

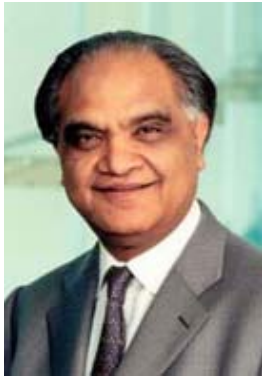


Promising Research Directions Using the Practice Approach

*Tomi Laamanen
Helsinki University of Technology*

*SMS Conference 2009
United States, Washington DC*

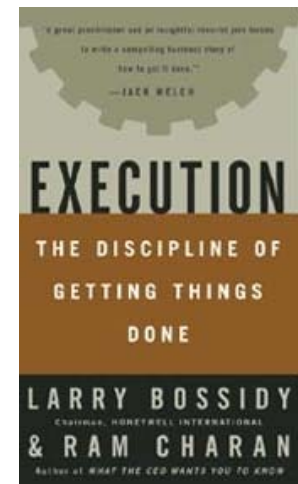
“Leading for execution is not rocket science. It’s very straightforward stuff. The main requirement is that you as a leader have to be deeply passionately engaged in your organization and honest about its realities with others and yourself. This is true whether you’re running a whole company or your first profit center. Any business leader, at any company or any level needs to master the discipline of execution.” (Bossidy et al., 2002: 8)”



Ram Charan



Lawrence A. Bossidy

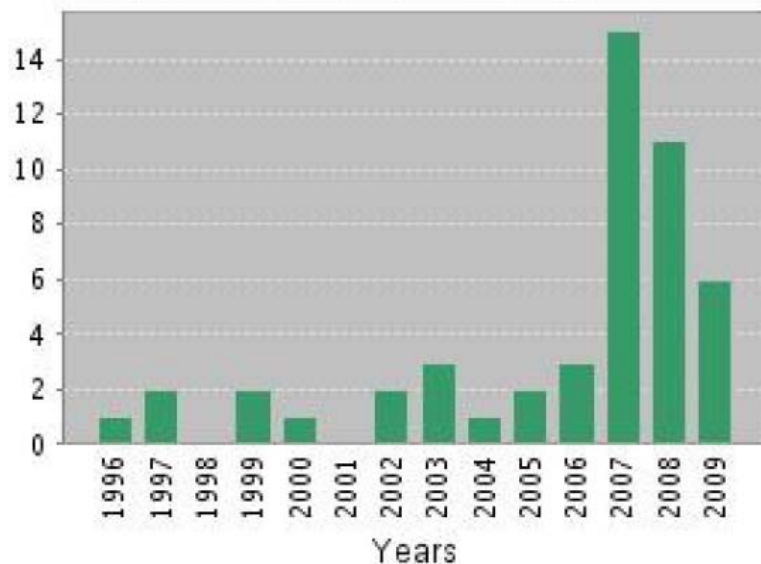


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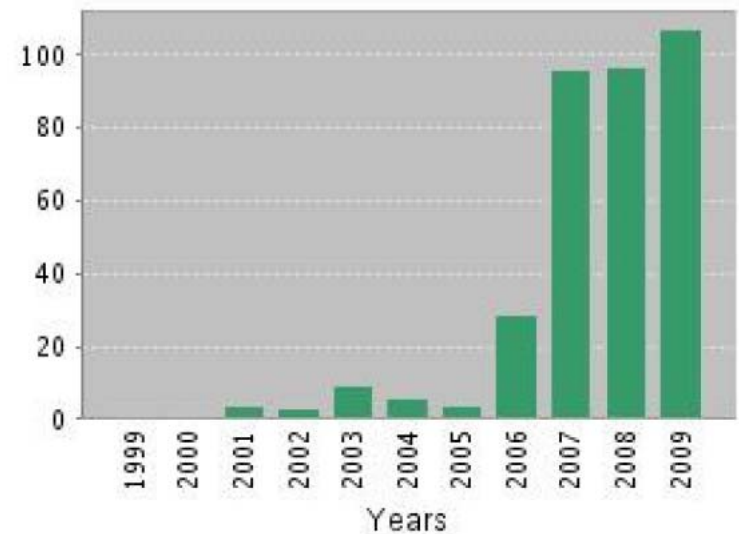
Practice Research

