Images of Strategy-as-Practice

Ann Langley, Patrick Regnér,
Linda Rouleau, EGOS 2007

Strategy as situated, socially accomplished flows of activity that are consequential for the direction and survival of the group, organization or industry.

Practitioners
Actors who shape the construction of practice through who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon.

Practices
Cognitive, behavioural, procedural, discursive, motivational and physical practices that are combined, coordinated and adapted to construct practice.

Practice
Strategy as situated, socially accomplished flows of activity that are consequential for the direction and survival of the group, organization or industry.

Institutionalised Strategies: e.g. conglomeratisation
Institutionalised Processes: e.g. planning
Institutionalised Field Practices

Organizational Strategies: e.g. diversification
Organizational Processes: e.g. strategic change
Organizational Field Practices

Actor's process activities: e.g. strategy debates
Actor's content activities: e.g. relationship building

Organizational Actions
Activities/Praxis

Rules
Community
Division of labour

Subject
Object → Outcome

Tools

Contact
Process
Strategy as Practice
What is that?

- A perspective that views strategy as something *people do* and that focuses on strategy activities as its central object.

- A community of researchers
  - Special issues: *JMS (2003), HR (2007), LRP (2008)*
  - EGOS and SMS working groups
  - Website and listserv: http://www.strategy-as-practice.org
  - Books:
    - Jarzabkowski, Sage (2005)
    - Golsorkhi et al., Vuibert (2006) (in French)
Image 1: Strategy-as-Practice

Theory
Practice-based theories +

Methods
Qualitative approaches +

Empirical phenomenon
• Doing strategy
Image 2: Strategy-as-Practice
The empirical phenomenon

Content
- Institutionalised Strategies: e.g. conglomeratisation
- Organizational Strategies: e.g. diversification
- Actors’ content activities: e.g. relationship building

Process
- Institutionalised Processes: e.g. planning
- Organizational Processes: e.g. strategic change
- Actors’ process activities: e.g. strategy debates

Institutional Field Practices
Organizational Actions
Activities/Praxis

Johnson, Langley, Melin, Whittington, 2007
Image 3: Strategy-as-Practice

The empirical phenomenon

Praxis
Strategy as situated, socially accomplished flows of activity that are consequential for the direction and survival of the group, organization or industry

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Practices
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Strategizing

Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl, HR, 60/1, 2007
Image 4: Strategy-as-Practice
Theoretical resources

Johnson, Langley, Melin, Whittington
Image 5: Activity theory as a theoretical resource for S-a-P

Yrjö Engström, 1993
Need for more thinking on methods?

Theory
- Practice-based theories +

Methods
- ???

Empirical phenomenon
- *Doing strategy*
Three books
Opening panelists

- Yrjö Engeström, University of Helsinki & University of California in San Diego
  - Strategy as anchoring: An activity-theoretical perspective

- Leif Melin, Jönköping University
  - Understanding strategy as practice: the social interaction of strategizing