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Abstract:

The use and the study of 'practice' has been widely developed in organization and strategic management research as an intermediary level of analysis between individuals, organizations, market fields and institutions. Bourdieu's work has been largely mobilized in these studies, particularly within the attempt to define practice, for example by Jarzabkowski (2004), Johnson et al. (2003), Whittington (1996, 2006), Chia and Holt (2006).

However, as asserted by Chia (2004), "advocates of practice-based approaches to strategy research may have underestimated the radical implications of the work of practice social theorists such as Bourdieu […] who they rely upon to justify this turn to practice" (Chia 2004: 30). Yet, authors mainly base on the characteristics of practice and on the relation between practice and habitus to understand how individuals develop their practical capacity to strategizing, but they mainly remain at a descriptive stage. They do not take into account the complete possibilities of the framework, mainly because they neglect the concept of field, which is nevertheless essential to understand the link between individuals and action. As Bourdieu puts it, "the 'subject' of what is sometimes called 'company policy' is quite simply the field of the firm or, put it more precisely, the structure of the relation of force between the different agents that belong to the firm"(Bourdieu 2005: 69). This highlights the struggling nature of strategy as a practice, a struggle for power, a political fight over time between agents.

The aim of this paper is to propose a comprehensive perspective on practice by taking into consideration the core notions of field and habitus. I propose to consider strategizing as a practice. This emphasizes the 'doing' of multiple agents; the embodied and tacit aspects; the symbolic violence and power issues at stake. As a consequence, strategizing refers to the practice of motivated agents engaged in struggles and to account more completely for the relation of forces (and their development) between them.

Keywords:
- Bourdieu
- Domination
- Field
- Habitus
- Managers
- Practice
- Strategy

Résumé :

Le concept de « pratique » s'est largement répandu pour l'étude des oprganisations. Il est généralement présenté comme un niveau d'analyse intermédiaire entre l'individu et l'organisation, tout en faisant le lien avec le niveau institutionnel et mettant en exergue l'action collective. Les travaux de Bourdieu ont été largement mobilisés, par exemple par Jarzabkowski (2004), Johnson et al. (2003), Whittington (1996, 2006), Chia and Holt (2006). Toutefois, l'usage des travaux de Bourdieu reste largement sous-exploité, comme le suggère R. Chia (2004).

L'objectif de ce papier est de montrer les implications du dispositif de Bourdieu dans le cadre de la pratique de la stratégie. Dans un système dispositionnel et relationnel, la pratique de la stratégie met en avant la multitude des agents à prendre en compte, les aspects tacites et enracinés dans l'action, les enjeux de pouvoir.

Mots clés :
- Bourdieu
- Champ
- Domination
- Habitus
- Managers
- Pratique
- Stratégie

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"The firm is not a homogeneous entity that can be treated as a rational subject –the 'entrepreneur' or the 'management' –oriented towards a single, unified objective. It is determined (or guided) in its 'choices' not only by its position in the structure of the field of production, but also by its internal structure which, as a product of all its earlier history, still orients its present. […] Its strategies are determined through innumerable decisions, small and large, ordinary and extraordinary, which are, in every case, the product of the relationship between, on the one hand, interests and dispositions associated with positions in relations of force within the firm and, on the other, capacities to make those interests or dispositions count, capacities which also depend on the weight of the different agents concerned in the structure, and hence on the volume and structure of their capital" (Bourdieu 2005: 69).

Introduction

The use and the study of 'practice' has been widely developed in organization and strategic management research as an intermediary level of analysis between individuals, organizations, market fields and institutions: communities of practice have been presented has the best level of understanding for shared action (Lave and Wenger 1991, Brown and Duguid 2001; practice is considered essential to understand what people really do in organizations and to bridge the micro with the macro levels of strategizing (Whittington 1996, 2006; Chia 2004, Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl 2007); Cook and Brown (1999), Gherardi (2000), Orlikowski (2002), Nicolini et al. (2003) argue that practice puts action at the first sight, build dynamic links between knowledge and action and emphasize the contextualized

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aspects of practice; Lounsbury (2001), Suddaby and Greenwood (2005), Boxenbaum and Batilana (2005) mobilize practice as a core concept to explain the role of institutional entrepreneurs in major changes in organizations and their environment.