Practice Research + Citations

Published Items in Each Year



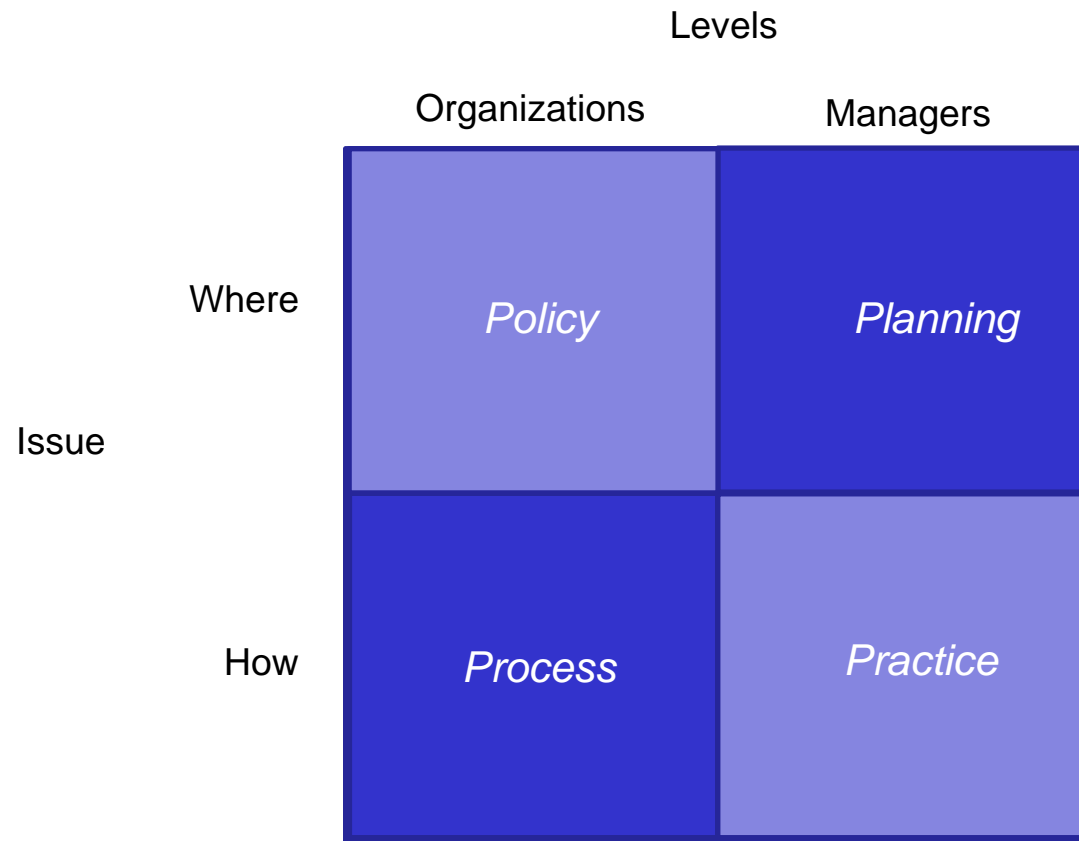
Citations in Each Year

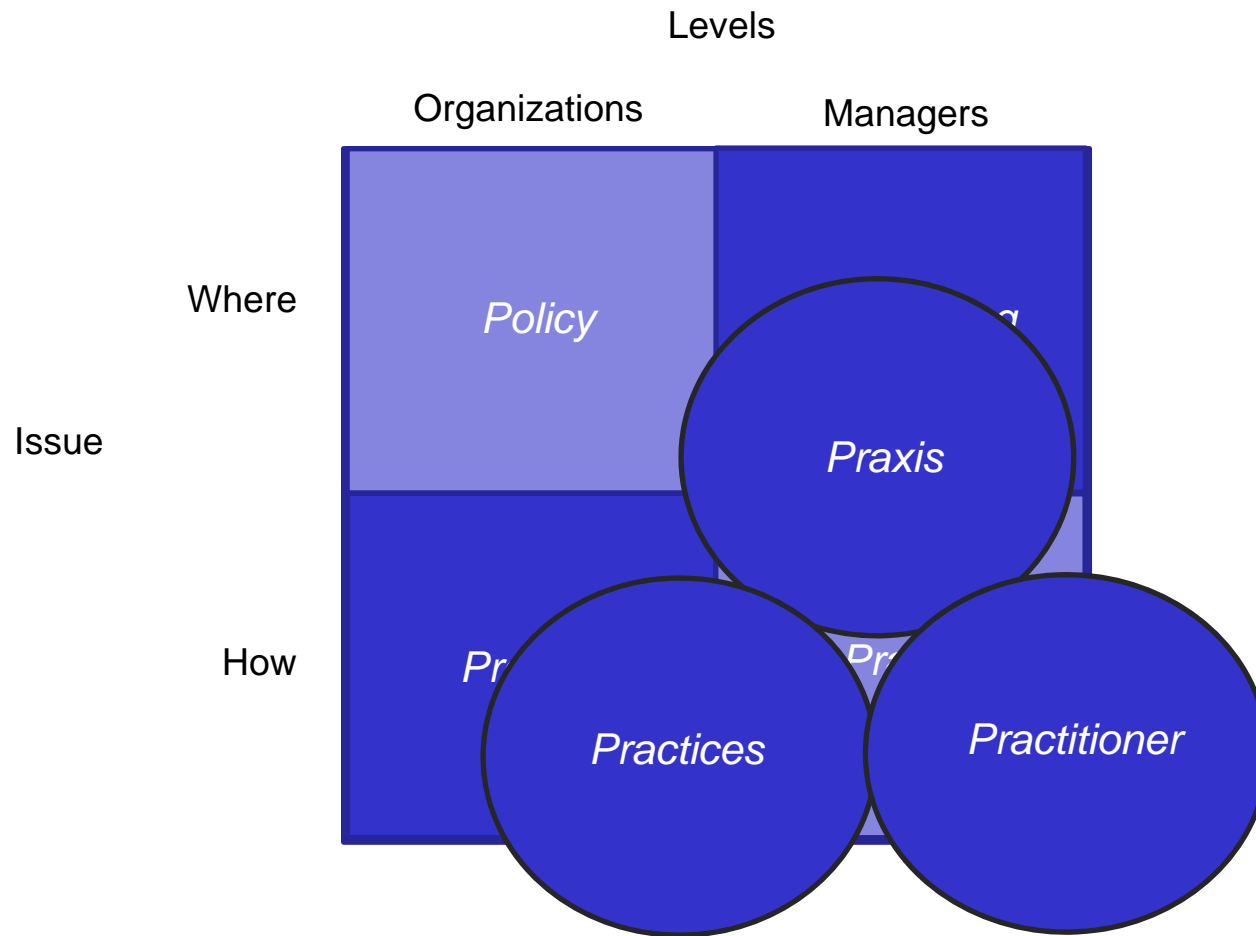


Keywords: "Stategy as practice", "Strategy-as-practice", "Strategy practices"

Top Most Cited Strategy Practice Articles

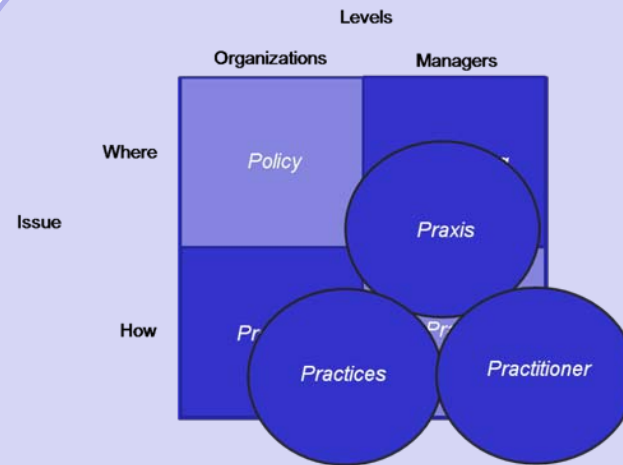
							CITATIONS				
1.	Title: Strategy as practice Author(s): Whittington R Source: LONG RANGE PLANNING Volume: 29 Issue: 5 Pages: 731-735 Published: OCT 1996	0	5	12	13	13	56				
2.	Title: Strategy as practice: Recursiveness, adaptation, and practices-in-use Author(s): Jarzabkowski P Source: ORGANIZATION STUDIES Volume: 25 Issue: 4 Pages: 529-560 Published: MAY 2004	1	5	19	14	12	51				
3.	Title: Completing the practice turn in strategy research Author(s): Whittington R Source: ORGANIZATION STUDIES Volume: 27 Issue: 5 Pages: 613-634 Published: MAY 2006	0	1	17	20	9	47				
4.	Title: Strategic practices: An activity theory perspective on continuity and change Author(s): Jarzabkowski P Source: JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES Volume: 40 Issue: 1 Pages: 23-55 Published: JAN 2003	1	4	15	7	7	36				
5.	Title: Strategy creation in the periphery: Inductive versus deductive strategy making Author(s): Regner P Source: JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES Volume: 40 Issue: 1 Pages: 57-82 Published: JAN 2003	0	5	10	5	5	25				
6.	Title: Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective Author(s): Jarzabkowski P, Balogun J, Seidl D Source: HUMAN RELATIONS Volume: 60 Issue: 1 Pages: 5-27 Published: JAN 2007	0	0	3	10	10	22				



