use this framework to examine the strength and distinctiveness of the existing research and propose their own agenda for future work. A more recent literature review and research agenda on the basis of this framework is provided by Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009). In addition, there are several other publications that provide introductions to and overviews of strategy-as-practice research (e.g., Jarzabkowski, 2004; 2005; Whittington, 1996, 2002; Whittington et al., 2003).

There are several useful discussions of various *theoretical perspectives* on strategy-as-practice research. Jarzabkowski, for example, explored activity theory (Jarzabkowski, 2003; 2005), different theories of social practice (Jarzabkowski, 2004) and structuration theory in particular (Jarzabkowski, 2008). Dennis et al. (2007) compared potential contributions from theories of social practice, convention theory and actor network theory. In Johnson et al. (2007) we find an exploration of situated learning theory, actor network theory, the Carnegie tradition of the sensemaking and routines perspective, and institutional theory. In addition, Chia and Holt (2006) have explored the potential of the Heideggerian perspective, Campbell-Hunt (2007) the complexity theory, Seidl (2007) the systemic-discursive theories (such as those by Wittgenstein and Lyotard), and Vaara et al. (2004) the critical discourse analysis as a fruitful basis for strategy-as-practice research.

There also are a few *methodological reflections on strategy-as-practice*, although explicit contributions have been rare. Balogun et al. (2003) is the first paper to address this issue and to suggest particular methodological approaches. The paper summarizes the particular methodological challenges of strategy-as-practice research as follows: "The growing need of researchers to be close to the phenomena of study, to concentrate on context and detail, and simultaneously to be broad in their scope of study, attending to many parts of the organization, clearly creates conflicts." (p. 198). This issue is also taken up in a separate chapter in Johnson et al. (2007) providing illustrations of various methodological choices and their respective advantages and disadvantages. Rasche and Chia (2009) also deal with methodological challenges briefly in a separate section of their paper which propagates ethnographic approaches as most suitable for strategy-as-practice research.

However, others have *criticized the predominant definitions and approaches to strategy-as-practice research*. In particular, Robert Chia and his colleagues have provided alternative perspectives on the analysis of strategy (Chia and MacKay, 2007; Rasche and Chia, 2007). Rather than building on the proposed frameworks, they criticize current research for its lack of distinctiveness and call for a more focused approach which breaks away from the methodological individualism that still dominates strategy-as-practice work. In addition, Clegg, Carter and Kornberger (Clegg, Carter and Kornberger, 2004; Carter, Clegg and Kornberger, 2008) have critiqued the conceptual and methodological bases of much of the research in this area. In a nutshell, they have argued for more theoretically advanced and critically oriented studies to explore fundamental issues of identity and power. This critique served as a key motivator for the expansion and development of the strategy-as-practice research agenda in this Handbook.

Central themes in strategy-as-practice research

Strategy-as-practice research has examined various important themes, examples including strategizing methods in different settings, formal strategic practices, sensemaking in strategizing, discursive practices of strategy, roles and identities in strategizing, tools and techniques of strategy, and power in strategy.

The thrust of existing research has focused on *ways in which strategizing is conducted in specific organizational settings*. In fact, most studies in this area have concentrated on organizational processes, activities and practices in particular contexts. Apart from studying business organizations, such as venture capital firms (King, 2008), financial services organizations (Ambrosini et al., 2007), airlines (Vaara et al., 2004), clothing companies (Rouleau, 2005), or multi-business firms (Paroutis and Pettigrew, 2007), scholars have also examined strategizing in orchestras (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2003), cinemas (Rouleau et al., 2007), hospitals (Von Arx, 2008) and universities (Jarzabkowski, 2003; 2004; 2005; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). These analyses have also revealed general patterns of strategizing; for example, Regnér (2003) showed that there are significant differences in the way that people in the center of a firm strategize compared to those who work on the periphery.

Researchers have also focused special attention on *formal strategic practices*. Studies have examined the strategic roles of strategy workshops (Hendry and Seidl, 2003; Hodgkinson et al., 2006; Bourque and Johnson, 2008; Whittington et al., 2006), strategy meetings (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008), committees (Hoon, 2007), formal teams (Paroutis and Pettigrew, 2007) and various formal administrative routines (Jarzabkowski, 2003; 2005; Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2002). Nevertheless, it has been argued that these formal practices receive far less attention than they should. For this reason, Whittington and Cailluet (2008) have dedicated an entire special issue to the exploration of new avenues for research on strategic planning.

A significant part of strategy-as-practice research to date has been devoted to the study of *sensemaking in strategizing*. In contrast to earlier works on cognitive aspects, strategy-as-practice scholars have been interested in the social dimensions of sensemaking. Accordingly, researchers have focused on the socially negotiated nature of sensemaking (Balogun and Johnson, 2004; 2005), the political contests around the framing of strategic issues (Kaplan, 2008), the interaction between individual-level and organizational-level sensemaking (Stensaker and Falkenberg, 2007), and the

influence of the wider societal context on sensemaking activities at the organizational interface (Rouleau, 2005). The interest in sensemaking aspects is somewhat related to a further, nascent area of contribution: *the role of material artifacts in strategizing*. Heracleous and Jacobs (2008), for example, show how material artifacts are purposefully employed in change interventions in order to stimulate particular sensemaking processes. Whittington et al. (2006) discuss physical objects as particular means of communication.