Bourdieu's work on practice has been largely mobilized in these studies, particularly within the attempt to define practice. Within the strategy-as-practice perspective, some seminal works, such as Jarzakbowski (2004), Johnson et al. (2003), Whittington (1996, 2006), Chia and Holt (2006), mobilize practice in Bourdieu's view.

However, as asserted by Chia (2004), "advocates of practice-based approaches to strategy research may have underestimated the radical implications of the work of practice social theorists such as Bourdieu […] who they rely upon to justify this turn to practice" (Chia 2004: 30). Yet, authors mainly rely on the characteristics of practice and on the relation between practice and habitus to understand how individuals develop their practical capacity to strategizing, but they mainly remain at a descriptive stage. They do not take into account the complete possibilities of the framework, mainly because they neglect the concept of field, which is nevertheless essential to understand the link between individuals and action. As Bourdieu puts it, "the 'subject' of what is sometimes called 'company policy' is quite simply the field of the firm or, put it more precisely, the structure of the relation of force between the different agents that belong to the firm"(Bourdieu 2005: 69). This emphasizes the struggling nature of strategy as a practice, a struggle for power, a political fight over time between agents.

The aim of this chapter is to propose a comprehensive perspective on practice by taking into consideration the core notions of field and habitus. It would allow a better understanding of strategizing as a practice of motivated agents engaged in struggles and to account more completely for the relation of forces (and their development) between them.

A Bourdieusian perspective

The work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) is one of the more influential in social sciences (Calhoun 2003). His considerable writing (thirty books and hundreds articles) benefited from the outstanding intellectual background of Pierre Bourdieu, his remarkable knowledge of philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology, arts, his familiarity with the works of –among others- Descartes, Pascal, Bachelard, Comte, Bergson, Husserl, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Ricoeur, Cassirer, Foucault, Levi-Strauss, Merleau-Ponty, Saussure, Deleuze, Sartre, Duby, Panofski, Schütz, Goffman, Durkheim, Mauss, Habermas, Wittgenstein, Marx, Weber… that he mobilizes in his own work, building upon or in reaction to them.

Practice is a central concern in his work. With the concepts of habitus, capital and field (but also many others that cannot be detailed in this paper), he draws a theory of practice which is particularly rich and exhaustive: a "shared sociological treasure", as qualified by Lahire 2001. In his "theory of practice", he re-reads Weber's sociology of the religious fact and the role of symbolic power through the lens of the structuralism of Levi-Strauss and Foucault to draw his conception of field (Bourdieu 2000: 172-179), but at the same time, he denies Weber's precept that legitimacy acknowledgement is a free and conscious act (Bourdieu 1990: 63); he critics the ignorance of structuralists for the active dimension of symbolic production. He draws on the Marxist view of praxis from the *Thesis of Feuerbach* (Bourdieu 2000: 136) and his vision of a conflicting social world but he deplores his determinism, his incapacity to think agency and the overall primacy of economic factors upon symbolic and cultural elements (Bourdieu 1990: 41). At the same time he critics the over-reflexivity of Garfinkel and the rational actor theory. He capitalizes on the phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Bourdieu 1990) to reject the traditional dichotomies between body and mind, understanding and apprehending, subject and object and thus define habitus. Among the major influences, Wittgenstein's work on language games has been a fruitful insight to theorize his vision of the influence of rules on social agents.

As a matter of facts, Bourdieu's approach on the social world is particularly fertile, capitalizing on the major intellectual influences to build his own coherent and systemic framework to comprehend social life.

The metaphor of game

As a former rugby player, Bourdieu frequently uses the game metaphor to grasp his sense of social life and to show the embeddedness of habitus, field, capital, and practice (Bourdieu 1990: 66; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 98; Bourdieu 2000: 151). By game, he does not mean entertainment, but the practice of serious athletes, involved in an interactive competition with the others and also with their own limits (Calhoun 2003).

Players oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity: the game is a space for struggles to conquer the goals that are at stake. Players elaborate strategies in order to reinforce their positions and their gains (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 98-99). These strategies and the struggles are underlying in the match. The stakes that motivate participants are particular to every game. Players are invested in the game, they are taken by the game. They feel that they take part of a larger system, not only the team and the match, but also the game itself.