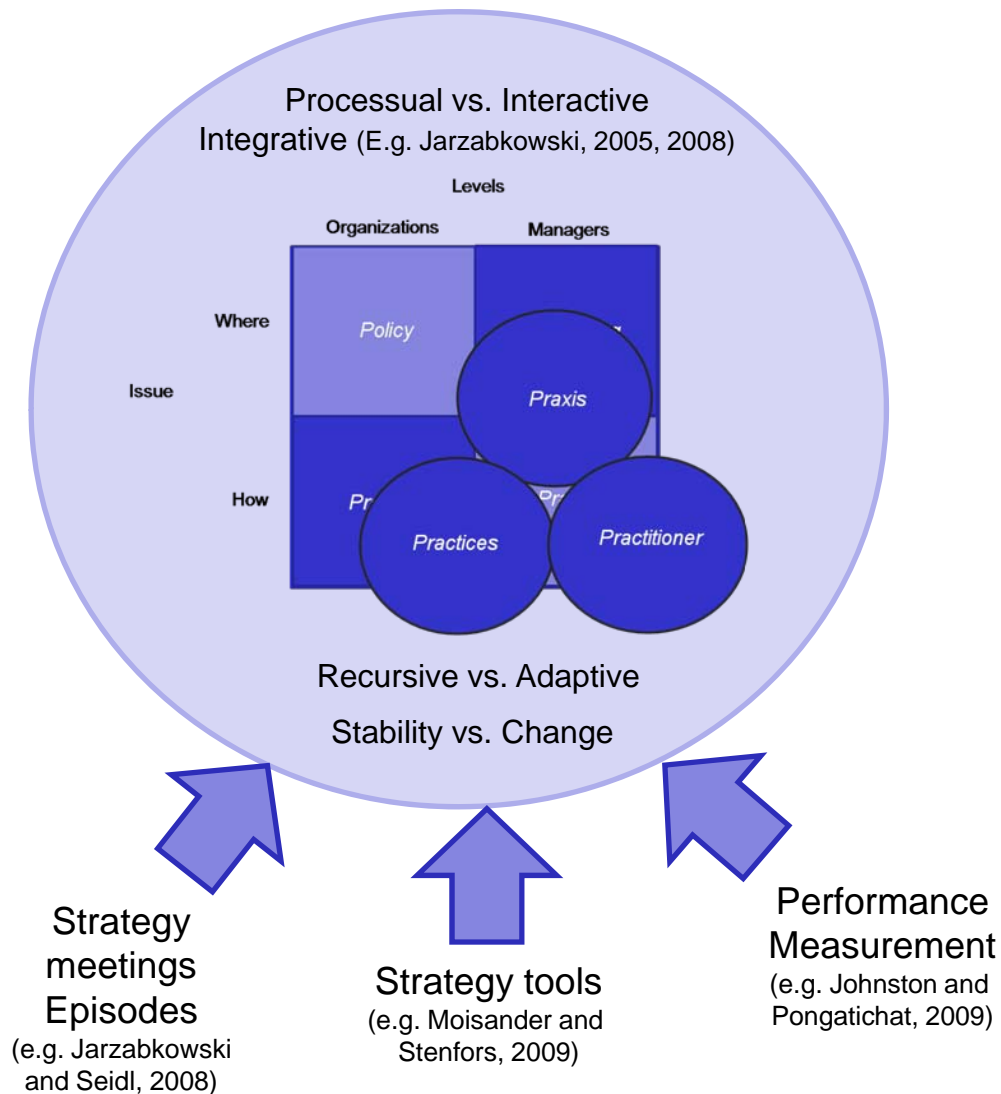


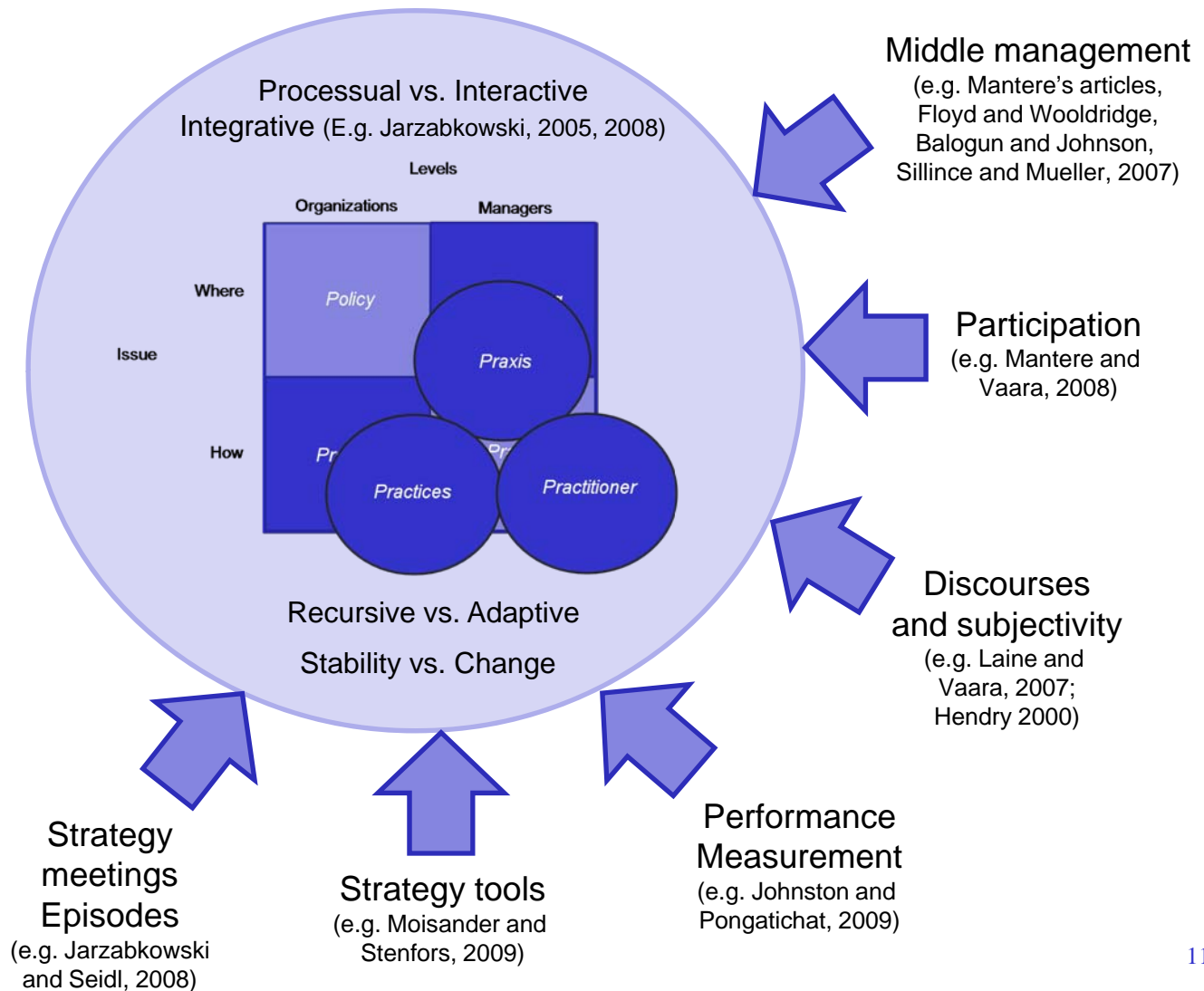