Studies on the *discursive aspects of strategy* have become increasingly popular in recent years. A seminal paper by Knights and Morgan (1991) examines the historical emergence of strategic management discourse, its assumptions, and implications on management. Hendry (2000) provides another influential account of strategy as an essentially discursive practice. In addition, the seminal narrative analysis of Barry and Elmes (1997) elaborates on the role of strategic storytelling. Based on ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, Samra-Fredericks (2003, 2004, 2005) has examined the rhetorical micro-processes of strategizing and the ways in which conversations impact strategy. Drawing on critical discourse analysis, Vaara and his colleagues have examined how discursive practices make up strategy (Vaara et al., 2004), how strategy discourse is appropriated and resisted (Laine and Vaara, 2007), and how discourses may impede or promote participation in strategic decision-making (Mantere and Vaara, 2008). Phillips, Sewell and Jaynes (2008) have followed suit to provide an integrative model of the role of discourse in strategic decision-making. Sminia (2005) examines strategy as layered discussions, where strategic reflections often take place indirectly and implicitly within discussions on other matters. Coming from a somewhat different perspective, Seidl (2007) points to the differences between different types of strategy discourses and the problematic relations between them.

Researchers have also examined the *role and identity of managers and other organizational members engaged in strategy and strategizing*. Accordingly, a great deal of research has been devoted to the strategic role of middle managers (Rouleau, 2005; Mantere, 2005; 2008; Sillince and Müller, 2007; Balogun and Johnson, 2004, 2005). Other groups of actors that have received specific attention are consultants (Nordqvist and Melin, 2008; Schwarz, 2004) and regulators (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009). In addition, scholars have pointed out the need for research into the strategic roles of strategy teachers and strategy gurus (Hendry, 2000; Whittington et al., 2003). Others have focused on the identity of strategists. Knights and Morgan (1991) already described how the emergence of strategic management in the middle of the twentieth century turned the passive administrators at the top of companies into proactive strategists. Strategy accordingly is described as a set of practices "which transform managers and employees alike into subjects who secure their sense of purpose and reality by formulating, evaluating and conducting strategy" (252). In another study, Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) provide a conceptualization of agency that accounts for the way in which practitioners are constrained by wider societal belief systems, providing meaning to their activities and prescribing them specific roles that delimit the scope for performativity. Beech and Johnson (2005) in turn showed the recursive relation between a strategist's identity and his strategizing activities during a larger change project. Furthermore, Rouleau (2003) has examined the impact of gender on strategizing practice.

Several publications in strategy-as-practice have lately been exploring the *way in which specific tools and techniques are utilized in strategizing activity*. Some authors

have studied the ways in which tools and techniques change according to context (Seidl, 2007; Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2006). Others have examined strategy tools as potential boundary objects that can span across different organizational context (Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2009). Moreover, there have been calls to analyze the ways in which strategizing work has changed through the use of technologies like Power Point, mobile phones and the like (e.g., Molloy and Whittington, 2005).

Ever since the beginning of strategy-as-practice research, scholars have also been interested in *issues of power*. Knights and Morgan (1991) set out on an analysis of the "disciplinary force" of strategy as a particular institutional practice. Studies drawing on Critical Discourse analyses have also focused on the ways in which strategy discourse can be used to legitimate or resist specific ideas and to promote or protect one's own power position (Laine and Vaara, 2007; Mantere and Vaara, 2008). This has been followed by studies by Ezzamel and Willmott (2008) and McCabe (*in print*) who examined the power differentials and inequalities in the strategizing processes occurring in a global retailer and manufacturing company and a UK building society respectively, focusing attention on various modes of resistance. However, as noted above, critical analyses of strategy-as-practice have called for more studies of power in strategy and strategizing (Clegg et al., 2004).

IV. Ontological and epistemological questions

The strategy-as-practice approach was born from a break with the traditional notion of strategy as a property of organizations. Instead, strategy was to be understood as an activity or practice: Strategy is not something that firms *have*, but something that people *do* (Johnson et al., 2003; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). If taken seriously, this re-conceptualization implies a fundamental ontological shift in several respects. First, the world of strategy is no longer taken to be something stable that can be observed, but constitutes a reality in flux. Second, strategy is no longer regarded as "located" on the organizational level; instead, it is spread out across many levels from the level of individual actions to the institutional level. Third, the world of strategy constitutes a genuinely social reality created and re-created in the interactions between various actors inside and outside the organization. Accordingly, there are several fundamental epistemological consequences both for researchers and practitioners. So far, however, strategy-as-practice scholars have focused relatively little attention on epistemological questions. In this sense, the chapters in Part I of this book pave the way for a better understanding of these fundamental issues.