Every match is different and players develop new strategies, new forms of actions, according to the position they occupy in the team. The force attached to a player depends on its various strengths and weapons, and on the position in the field. The one who plays as a defender won't have the same possibilities than the one playing as a striker. In the same way, players

from a team leading the League won't develop the same strategies as those from a challenger one.

Players act according to their feel for the game, the field, the rules, and by anticipating their co-players and opponents' actions. During a match, the actions of players cannot be constrained to a simple application of the rules of the game, nor rationale and reflexive analysis of the situation, which would suppose a clear separation between action and thinking. The players use the way they integrated, interpreted the rules and their possibilities for action. It is a state of belief that characterizes the players' relation with the rules. They learnt various possible actions through the game and training. However, in every match they will face new situations during which they will use their knowledge but also restructure it. They possess a "sense of the game" that is the result of initial predispositions, training and practice through which they integrated the rules. The player "exactly knows what he has to do […] without needs to know what he does. Neither automaton, nor rational actor" (Bourdieu 2002: 74).

The field

The game is an example of field, a microcosm among the numerous ones that exist in our social world. Every field is relatively autonomous. It is built, structured and organized through time. It is ruled by its own stakes and specific interests (Bourdieu 1990). It is a differentiated and structured space of objective relations between positions held by agents or institutions.

If photographed at a given moment, the field is a field of forces, a field of struggles, even those presented as disinterested, like science (Bourdieu 1988), arts (Bourdieu 1984) or sports (Bourdieu 1978). The field structure reveals "the state of the forces between agents or institutions engaged in struggle" to dominate the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 77). Participants in a field are qualified as agents, because they are "neither a subject confronting the world as an object in a relation of pure knowledge", nor completely shaped by a 'milieu' exerting a form of mechanical causality" (Bourdieu 2000: 150).

Organizations constitute fields, which are included in larger fields such as industries, competitive markets, economy and society (Bourdieu 2005: 205, 217). As such, organizations are at the same time agents involved in its competitive environment taken as field, and a field whereas individuals taken as agents evolve.

The situation of agents in a field depends on the capital they possess. The more relevant capital they possess, the more powerful they are, the more possibilities of actions they get. Capital is a core notion to understand practice because it impacts the agents' position in the field, their relative force, and their strategic orientation towards the game.

Capital varies in forms and in importance for each field. Indeed it is the amount of capital and the relative weight of the various forms of capital hold by agents that is determinant. "Just as the relative value of cards changes with each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital [...] varies across the various fields." (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 98).

Capital can take numerous forms, mainly economic, cultural, social and symbolic. It is a very flexible concept that can be adapted to every study. According to the fields, some forms of capital are more valuable than others. They also change in time. Through competitive relations, agents try to increase their amount of capital. They also try to increase the value of the forms of capital they possess. As a consequence, the conquest of capital or the valuation of existing capital is always underlying in agents' practice, even if this remains at an unconscious level. Although those struggles might appear as vain for actors external to the field, they are crucial for its members.

As agent included in its competitive field, any organization possesses capital, varying in amount and form. This corporate capital can take various forms (Bourdieu 2005: 194), for instance: financial capital, corresponding to the control of direct and indirect financial resources; technological capital, with the mastering of specific techniques, research and development capabilities; commercial capital, with the control of sales network and an advantage in commercial negotiation; information capital, with a privileged access to information upon the market; symbolic capital, such as brand image or customer loyalty. The structure and the distribution of corporate capital among competing firms determine their power over the field in general and more specifically over their competitors. The more capital a firm possesses, the more success factor it gets and the larger possibilities it can develop (Bourdieu 2005: 199). The position of the firm also affects the initiatives of individual agents inside the company.

Inside the field of an organization, the capital of individuals as agents can take the following forms: bureaucratic capital, linked to the responsibilities, action domain, hierarchical level, seniority; financial capital corresponds to the amount of financial resources agents can involve in their projects, mainly through their budget; possessing an expertise or a specific mastery constitutes a form of technological capital; organizational capital corresponds to the capacity to master procedures and formal rules inside the organization; social capital includes the involvement in social networks; informational capital is constituted by the knowledge on internal and external environment.