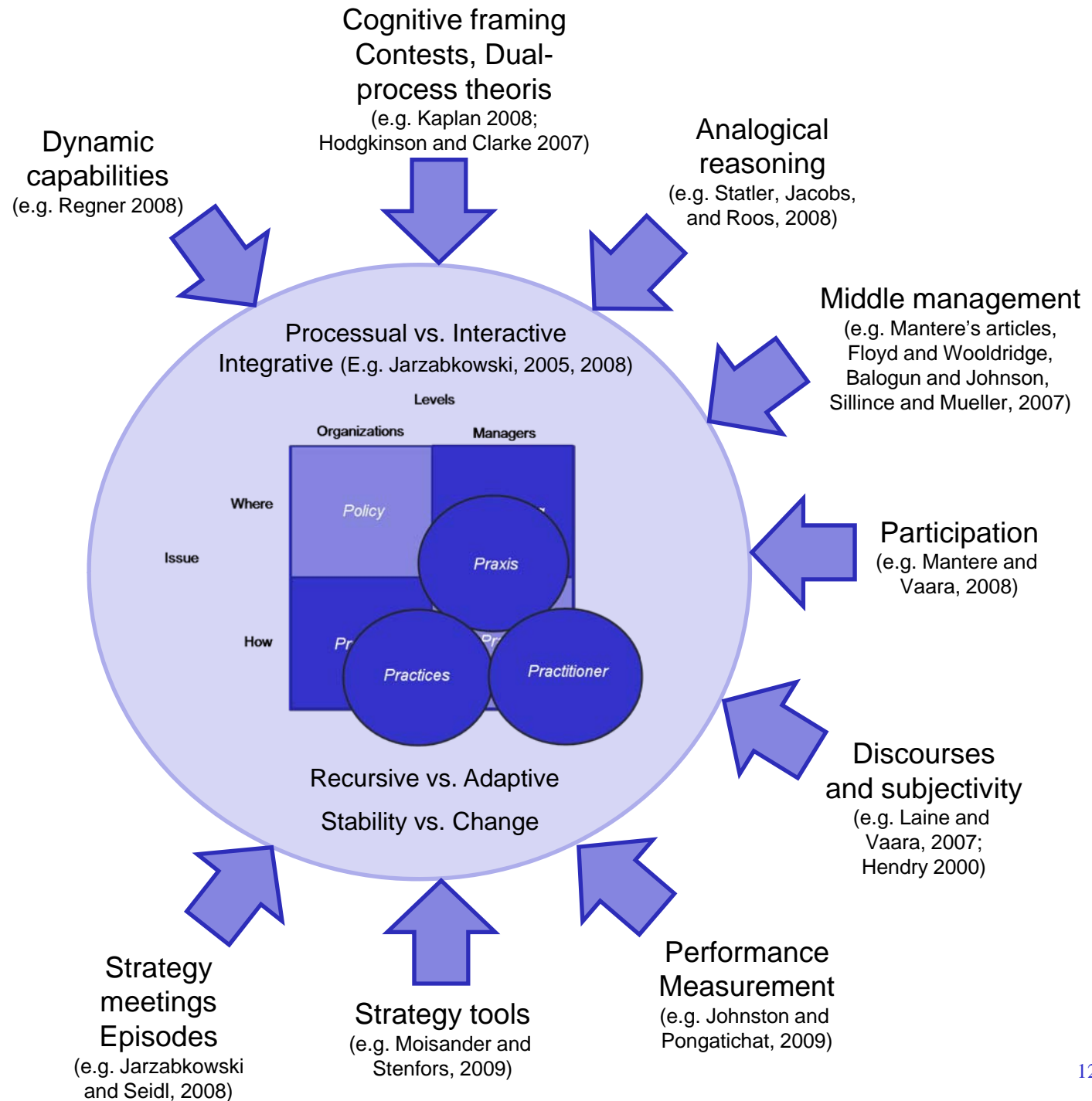
Processual vs. Interactive
Integrative (E.g. Jarzabkowski, 2005, 2008)