Wanda Orlikowski in her chapter distinguishes three different types of practice research in organization studies in general and strategy-as-practice research in particular. These three types of research result from fundamentally different understandings of "practice" among the respective researchers. The first type treats practice merely as *phenomenon*: researchers study what happens "in actual practice" as opposed to what is merely derived theoretically. The second type emphasizes practice as a theoretical *perspective*: apart from attending to actual practice, researchers draw on practice-centered theory in their studies. Incorporating the assumptions of the other two types, the third mode highlights the notion of practice as a particular *philosophy* (ontology): researchers conceive of practice as constitutive of all social reality; i.e. actors and agency are treated as a product of their practices. This mode of engagement with practice is the most extreme form, rarely found in existing

publications. Orlikowski discusses the general challenges of the three different practice views and the implications for research practice.

The next two chapters elaborate on Orlikowski's third mode of practice engagement. Drawing on Heidegger, **Robert Chia and Andreas Rasche** characterize this mode as a "dwelling world view," in contrast to what they refer to as a "building world view." The latter is the dominant view inherent to traditional strategy research, accounting for a large percentage of existing strategy-as-practice work. This view is characterized by two basic assumptions: (1) individuals are treated as discretely bounded entities. (2) There is a clear split between the mental and physical realm; cognition and mental representation of the world necessarily precede any meaningful action. Accordingly, strategic action is explained through recourse to the intention of actors. In contrast, the dwelling world view does not assume that the identities and characteristics of persons pre-exist social interactions and social practices. Social practices are given primacy over individual agency and intention. Thus, strategic actions are not explained on the basis of individual intentions but as the product of particular, historically situated practices. Chia and Rasche discuss the epistemological consequences of these two world views. They argue that the research findings depend greatly on the chosen world view.

In the following chapter **Haridimos Tsoukas** develops the argument of Chia and Rasche further. In line with earlier works by Chia (Chia and Holt, 2006; Chia and MacKay, 2007) he argues that strategy-as-practice researchers need to follow Orlikowski's third mode of practice engagement. Only this would allow them to go beyond the process approach in strategy. He supports the call for a clear break with methodological individualism in favor of a view that gives primacy to practice. Yet he warns about pushing research too much in the opposite direction, where strategy is treated as emergent by definition. Instead, we need to reconcile – from a practice-based approach – the possibility of both non-deliberate and deliberate types of action in strategy. Drawing on Heidegger's philosophy he develops a framework that distinguishes between three different types of actions according to the involved form and degree of intentionality: (1) "practical coping" (based on tacit understandings), which constitutes non-deliberate action, (2) "deliberate coping" (based on explicit awareness), and (3) "detached coping" (based on thematic awareness), which is the most deliberate form of action. These three forms of action are then linked to three forms of strategy making.

Simon Grand, Johannes Rüegg-Stürm and Widar von Arx argue in their chapter that serious practice research needs to be accompanied by constructivist epistemologies. They show that while there are many variants of constructivism they all share four central concerns: (1) They challenge the pre-dominance of unquestioned dichotomies in the social sciences, like micro vs. macro or situated activities vs. collective practices. (2) Agency is treated as distributed and related in specific ways in different contexts. (3) Reality is treated not as given but constructed. (4) Therefore, the status of knowledge needs to be explicitly studied. After introducing and comparing the three most central constructivist perspectives, Grand and his co-authors discuss the implications of the four central assumptions of strategy-as-practice research, useful for the study of strategizing practices, the understanding of strategy, and the conduct of strategy research. Above all, they emphasize that the very notion of strategy and strategizing practice contains nothing that can be taken as given, but is instead the

result of continuous (re-)construction by the activities of the practitioners and researchers involved.

The chapter by **Karen Golden-Biddle and Jason Azuma** continues the same theme by examining how strategy-as-practice articles construct their contribution to the field of organizational studies. Based on earlier work (Locke & Golden-Biddle 1997), they argue that the construction of academic contributions can be examined along two dimensions: (1) The article needs to make connections among extant work, and between extant work and the respective article. This can be accomplished in several different ways, for example by presenting progressive coherence in the literature. (2) In order to make a contribution the article has to problematize the current state of research. Again, there are different methods for doing that, e.g., by presenting it as incomplete or contradictory. Combining the two dimensions, the authors create a framework of nine generic choices for constructing contributions. By placing the existing strategy-as-practice papers within the framework, Golden-Biddle and Azuma identify opportunities for the construction of contributions yet to be examined by strategy-as-practice researchers.

In the final chapter of Part I, **Ann Langley** addresses a central question in strategy-as-practice research: How can we build a cumulative body of knowledge when strategy-as-practice interests tend to favour small intensive samples and fine-grained analysis, leading to corresponding limitations in terms of generalizability? Langley addresses this question from three different perspectives on the nature and purpose of science: (1) The "normal-science view" is based on the ongoing search for more accurate, general and useful causal statements about the relationships between important phenomena. (2) Rather than striving for a single truth, the "practice view" calls for increasingly more insightful interpretations or representations of the social world. (3) The "pragmatic view" puts the emphasis on the instrumentality of knowledge. Accordingly, the researcher ought to uncover the knowledge of the practitioners, render it explicit and make it available to others. Langley shows how the different publications in the field of strategy-as-practice invariably fall into one of the three views of science. She concludes by discussing the advantages and disadvantages were strategy-as-practice to adhere to any one of these models of science.