The position of agents in the field, i.e. the volume and structure of capital they possess, constrain and condition practice but do not determine it. Agents may have different personal perspectives on practice: even with similar positions and trajectories in the field, two agents won't necessarily do the same thing. One may appear audacious and take some risk,

whereas another one may appear conservative. Personal dispositions –habitus- are fundamental to account for practice.

Habitus

Agents' practice rest on habitus. Habitus is a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which are socially constituted (Bourdieu 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 98). It is a set of schemes of perceptions, appreciations, beliefs (Bourdieu 1977: 95) of what to do or not to do, in relation to a probable future. It is a repertory of dispositions, acquired in practice, and which allows practice.

The construction of the habitus is a long lasting process. It is the product of a trajectory: the habitus is the result of experience and it is influenced by the different environments the agent goes through. Hence, a specific field will influence the habitus of its members through the integration of its rules. Habitus is the result of an inculcation but also an appropriation of the field's '*doxa'*, the taken-for-granted assumptions on the way things work in the field. Doxa is a belief in the legitimacy of the game and its stakes. Then, habitus shapes practices being a '*modus operandi*'.

Habitus is both personal and social. It is personal because it is developed through the particular experience of the agent. It is linked to the personal initial dispositions of the agents, their particular experiences in the field. It is social, because it is highly linked to the context of the field and the agent's position inside this field. It is "the social embodied" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127), a "socialized subjectivity" (Bourdieu 2005: 211). Its schemes of perceptions and appreciation (systems of preferences, tastes, …) are the product of collective and individual history.

Habitus functions as both "structured, structuring dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990: 52). As a structured disposition, it is the product of the interpretation of past experience and learning, which allows repetition of action. As a structuring disposition, it is an art of inventing, which allows improvisation in the particular context of a new practice. Bourdieu insists on the creative, active, inventive capacity of agents (Bourdieu 1990: 55) while stating that their environment, experience and history are major influences. It "makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" (Bourdieu 1977: 95). In a permanent interaction, habitus shapes practice but in turn is restructured and transformed through practice.

Habitus allows preconscious action. Agents mobilize their dispositions and schemes of perceptions in a rather automatic manner. They have an immediate relation to the world, it is a "relation of presence in the world, of being in the world, in the sense of belonging to the

world. […] We learn bodily." (Bourdieu 2000: 141). As a consequence, "the world is comprehensible, immediately endowed with meaning" (Bourdieu 2000: 135). Agents lean upon their habitus to develop specific strategies in order to strengthen their position without necessarily having a clear and rationale reasoning about what is at stake: habitus "is the source of these series of moves which are […] organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention" (Bourdieu 1977: 73).

Practice

Bourdieu seldom refers to practice alone. He usually refers to 'practical sense', the 'logic of practice', 'economies of practice'. Practice is the meeting point between collective and personal histories. It is "the site of the dialectic of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*; of the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice; of structures and habitus." (Bourdieu 1990: 52)

Practice is possible because of habitus, which provides a repertory of possibilities. While habitus is implicit rather than explicit, agents' practices can be analyzed as embodying their habitus. These practices are the way the habitus "works out". Yet, they are limited and influenced by the forms and amount of capital those agents have in their possession as well as by the structures of the field. Thus, Bourdieu (1984: 101) proposed this "formula": [(Habitus) (Capital)] + Field = Practice.

Both habitus and practice are structured by the field. Practice makes sense in the particular context of a field. As such, practice is the product of incorporated rules. The "practical sense" allows agents to practice in a pre-reflexive mode. This does not mean that practice is only the repetition of patterns. Habitus gives place to possible invention and changes in practice. Moreover, in the context of a field, practice is the situated action of agents who try to conquer a better relative position in the field. It expresses the positions and movements of agents within the field. Thus, practice is the place where individual and collective aspects meet. As such, it is indispensable to bridge habitus and field to understand practice. These concepts function as a system (Golsorkhi and Huault 2006): they are completely interrelated and interacting, they are dynamic, their combination is necessary to gain an equilibrium and they offer a exhaustive understanding of the global phenomena, social life, they ambition to represent. As Bourdieu puts it: "[practices] can therefore only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the habitus that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented" (Bourdieu 1990: 56).