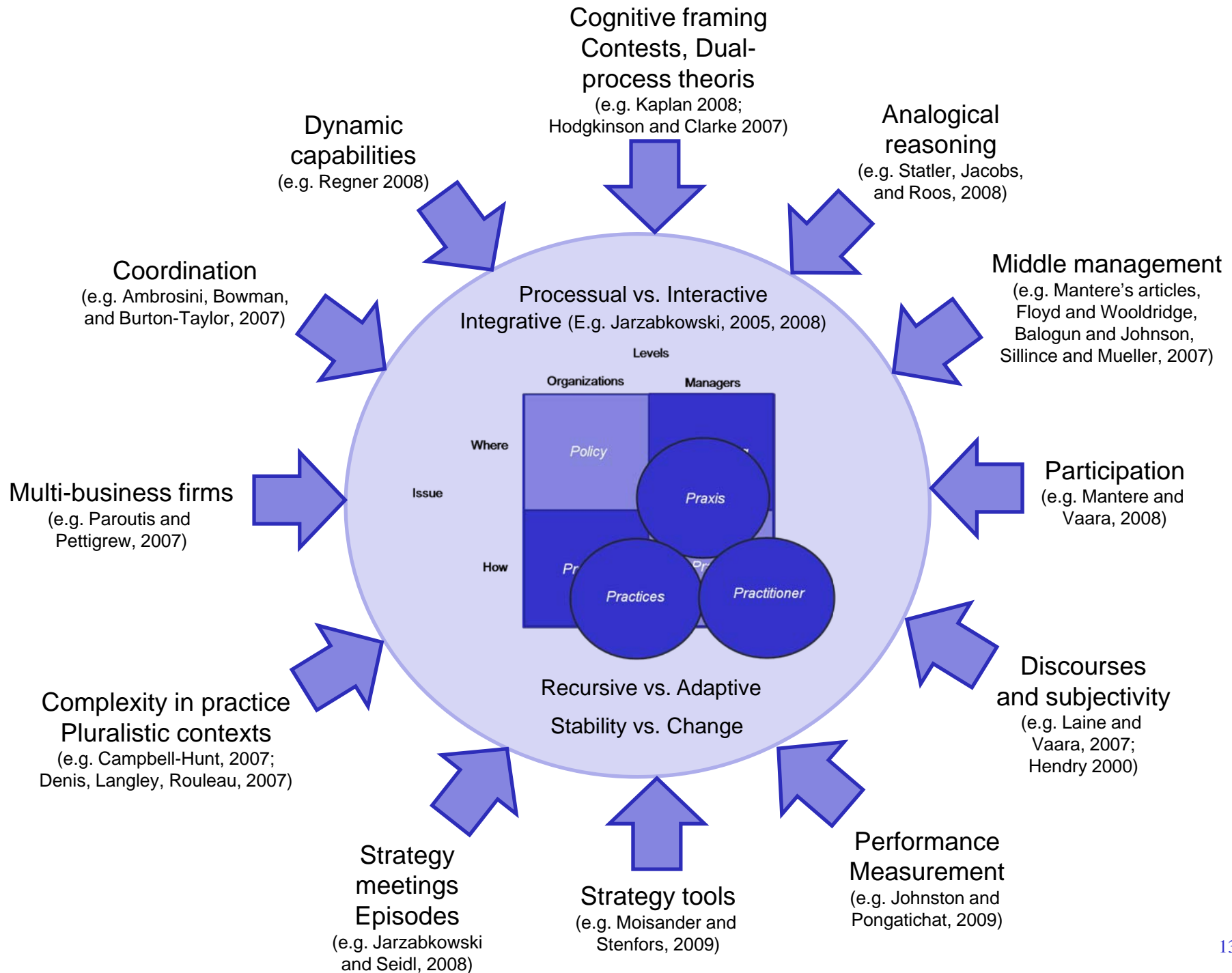


Recursive vs. Adaptive
Stability vs. Change









“At present, the approach resembles unfocused, albeit fashionable, consumption in which, despite the attractions of the individual pieces, the collection as a whole lacks thematic unity. **Strategy is irremediably political; for this reason, far more attention needs to be paid to the politics of practice in an oeuvre somewhat more theoretically coherent yet no less entrepreneurial institutionally.**”
Carter, Clegg, Kornberger (2008: p. 111)

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S-A-P zapping the field

Chris Carter University of St Andrews, UK

Stewart R. Clegg University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

Martin Kornberger University of St Andrews, UK and University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

In their rejoinder, Jarzabkowski and Whittington do not concede one point. They even defend the resource-based view of the firm, despite its well-known limitations (the fact that some of its major limitations have been staked by someone labelled a 'sociologist' does not, from our perspective, make it any more palatable). Their defensiveness is surprising, though perhaps in keeping with Whittington's (2007) pithy description of S-A-P (strategy as practice) as being akin to 'a pushy younger sibling, making a lot of noise'.

There is perhaps another parallel. Thirty years ago, punk music exploded from English art schools, Kings Road fashion boutiques and London hang-outs. The movement was energized in reaction to what had gone before. Out went long hair, progressive rock, hippyism and flared trousers to be replaced by a do-it-yourself energy. Punk bands were formed that played fast, short and simple songs with nihilistic lyrics in small clubs; their records were released on small start-up record labels and came to define the late 1970s. The DIY attitude characterized the movement and in part was a sign of the political changes that were to follow.

We are not suggesting that S-A-P types parade around the Academy of Management in bondage trousers, with Mohican haircuts and safety pins through their noses, but there is an undeniable DIY quality to the S-A-P community. Not versed or trained in sociology – just as the punks 30 years ago were barely musicians – they are simply getting on and doing sociology themselves. While the energy and vibrancy of the community is impressive, like punk the output is more open to question, although it does have a certain mongrel vitality, particularly in its cheerful irreverence for the hastily erected and recent traditions of strategy research composed as a part of some thing called 'management'.

Would one want to call the composition that is management a 'discipline'? Probably not, for it is far too eclectic in its borrowings: a little psychology here, dashes of information systems there, huge chunks of economics (usually neoclassical), some engineering, a fair mix of hagiography and war stories. ... Yet, it is precisely this lack of a 'strong tradition' that makes management interesting and creative; the development of theory in the interstices or *différend* between disciplinary areas can be an exciting project. Indeed, one striking way the field of management studies develops is through the creation of hybrids

“...the most important difference between our approach and the processual theorists. It concerns **the way in which we see power to be productive of subjectivity**. Managers and staff are not just passive victims of strategy discourse; through it they are constituted as subjects either in support of, or in resistance to, its plausibility.”
Knights and Morgan (1991: p. 269)