V. Alternative theoretical perspectives

With Kurt Lewin's adage 'nothing is so practical as a good theory' in mind, it is important to focus attention on the theoretical basis of strategy-as-practice. A 'good' theory allows us to advance knowledge without having to reinvent the wheel. By offering means to make sense of the very processes, activities and practices that constitute strategy and strategizing, it can also serve practitioners. However, there is no one theory of practice that can provide a basis for all relevant research questions at various levels of analysis, which range from reflections on strategy as a body of knowledge and praxis to studies of the idiosyncrasies of specific strategic and organizational processes in different institutional and cultural contexts. Nor should a unified theory be the objective if we wish to advance theoretical discussion of practices and their implications. Consequently, strategy-as-practice research can and must be informed by alternative conceptions of practice and strategy. Various approaches have been offered and applied, the most important of which will be presented and discussed in Part II of this Handbook. It serves to explain how specific

approaches are able to elucidate not only our understanding of concrete strategic decision-making, but also of strategy as a body of knowledge and praxis.

In the first chapter of Part II, **Richard Whittington** explains how Giddens' (1984) Structuration Theory can be applied to strategy-as-practice research. Giddens has been a key source of inspiration in seminal pieces of strategy-as-practice, including Whittington's own influential work (Whittington, 1992, 2006). In his chapter, Whittington demonstrates how management researchers have already applied Structuration Theory in strategy-as-practice research. He explains how Structuration Theory differs from two close alternatives: the practice theoretic approach of Pierre Bourdieu and the Critical Realist approach of Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer. Whittington focuses on the advantages of Structuration Theory and highlights its usefulness for analysis that deals with the ever-present issues of agency and structure. However, he also points out that there is more to Structuration Theory than has been realized in previous research. In particular, he argues that the institution of strategy has received far too little attention, and he concludes by calling for further studies in this area.

In the second chapter, **Paula Jarzabkowski** focuses on activity theory as a basis for strategy-as-practice research. The roots of activity theory can be traced to Russian social psychology (Vygtosky, 1978; Leontiev, 1978), but this approach has lately been developed into a widely used approach to study the interaction between the individual and the collective in the pursuit of activity. Jarzabkowski demonstrates how activity theory allows one to understand strategic actions as part of activity systems that comprise the actor, the social community with which the actor interacts, and the symbolic and material tools that mediate between actors, their community, and their pursuit of activity. In particular, she explains how the elements of the activity system are linked with the key concepts of strategy-as-practice research: practitioners, practices and praxis. She also compares activity theory with theories of practice, to highlight the benefits of activity theory. In conclusion, she calls for more in-depth activity theory-inspired research in strategic management.

Marie-Léandre Gomez provides a Bourdieusian perspective on strategy-as-practice. This is a contribution that is very much needed, given the impact of Pierre Bourdieu's work on practice theory in general. Gomez explains how Bourdieu offers a systemic view of practice that highlights the importance of relations between agents and with the field, the capital possessed by these actors, and their habitus. She argues that research on strategy can benefit greatly from Bourdieu's praxeology. In particular, a Bourdieusian perspective allows one to overcome false dichotomies in strategy and strategizing: the micro/macro alternative, the opposition between structure and agency, and the dilemma between rationality and emerging strategy. In addition, the perspective can help to better understand the various struggles that characterize strategy and the role of academics in these struggles.

Saku Mantere turns his attention to Ludwig Wittgenstein and the potential of the philosopher's ideas to elucidate our understanding of strategy-as-practice. This is an important contribution in view of the fact that, apart from being one of the most influential philosophers, Wittgenstein's ideas have paved the way for the 'practice turn' in social science. Both Giddens and Bourdieu, for example, have been greatly influenced by Wittgenstein. Mantere focuses on the idea of the 'language game' as a

powerful concept to make sense of strategy-as-practice. He argues that language games shed more light on the discursive struggles endemic to the practice of strategy. He also maintains that the notion of 'forms of life,' used to characterize the non-linguistic background of social practice, can direct our attention to on a number of important yet often neglected aspects of strategy. Examples from real-life strategy conversations provide concrete illustrations of these ideas.

Florence Allard-Poési adopts a Foucauldian view on strategy-as-practice. This reflection helps to understand the seminal role of Foucault's work in more critical studies of strategy as practice, as well as to point to new ways in which we can look at strategy as a body of knowledge. From this perspective, strategic management may be seen as a heterogeneous set of discursive and material practices. These discursive and material practices are governed by specific rules that structure what can be read, said, and done in and around strategy. They are one of the techniques utilized for controlling from a distance in the modern enterprise, with both enabling and constraining implications for organizations and their members. She argues that strategic management is similar to a monitoring technique in which the strategist is led to reveal one's intentions, say aloud what is hidden, and 'objectify' ones subjectivity. This has all kinds of effects on the individuals in question and the way in which people can and will make sense of strategy.