Strategizing as a practice

Within the field-habitus-practice framework, strategy must be analyzed in terms of the interacting moves of agents to strengthen their position in their field, with the double perspective of the agents as individuals in the field of the organization and the organizations as agents in the industry as a field (Bourdieu 2005). First, strategizing corresponds to the actions (taken in the broad sense, which include discourse and decision-making) affecting the position of the organization within its competing field. The moves of the organization correspond to changes in its relative position in its field, i.e. changes in the value of its capital. Second, strategizing cannot be understood only by this 'macro' perspective. Moves of the organization as a whole are the product of actions, decisions, developments proposed, settled, implemented by individuals. We need to enter the organization and to detail what happens there to understand the practice of strategizing by these individuals as agents involved in this serious game. This implies to consider the relative position of agents and the dispositions they can mobilize in strategizing to understand practice. Agents compete for the same stakes and forms of power upon the field, so strategizing is the site for struggles, where the use of symbolic violence is key to dominate the field.

1°) Strategizing implies doing

Strategy is not something a company has, but something it does, or, more exactly, that its agents do. In this way, it has more sense to speak about strategizing, as proposed by Johnson et al (2003) and Jarzabkowski (2004). It largely run over the result of decisions taken by a group of 'happy few', corporate discourses on strategic orientation, and the formalized strategic plans. It is the continuous stream of numerous actions, decisions, positions taken by a large number of agents. It embraces all the activities that responds to the so-called strategy of the company, for instance changes implemented by employees in their daily job in response to the strategy. Strategizing is a practice with specific rules and routines, that were constructed among time, about the making of strategic discourses, strategic plans, defining strategic goals. As such, the choice for methods, procedures in the strategic process, is also –and highly- strategic. It may reveal the struggles in strategizing.

Inside the organization, all agents can play a role in strategizing. Obviously, their possibilities and margins for action depends on their positions in the field, i.e. the amount and structure of capital they possess. As such, capital owning is key to understand the role of agents. Capital allows to understand the position of agents, and thus their possibilities or impossibilities for actions. The importance granted to every form of capital varies among companies and among time. In some organizations, diplomas are highly valued to access top management positions, as showed by Bourdieu and Saint Martin in their study of French CEO (Bourdieu

and St Martin, 1978), Bourdieu in his study of the housing market (Bourdieu 2005: 70). In others, previous jobs or an experience in commercial service will be the must-have. Fligstein (1993) describe how power in large American companies passed from production managers to marketing managers and then finance managers.

Because they have more possibilities and opportunities in strategizing, the role of CEO and key managers are of particular interest. However, other agents must be considered, even if their limited capital constrains their possibilities.

Last, Strategizing implies doing but there is a feed-back loop to agents: the situation of agents is also modified; this changes their position and their future possibilities to pursue strategizing.

2°) Strategizing as the site for struggles

Struggles among agents inside the field are underlying in strategizing. The competition between companies take the form of a struggle to improve their relative position, which is defined in terms of capital they possess: the gobal volume of capital, the share of sort of capital and the relative value of each sort in the field do matter. Decisions, discourses, moves undertook in organizations competition affect their position. They modify the volume of capital (increasing their success factor, as said by the traditional strategy vocabulary); they change the value of capital, which can take the form of increasing the value of the capital they possess or decreasing the value of the capital or the privileged form of capital owned by competitors; they can modify the possibilities to access capital, creating entry barriers that limit the number of competitors; they can increase the global volume of capital available, which benefit to all competing firms. These struggles among companies are widely represented and illustrated in strategy literature, with, for example, the Porter's five forces leading model (Porter 1980).