Corporate Strategy, Organizations, and Subjectivity: A Critique

David Knights, Glenn Morgan*

Abstract

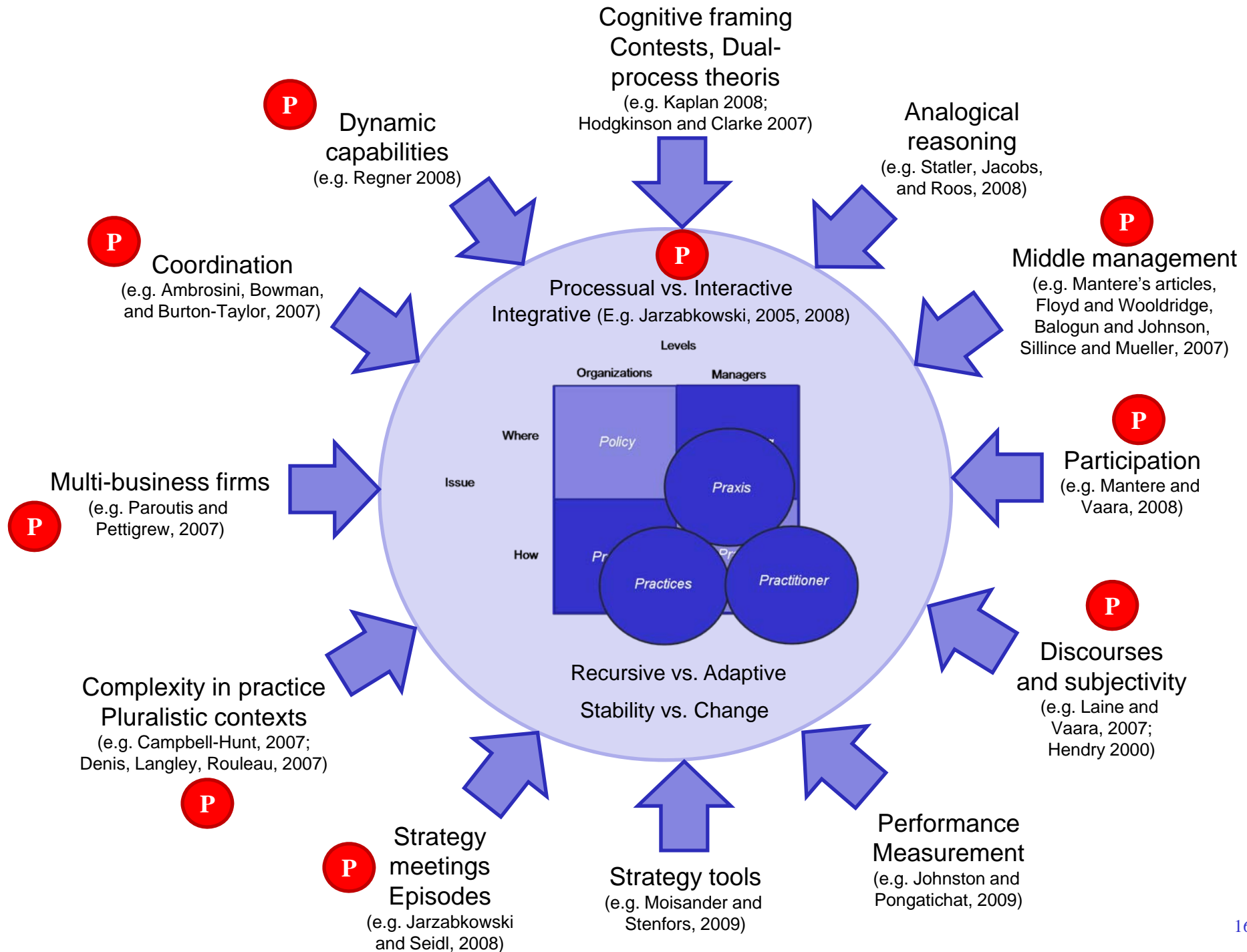
David Knights,
Glenn Morgan
Manchester
School of
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University of
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Institute of
Science and
Technology,
Manchester, U.K.

This paper attempts to develop a new approach to the study of corporate strategy. It draws on the methodology of Michel Foucault to suggest that corporate strategy can be seen as a discourse which has its own specific conditions of possibility. These are traced historically to various exercises of power within the conduct of war and the development of business organizations. Strategy is located as an emergent set of practices which has distinctive power effects on organizations and subjectivity. Analyses of strategy cannot be reduced either to rationalist accounts of markets and environments nor interpretive understandings of actors' frames of reference. The emergence and reproduction of 'strategy' as an essential element in managerial discourse needs to be located in specific changes in organizations and managerial subjectivity, because it is a mechanism of power that transforms individuals into particular kinds of subjects who secure a sense of well-being through participation in strategic practices. Conflict over 'strategy' is therefore more than just a question of career politics and market competition. It touches on the very sense of what it is to be human as well as having effects that readily legitimize prevailing relations of inequality and privilege in contemporary organizations and institutions.

Introduction

The concept of corporate strategy has a central place today in the way in which managers think about themselves and their organizations. According to the orthodoxy propounded in business schools and embraced by consultants, stock market analysts, financial institutions and the media, every organization must have a strategy, because otherwise it is without direction in an increasingly turbulent economic, and politically charged, environment. To date, much of the academic literature (e.g. Ansoff 1965; Hofer and Schendel 1978; Porter 1980, 1985) has tended to generate and/or support this orthodoxy in which strategy is perceived as a set of 'rational' techniques for managing complex businesses in a changing environment. There are others (e.g. Pettigrew 1985, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987, 1988; Mintzberg 1978; Mintzberg and Waters 1982, 1985; Mintzberg and McHugh 1985), however, who have begun to challenge this orthodoxy by questioning the extent to which strategy actually embodies rational processes. They give attention to the socially constructed and thereby political character of strategic processes and the inability

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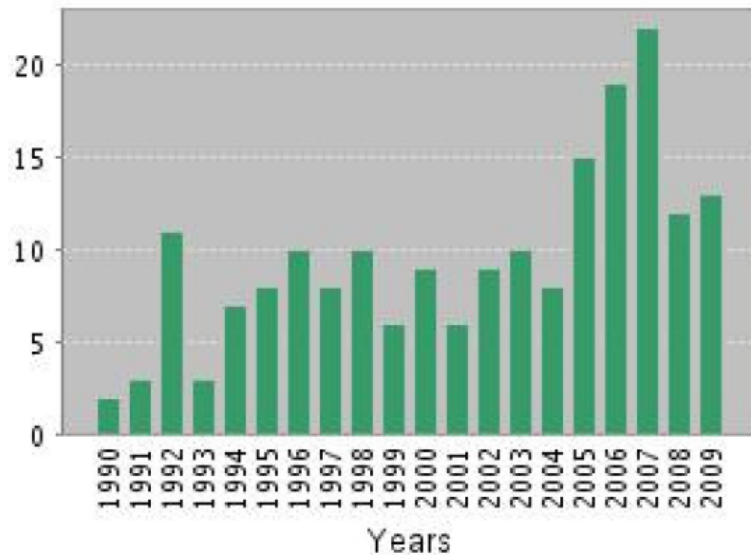