Valérie-Inés de La Ville and Eléonore Mounoud outline a narrative approach to strategy as practice. They draw from Paul Riceour and Michel de Certeau in order to elucidate the various narrative practices that constitute an inherent part of strategy and strategizing. This involves the production of texts in strategy formulation, but also the consumption of texts in the 'implementation' of strategies. They offer a model that focuses on the writing and reading of texts and narratives as ongoing activities in organizations. This view allows one to understand the crucial role of strategy texts and ongoing interpretations in strategizing – and thus challenges the conventional view that focuses solely on formal strategies without considering the ways in which they are 'talked into being.'

VI. Methodological issues and exemplary studies

Already at the inception of the strategy-as-practice movement, scholars (Balogun et al., 2003) pointed to its methodological challenges, which require the researcher simultaneously to be close to actual practice while remaining broad in their scope of study. There have been calls for an exploration of methods that allow us to observe and understand the longitudinal and processual dynamics of the practices, routines and actions of the situated actors, to uncover their interdependences and interactions, and also to focus on discourses and their performativity, the disclosure of the 'non-says,' of what is implicit or couched in rhetoric. While longitudinal case studies remain the most frequently used research design in strategy-as-practice, there is a notable trend towards applying and developing other methodologies. Some of the most promising approaches are presented and discussed in Part III of this book. As will become clear, the call for 'methodologically innovative' approaches does not necessarily mean that one has to develop entirely new methodologies; it suggests, rather, that we look at them through a 'practice lens' and use innovative ways to approach managers and reconstruct their strategizing activities and roles.

Anne Sigismund Huff, Anne-Katrin Neyer and Kathrin Möslein suggest that the strategizing agenda should be expanded to respond better to macro-events such as the economic crisis in late 2008. They put forward an enhanced agenda, followed by an annotated list of relatively novel ways of interacting with informants, collecting data, involving collaborators, analyzing information and presenting results. Theirs is a thoughtful and stimulating paper that will certainly become a must so far as the methodological questions related to the strategy-as-practice field are concerned. It provides a set of methods that can be applied to the study of strategizing activity in all environments, and urges researchers to use methods that are conducive to explanations that can be easily generalized and will help develop the strategy-as-practice perspective further.

Eero Vaara looks at the discursive aspects of strategy and strategizing from a critical angle. He emphasizes that critical discourse analysis (CDA) differs from that of relativist forms of discourse analysis, which reduce everything to discourse. After an overview of the characteristic features of CDA, he presents various ways in which this methodology can be applied to advancing our understanding of different forms of strategic discourse: (1) the central role of formal strategy texts, (2) the discursive construction of conceptions of strategy and subjectivity in organizational strategizing, (3) the processes of legitimation in and through strategy discourse, and (4) the ideological underpinnings of strategy discourse as a body of knowledge and praxis. He also provides an example of CDA as applied to the analysis of a media text. By focusing on 'strategic text,' his chapter addresses the fundamental questions of how texts are selected and to what extent findings are generalizable in the strategy-as-practice perspective.

Dalvir Samra-Fredericks explores select aspects of the ethnomethodological and conversation analytical (EM/CA) traditions in order to explain their relevance to the study of various strategizing practices. Drawing on two snippets of transcribed interaction reproduced from previous studies, she discusses some of the practical challenges one faces when accessing, selecting, and interpreting accounts, and raises many theoretical issues related to the understanding of the elusive nature of practice. Her chapter delves into the reasoning processes that underlie EM/CA and offers strategy-as-practice researchers an insightful discussion on the skills and forms of knowledge that effective leaders use in talk-in-interaction. The author simply and clearly demonstrates through her own EM/CA perspective how the tiniest moment of interaction contains the essence of strategic and social order.

Phyl Johnson, Julia Balogun and Nic Beech propose that strategy practitioners and their strategy-making practices should be examined through an 'identity lens,' and urge strategy-as-practice researchers to move to a 'close with' relationship with research subjects. Drawing on an empirical example, they propose a generic methodological approach to access identity through narratives captured from longitudinal engagement, multiple performances and back-stage access to the strategic practitioner. This chapter encourages researchers to produce collaborative research and engage themselves in long-term relationships with practitioners. Even though the authors provide some ground rules for establishing close relationships with strategists, they nevertheless maintain a critical and reflexive stance towards the position of researchers engaged in a collaborative agenda.

Linda Rouleau suggests that narratives of practice, a variant of biographical methods, constitute a set of relevant qualitative methods of inquiry that offers many possibilities for developing typologies of practices and propositions regarding the skills needed in strategizing. Focusing on work experience and professional trajectories, narratives of practice provide privileged access to the subjective accounts of what managers and others 'do.' The chapter draws on results and illustrative data extracted from a previous study, which examined how middle managers deal with the restructuring of their organization. It explains with clarity how narratives of practice can be used to gain access to explicit and tacit knowledge, and how the depth of the relationship between narrator and researcher is central to the thorough understanding of strategizing practices.