Context

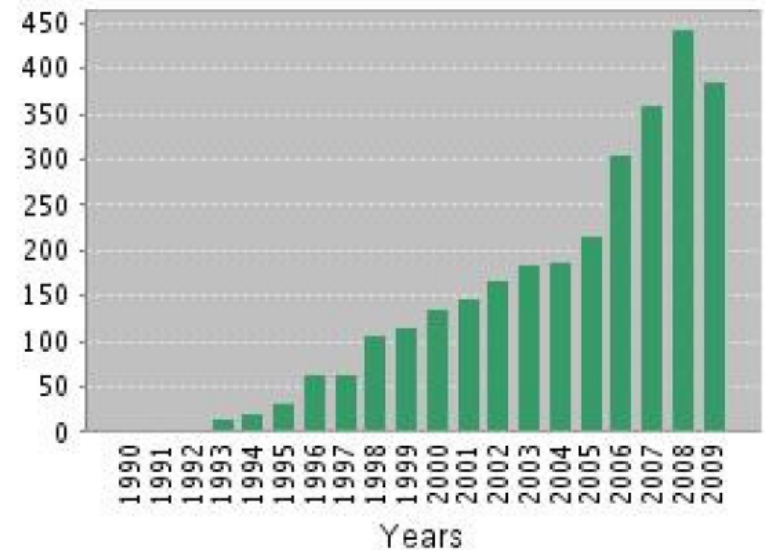
- Airline company in Europe
- Artistics organizations
- Automotive safety firm
- Biotech firm TMT meetings
- Brand development projects
- Consulting organizations
- Commercial marketing division
- European furniture logistic firm
- Evangelical church
- European insurance company
- Fast moving consumer goods firm
- Fighter pilots in Afganistan
- Freight transportation firm
- French radio stations
- FTSE-100 firms
- Game developer firm
- Higher education institutions
- Hospitals in Brazil
- Hospitals in the U.S.
- Information and communications firm
- Infrastructure firm's service roll-out
- Insurance company's claims handling
- Local indigenous people
- Meat processing company
- Mining merger discourse
- Ministers' political assistants
- Mobile operator
- Mountain climbing expedition
- Newspaper classifieds
- Non-executive directors
- World of Warcraft

Strategy Process Research + Citations

Published Items in Each Year



Citations in Each Year



Keywords: "Strategy process", "Strategy processes", From 1990 to the present.

Top Most Cited Strategy Process Articles

CITATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|----|----|----|----|------------|
| 1. | Title: The evolution of cooperation in strategic alliances: Initial conditions or learning processes?
Author(s): Doz YL
Source: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL Volume: 17
Special Issue: Sp. Iss. SI Pages: 55-83 Published: SUM 1996 | 28 | 29 | 38 | 42 | 34 | 347 |
| 2. | Title: THE ROLE OF MANAGERIAL LEARNING AND INTERPRETATION IN STRATEGIC PERSISTENCE AND REORIENTATION - AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION
Author(s): LANT TK, MILLIKEN FJ, BATRA B
Source: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL Volume: 13
Issue: 8 Pages: 585-608 Published: NOV 1992 | 9 | 15 | 13 | 20 | 11 | 161 |
| 3. | Title: SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING STRATEGY PROCESS - A RESEARCH NOTE
Author(s): VANDEVEN AH
Source: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL Volume: 13
Special Issue: Sp. Iss. SI Pages: 169-188 Published: SUM 1992 | 11 | 15 | 16 | 13 | 7 | 154 |
| 4. | Title: AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGY-MAKING PROCESSES
Author(s): HART SL
Source: ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW Volume: 17
Issue: 2 Pages: 327-351 Published: APR 1992 | 6 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 16 | 140 |
| 5. | Title: THE SCIENCE OF COMPLEXITY - AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE FOR STRATEGIC CHANGE PROCESSES
Author(s): STACEY RD
Source: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL Volume: 16
Issue: 6 Pages: 477-495 Published: SEP 1995 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 115 |
| 6. | Title: THE STRATEGY PROCESS, MIDDLE MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE
Author(s): WOOLDRIDGE B, FLOYD SW | 10 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 108 |

Content

- There is less emphasis on strategy content that would go beyond the contextual setting.
- Is strategy content always irrelevant when focusing on strategy practices as "something that people do"?
- Can strategy content have implications for strategy practices beyond its political repercussions?
- Does strategy content matter in strategy practice research?

Performance

- There is relatively little emphasis on performance implications of the strategy practices beyond their consequent organizational effects. Does performance matter then in strategy practice research?
- Are intermediate performance variables enough? Is there a danger that our avoidance of the performance implications and instrumentality becomes a blind spot?
- This could help us address e.g. the questions relating to the appropriateness of practices in different contexts.

Practice research may be interested in organizational performance, but strategy's wider repercussions need analysis too. Strategy-as-Practice can problematize the performance issue at a more micro level as well. In a Goffmanesque sense, Strategy-as-Practice can appreciate the performance of strategy praxis as an achievement in itself. **At stake here is the competence and credibility of individual practitioners in performing their roles, rather than some notion of organizational performance.** Whittington (2007: pp. 1583)



Essai

Strategy Practice and Strategy Process: Family Differences and the Sociological Eye

Richard Whittington

Abstract

This Essai argues for the distinctive position of Strategy-as-Practice research outside the immediate family of Strategy Process. Strategy-as-Practice's fascination with the phenomenon of strategy itself takes it beyond traditional Process perspectives. Relying on the 'sociological eye', Strategy-as-Practice treats strategy like any other practice in society, capable of being studied from many different angles. Under the four themes of praxis, practices, practitioners and the profession of strategy as an institutional field, the Essai demonstrates the potential range of research topics, performance notions and methodologies within Strategy-as-Practice. It concludes by proposing five implications of the sociological eye for the conduct of Strategy-as-Practice research, highlighting particularly social connections and relationships, embeddedness, irony, problematized notions of performance and a respect for continuity.

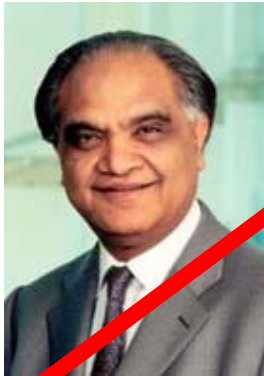
Keywords: practice, process, sociology, strategy

I want to address a frequent source of confusion: the relationship between Strategy-as-Practice and the Process tradition in strategy. The confusion is understandable, for the relationship is close. But none the less there are important differences between Practice and Process approaches. Just as in the best of families, these differences can be a source of unnecessary misunderstandings. The result for Strategy-as-Practice is often an unfortunate diversion of research and awkward relations with the more senior partner. It is best to get the differences out in the open. That way, Practice research will have greater confidence in its own distinct agenda – and tangle less with Process.