Apart from the chapters of Part III, which focus exclusively on methodological issues, this Handbook also contains four exemplary empirical works in Part IV, which provide additional illustrations of the use of different methodologies in strategy-as-practice research.

In the first chapter of Part IV, **Gerry Johnson, Stuart Smith and Brian Codling** tackle one of the key issues in strategy-as-practice research: strategic agency in institutional change. They focus on the links between what managers do in practice and institutional changes at the level of organizational routines. For this purpose the authors adopt a longitudinal approach to a revealing case: British Rail, as it went through a transitional period of privatization. They examine how, and to what extent, managers adhere to or amend institutionalized routines and thereby affect the outcome of such change (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). By so doing, they clarify the role of strategists in institutional change; in particular, the role of strategic actions in a process of deinstitutionalization. This chapter thus provides an illuminating example of the power of a classic longitudinal case study to add to our understanding of important theoretical questions.

In the second study, **Robert MacIntosh, Donald MacLean and David Seidl** examine the role of strategy workshops, i.e. a particular formal strategic practice, as a means of effecting strategic change. The authors examine the conditions under which such workshops turn out to be effective compared to those in which they are not. For this purpose they combine a comparative case study methodology with a more engaged action research approach. While several scholars have pointed to action research as a potentially powerful approach for getting close to strategizing practices, few previous strategy-as-practice studies have actually employed it. In this sense, this chapter paves the way for new studies making innovative use of action research in the strategy-as-practice area.

Pikka-Maaria Laine and Eero Vaara provide an example of a discourse-analytical study of strategizing. They focus on the crucial issue of subjectivity in organizational strategizing, arguing for a discursive-struggle approach, according to which strategizing can be conceptualized as a dialectical battle between competing groups. Central to this perspective is the view that discourse and subjectivity are closely linked. The critical discursive analysis draws from multiple sources of data, focusing on examples of sensemaking and giving sense to strategic development in a multinational engineering group. The analysis shows how strategy discourses produce subject positions for the actors involved. At the same time, however, actors employ and resist other discourses – precisely to protect or enhance their social agency or

identity. Thus, their chapter provides a rare example of using discourse analysis to study strategizing in concrete organizational settings.

Finally, in the last chapter of this book, **Mona Ericson and Leif Melin** adopt a philosophical, hermeneutically-based understanding of practice. By so doing, they provide a novel perspective on one of the most central but poorly understood issues in strategy-as-practice: the role of history in strategizing. They argue for *hermeneutical situatedness*, where strategizing is a matter of history and all the present and future actions are in an endless relation with the past, as they are influenced by what was done, said, and thought. According to this view, current strategic activity cannot be understood without a dialogical openness to the past. To illustrate this approach, they offer examples from a longitudinal case study of how history influences strategizing. By so doing, their analysis provides an illuminating example of the usefulness of hermeneutical methods in strategy-as-practice research.

VII. Challenges for future research: A research agenda

As mentioned, this Handbook strives to be future-oriented. Each of the chapters provides innovative ideas for further advancing our understanding of strategy-as-practice. With this in mind, the editors wish to take this opportunity spell out a renewed agenda for strategy-as-practice research. First and foremost, it is vital to make sure that these new insights connect with other streams of strategic management. Otherwise, strategy-as-practice stands at risk of becoming an isolated research approach or a social movement that does not interact with other communities. Hence, one of the key challenges for the future is to strengthen, both on theoretical and empirical fronts, its linkages to other important sub-fields in strategy, like the strategy process school, institutional approaches to strategy, the resource-based view and its new applications, cognition and sensemaking in and around strategy, evolutionary perspectives, learning, and communication in strategic management.

Future research on strategy-as-practice holds great promise if it can continue to draw from and apply theories and methodologies of social science in novel ways. It is paramount that this research approach does not reinvent the wheel or develop in a vacuum, but is linked with other areas of social science. The goal should be not only to be informed, but also to be able to contribute to other fields. As the chapters of this Handbook demonstrate, research on strategy-as-practice has a great deal to offer to contemporary social research on practice, activity, institutions, and discourse. For example, focused analyses of strategy and strategizing can add to the ways in which Giddensian, Foucauldian or Bourdieusian traditions can be applied in addressing crucial issues in contemporary organizations or society at large.

However, it is crucial that strategy-as-practice research continue on the trajectory of theoretical and empirical analysis, aiming at an increasingly better understanding of the activities, processes and practices that characterize organizational strategy and strategizing. The contributions of this Handbook illustrate how much we have learned since this research approach came into being. But many issues still warrant targeted research efforts. They include the following:

Linkage of the macro and micro in strategy: One of the great advantages of the practice approach is that it provides an opportunity to analyze how concrete micro-level activities are linked with broader institutionalized practices. This link is visible for example in discursive analyses of strategy, but many other aspects of the social and

organizational practices that constitute strategy and strategizing remain unexplored. Whether we call it institutionalization, legitimation, naturalization, or normalization, there is a great deal of work still to be done to explain how widely-held assumptions about appropriate strategizing methods influence what is actually done in organizations, and how these activities, then, reproduce or at times transform prevailing understandings and practices.

Agency in strategy and strategizing: A key reason for the emergence of practice theories was the need to develop concepts that explain how structure and agency are linked. Strategy-as-practice studies have added to our understanding of the role, identity and subjectivity of the strategists in many ways and yet we still know little about those who are unable to participate in strategic decision-making. Furthermore, there are still few analyses that specify the ways in which organizational actors are at the same time constrained and enabled by prevailing practices. We must go beyond the conventional view in strategic management that assumes that all strategists are omnipotent actors, but we must also not succumb to the gloomy perspective that everything is pre-determined. This is a major theoretical question, but there is no doubt that empirical analyses of agency have a great deal to offer to practitioners.

Coping and resistance: Conventional research tends to virtually ignore resistance; it is often framed as an obstacle to be dealt with and/or as illegitimate behavior. If we want to better understand the social processes in strategizing, we need to take the issue of resistance seriously. As demonstrated in the contributions of this Handbook, such analysis involves a re-conceptualization of the ways in which organizational actors interpret, make sense of, consume, or react to strategies that are imposed upon them. The reactions range from various modes of coping to outright resistance. Future research on strategy-as-practice would do well to draw from existing critical analyses of power and resistance in this endeavor.

Practitioners and their knowledge: Practice research should be accessible to practitioners. Increasingly sophisticated theoretical analysis runs the risk of becoming alienated from the problems and challenges of the practitioners. Researchers should be mindful of this and strive to better understand the world of the practitioners with new epistemological, theoretical and methodological perspectives. For example, future research could challenge the prevailing view that holds that academic knowledge is superior to practical knowledge. Theoretical work could develop concepts and ideas that draw from what is relevant – either useful or problematic – in the practitioners' world. In addition, new research could aim at a re-appropriation of methods such as action research.

Spread of strategy as discourse and praxis to new areas: Strategy-as-practice research is by definition contextual; the focus of the analysis lies in the activities and practices that constitute strategy and strategizing in a given setting. Apart from studies of strategizing in business organizations, it is important and interesting to analyze the spread of strategy as a body of knowledge and praxis to other types of context, in particular public organizations such as government, municipalities, universities, hospitals, or kindergartens. As the few existing studies show, such settings are often characterized by all kinds of struggles and clashes. However, at the same time they provide examples of re-contextualization and hybridization of practices, as well as innovations for dealing with problems and challenges.

Cross-national comparisons: Decision-making and strategizing practices have evolved in distinctive ways in different national contexts. Future research on strategy-as-practice could zoom in on these differences and examine trends of practice convergence or crossvergence.

Longitudinal analyses and the role of history: Not all research has to be longitudinal, but a more fine-grained understanding of the processes of strategic decision-making and change would benefit from longer-term analyses that elucidate changes in strategy and strategizing. Furthermore, historical studies can help us to better understand how practices have evolved and developed and the role of innovation in strategy and strategizing.

Mediation and technologization of discourse and practice: In many ways the prevailing theories and methods of strategic management and organization studies tend to follow the social science tradition of foregoing tools, technologies, artifacts and other objects. Although there are interesting possibilities in such strategy-as-practice research like activity theory, most theory and methods trial behind practice when it comes to analyzing the ways in which the various means of IT and tools of communication affect contemporary organizations. Moreover, if comprehensively understood, mediation (the use of media to communicate and interact) and technologization (the use of conceptual tools, IT technologies and other means in decision-making and organizational actions) are fundamental features of contemporary organizations and society that warrant attention in their own right.

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Table 1: Overview of the field

Example Papers	Particular Contribution
Development of the Research Agenda	
Relation to other sub-fields of strategy	
Chia/MacKay 2007	Relation to process approach
Johnson et al. 2003; 2007	Relation to process approach and RBV
Regnér 2008	Relation to Dynamic Capabilities/RBV
Whittington 1996	Relation to policy, planning and process approach
Whittington 2007	Relation to process approach
Definition of the strategy-as-practice agenda and/or frameworks	
Jarzabkowski 2004	Characterization of strategy-as-practice with a particular emphasis on the concept of recursivity
Jarzabkowski 2005	Characterization of strategy-as-practice with an emphasis on the Activity Theory perspective
Jarzabkowski et al. 2007	Characterization of strategy-as-practice together with a research framework, literature review and research agenda
Jarzabkowski/Spee 2009	Review of the strategy-as-practice literature and future directions
Johnson et al. 2003	Characterization of strategy-as-practice as "Activity-Based View"
Johnson et al. 2007	Characterization of strategy-as-practice together with a research framework and research agenda
Whittington 1996	First rudimentary characterization of strategy-as-practice
Whittington 2002; Whittington et al. 2003	Characterization of strategy-as-practice and research agenda
Whittington 2006	Characterization of strategy-as-practice together with a research framework and research agenda
Whittington et al. 2003	Introduction and research agenda
Exploration of different theoretical perspectives	
Campbell-Hunt 2007	Complexity Theory
Chia/Holt 2006	Heideggerian Perspective
Denis et al. 2007	ANT, Theories of Social Practice, Convention Theory
Jarzabkowski 2003; 2005	Activity Theory
Jarzabkowski 2004	Theories of Social Practice (Bourdieu, Giddens, de Certeau)
Jarzabkowski 2008	Structuration Theory
Johnson et al. 2007	Situated Learning, ANT, Carnegie Tradition (sensemaking, routines), Institutionalist Theories
Seidl 2007	Systemic-discursive approaches
Vaara et al. 2004	Critical Discourse Theory
Methodological reflections	
Balogun et al. 2003	Reflection on methodological challenges and exploration of novel methodologies
Johnson et al. 2007	Reflection on methodological challenges and exploration of novel methodologies