In this short Essai, therefore, I shall start by identifying some easy sources of confusion and then tackle a more fundamental problem – the lure of various powerful dichotomies in the theoretical literature. I shall outline the distinct position of Practice research, one that can resist such stark choices as between 'Content' and 'Process'. This position is based on a commitment to the phenomenon of strategy itself, seen comprehensively through the 'sociological eye' (Hughes 1971). In this sociological view, strategy can be treated much as many other institutionalized activities in our lives. Like law or journalism, war or

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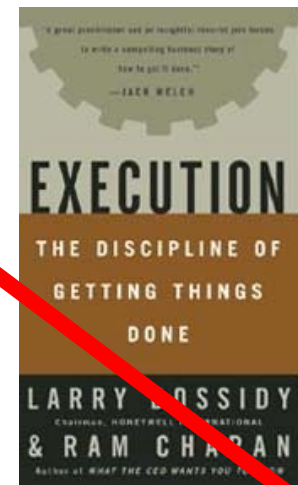
“Leading for execution is not rocket science. It’s very straightforward stuff. The main requirement is that you as a leader have to be deeply passionately engaged in your organization and honest about its realities with others and yourself. This is true whether you’re running a whole company or your first profit center. Any business leader, at any company or any level needs to master the discipline of execution.” (Bossidy et al., 2002: 8)”



Ram Charan

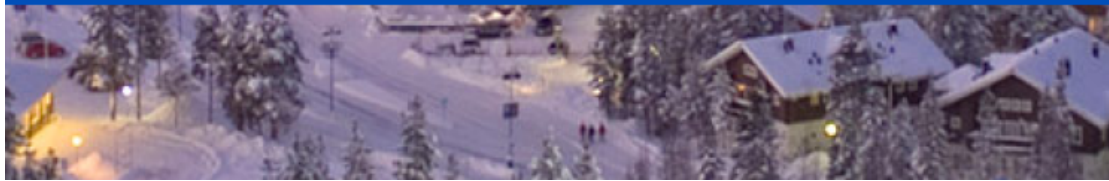


Lawrence A. Bossidy



**New York Times Best Seller list 3 years
Over 2 Million copies sold**

Looking forward



*Intersections of
Strategy Processes
and Strategy
Practices*



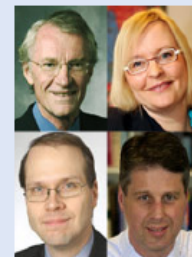
In a fast changing global economy there is an increasing need to understand how strategic decisions are made, how strategy emerges in an organization in practice, who gets involved in strategy processes and how strategy changes over time. It is more and more important to bring together varying perspectives of strategy processes and strategy practices to advance the practice of strategy. The emerging interest in the practice perspective to strategic management during the past decade makes it particularly interesting for us to reflect on the intersections between the process and practice perspectives of strategic management. By doing this our further aim is to link these two research streams to the recent developments in the fields of managerial and organization cognition, organizational and management innovations, and dynamic capabilities and strategic agility.

The Strategic Management Society brings together scholars, executives, and innovation policymakers in advancing the state of the art research and practice in a unique mini-conference organized for the first time in Finland.

Finland Conference News Items

- [Submission System Open](#)
- [A note from the SMS President](#)
- [Meet the Program Chairs](#)
- [Call for Proposals](#)
- [Finland in March](#)

Robert Burgelman, Hanna Lehtimäki, Tomi Laamanen and Richard Whittington are the Program Chairs for this SMS Special Conference
[Click here](#) to read their welcome.





SMS SPECIAL CONFERENCE





INTERSECTIONS OF STRATEGY PROCESSES AND STRATEGY PRACTICES

Conference Information AND Call for Proposals

Program Co-Chairs

Robert Burgelman
Stanford University

Tomi Laamanen
Helsinki University of Technology

Hanna Lehtimäki
Life Works Consulting Ltd

Richard Whittington
University of Oxford

The Strategic Management Society (SMS) is pleased to announce a special conference in Finland. The SMS brings together scholars, executives, and innovative policymakers in advancing state of the art research and practice in a unique mini-conference organized for the first time in Finland.

In a fast changing global economy there is an increasing need to understand how strategic decisions are made, how strategy emerges in an organization in practice, who gets involved in strategy processes and how strategy changes over time. It is increasingly important to bring together varying perspectives of strategy processes and strategy. The emerging interest in the practice perspective to strategic management during the past decade makes it particularly interesting for us to reflect on the intersections between the process and practice perspectives of strategic management. By doing this our further aim is to link these two research streams to the recent developments in the fields of managerial and organization cognition, organizational and management innovations, and dynamic capabilities and strategic agility.

SMS Special Conference Finland: Theme Tracks



The SMS Special Conference in Finland invites contributions that represent original, interesting, and theoretically bold research, as well as innovative empirical studies. As reflected in the themes of the conference tracks below, there are numerous potential questions that can be addressed.

- **Intersections of Strategy Process and Strategy Practice Research**

Strategy process and strategy practice research areas have evolved as separate research streams during the past decade. This has provided a major boost to both research areas, but it now also provides an exciting opportunity to take stock and look back to see what the intersections between these areas are. In this topic area, we address the following questions: What are the intersections of strategy process and strategy practice research? What are the future research directions in these two areas? How should we proceed in these two research areas in order to fully benefit from what we have learned? What are the main prescriptions offered by our research for executives?

- **Managerial and Organizational Cognition in Strategy Processes and Practices**

Research on cognition is entering the mainstream in the field of strategic management research. Moving beyond decision biases and basic cognitive maps, this research area provides a window into the cognitions of strategists, creativity in the strategy process, and the origins of dynamic capabilities. In this topic area, we address the following questions: What have we learned from three decades of work on managerial and organizational cognition in connection with strategy processes and strategy practices? How can we better integrate cognition research to our research on strategy processes and strategy practices? Where do we see the most important potential future areas?

- **Organizational and Management Innovations in Strategy Processes and Practices**

Organizational and management innovations are the result of creativity of executives in their strategy practices. In this topic area we address the following questions: How do we innovate our strategy processes and practices? What are some of the innovations that different firms have developed? How should we enhance an organization's ability to develop management innovations? How do process and practice related management innovations relate to the notion of dynamic capabilities?

- **Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Agility and Strategy Processes and Practices**

The importance of organizations' abilities to transform themselves even during the most difficult economic times has become increasingly important during the drastic changes in the business environment in the past few years. Multiple concepts have been developed and discussed outside the core strategy process and practice research streams for creating the required strategic flexibility for change. In this topic area we discuss the recent developments in the areas of dynamic capabilities and strategic agility.

- **Collaborative Strategizing for the Future**

How can strategy researchers and executives create a research agenda for the future together? What kinds of strategy practices emerge from collaboration between managers and researchers? What methods of inquiry and analysis would be best suitable for collaborative research? What kinds of working methods can be created for co-creation and sharing of leading edge knowledge? How can we better link executives to become a reflective collaborative community for our strategy process and practice development?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Invited are proposals (5-7 pages, for paper and panel sessions) relating to the conference theme and theme tracks. Only original, unpublished work is sought.

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: November 1, 2009

To learn more about the
SMS Special Conference in Finland
and about the submission process, please go to:

<http://finland.strategicmanagement.net>

<http://finland.strategicmanagement.net>