| Rasche/Chia 2009 | Propagation of ethnographic approaches |

Critical reflections on strategy-as-practice

Carter et al. 2008	Need for more theoretically advanced and critically oriented studies
Chia/MacKay 2007	Criticism for lack of differentiation from process research
Clegg et al. 2004	Need for more theoretically advanced and critically oriented studies
Rasche/Chia 2009	Criticism for lack of reflection of different strands of practice thinking

Central Themes Within Strategy-as-Practice Research

Strategizing in different contexts

Jarzabkowski 2003; 2004; 2005; 2008; Jarzabkowski/ Seidl 2008	Strategizing in universities
Jarzabkowski/Balogun in print	Strategizing in multi-nationals
King 2008	Strategizing of venture capital firms
Maitlis and Lawrence 2003	Strategizing in an orchestra
Paroutis/Pettigrew 2007	Strategizing in multi-business firms
Regnér 2003	Strategizing in the centre vs. periphery
Von Arx 2008	Strategizing in hospitals

The role of formal practices

Bourke/Johnson 2008	Strategy Workshops
Hendry/Seidl 2003	Strategic Episodes, Workshops, Meetings
Hodgkinson et al. 2006	Strategy Workshops
Hoon 2007	Committees
Jarzabkowski 2003; 2005; Jarzabkowski/Wilson 2002	Administrative Practices
Jarzabkowski/Seidl 2008	Strategy meetings
Paroutis/Pettigrew 2007	Formal teams
Whittington et al. 2006	Strategy Workshops
Whittington/Cailluet 2008	Strategic planning practices

The role of sensemaking

Balogun/Johnson 2004; 2005	Socially negotiated nature of sensemaking
Heracleous/Jacobs 2008	The role of embodied metaphors in sensemaking
Hodkinson/Clark 2007	Cognition in action
Kaplan 2008	Framing contests
Rouleau 2005	Contextual factors of sensemaking/sensegiving and context
Stensaker/Falkenberg 2007	Interaction between individual-level and organizational-level sensemaking

The role of materiality

| Giraudeau 2008 | Strategic plans as visual and textual representation of contexts and strategies |

| Heracleous/Jacobs 2008 | Embodied metaphors |
| Whittington et al. 2006 | Physical objects as means of communication |

Discoursive aspects of strategy

Barry/Elmes 1997	Strategic storytelling
Hendry 2000	Strategy as technological and appropriative discourse
Howard-Grenville 2007	Issue selling practices
Knights/Morgan 1991	Historical emergence of the strategy discourse
Laine/Vaara 2007; Mantere/Vaara 2008; Vaara et al. 2004	Critical discourse analysis of various aspects of strategizing
Phillips et al. 2008	Integrative model of the role of discourse in strategic decision-making
Samra-Fredricks 2003; 2005	Rhetorical micro-processes of strategizing and their impact on strategy
Seidl 2007	Differentiation between different strategy discourses
Sminia 2005	Layering of the strategy discussions

The role/identity of the participants to the strategizing process

Balogun/Johnson 2004; 2005	Middle managers
Beech/Johnson 2005	Recursive relation between strategist's identity and his/her strategizing activties
Jarzabkowski et al. 2009	Regulators
Knights/Morgan 1991	Impact of the emergence of Strategic Management on managers' identity
Lounsbury/Crumley 2007	Constraining and enabling of agency through wider/societal theories and belief systems
Mantere 2005; 2008	Middle managers
Nordqvist/Melin 2008	Consultants
Rouleau 2003	Impact of gender on strategizing
Rouleau 2005	Middle managers
Schwarz 2004	Consultants
Sillince/Müller 2007	Middle managers

Tools/Techniques

Jarzabkowski/Wilson 2006	Change of tools and techniques according to context
Molloy/Whittington 2005	Impact of everyday technologies on strategizing
Seidl 2007	Change of tools and techniques according to context
Spee/Jarzabkowski 2009	Tools as boundary objects

Issues of power

Ezzamel/Willmott 2008	Power diffentials and modes of resistance in strategizing processes
Knights/Morgan 1991	"Disciplinary force" of strategy as institutional practice
Laine/Vaara 2007; Mantere/Vaara 2008	Power diffentials and modes of resistance in strategizing processes
McCabe in print	Power diffentials and modes of resistance in strategizing processes