However, the struggle between individuals as agents inside an organization in the practice of strategizing has been rather ignored. Yet strategizing reveals the struggle for power. More than any other practice in the organization, it provides to agents a unique opportunity to match their own interests with the interests of organization. Agents conflict over the power to decide the directions the firm will take : strategy is a stake for struggles between agents, because the orientations of the organization will determine their own trajectory (in terms of evolution of position). Dominating agents try to maintain their position by exerting symbolic violence, dominated agents try either to resist or to increase their position. Tensions can emerge particularly when their production will have the value of norms. As such, the use of discourses, the elaboration of plans, the choice of tools, particularly reveal these tensions. In this way, Gomez (2002) describe how the planning groups in charge of defining objectives

and to establish a strategic diagnosis can face conflicts. As the formal and homogeneous output produced by planning groups will be taken as a norm and diffused among the organization, agents from various services and department try to impose their view. Laine and Vaara (2007) demonstrate the specific role of discourse by dominating and dominated agents. They show that strategic discourses are a space for struggles, "a dialectical battle between competing groups" (Laine and Vaara 2007: 30), between corporate management and more dominated agents such as middle-managers or project managers. Oakes et al. (1998) analyze the struggles to name and legitimate practices through business planning process, and the effects of these struggles on the agents and the field. Oakes et al. study also evidence that through the use of symbolic violence, these practices lead to change the position of the agents and the different forms of capital. Agents' situation is affected by strategizing, and this modifies their future possibilities in the practice of strategizing.

The importance of embodied and tacit aspects

Most of the aspects of strategizing remain at a tacit level. As the product of habitus, actions are directly in phase with the context of the situation. Agents know what do to or not to do thanks to their academic curriculum, their past experience, their knowledge of the organization. As asserted by Chia and MacKay (2007), "deliberate intentionality is not a prerequisite for the articulation of a strategy; strategy may emerge as a consequence of the inherent predispositions of an actor to unselfconsciously respond to external circumstances in a manner that we may retrospectively recognize as being consistently strategic" (Chia & MacKay 2007: 228).

Of course, agents express reasons, build discourses on their choices. However, "the most consciously elaborated strategies can be implemented only within the limits and in the directions assigned to them by the structural constraints and by the practical or explicit knowledge –always unequally distributed- of these constraints" (Bourdieu 2005: 196). Trying to make sense of their decisions and actions is an essential part of the practice of strategizing. They also rely on tacit and embodied dispositions, as analyzed by Rouleau (2005), "it is not only through consciously selecting and manipulating from a defined menu that these processes are produced. Sensemaking and sensegiving are more than just clear patterns constructed by top managers" (Rouleau 2005: 1437).

Tacit knowing is essential to the practice of strategizing. Agents learn through practice, for example for managers involved in strategic workshops, how to choose participants, how to organize the agenda, which tools to propose, how to deal with conflicts (Gomez 2002). However, everyone does not enter strategizing with the same background and the same possibilities: top managers have greater possibilities and thus more opportunities to learn

more, but they also enter the strategizing game with more tools to practice: with their operational responsibilities they have more acquaintance to the strategic concerns; they are more familiar with the strategy vocabulary through their curriculum in business schools and the reading of management literature. Agreeing with Denis et al (2007), "some strategists are more skilful than others in using routines, interactions and the other tools available to them to move events in directions they seek to promote" (Denis et al 2007: 209). However, their vision of learning to strategize appears incomplete in the field-habitus-practice framework. They note that "strategizing is a skill that can be acquired both individually and organizationally through active participation in its routines" (p.209), whereas habitus suggests that any agent has initial predispositions to strategizing due to his/her personal background and that his/her possibilities to learn strategizing is conditioned by his/her practice, thus his/her position in the field.

Discussion

The first characteristic that has been presented above, strategizing as a doing by numerous agents, is a widely-spread assumption within the strategy-as-practice perspective. It contributes to distinguish the strategy-as-practice approach from others, such as the resource-based-view of the firm (Ambrosini et al 2007), strategy-process (Chia & MacKay 2007), cognitive approaches (Hodgkinson and Clarke 2007). However, within this apparent consensus, there exists differences on the status of practice and strategizing between the framework presented here and other approaches on practice.

Towards a systemic approach on practice

First, practice is often considered as a sub-level of analysis for a global phenomena. According to authors, such as Whittington (1996, 2002, 2006), Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2006), Samra-Frederiks (2003), practice represents a more micro level of analysis than strategy process. For Jarzabkowski (2004), practice is centered on individuals/practitioners, as opposed to the traditional vision of strategy remaining at a more global or corporate level. This leads to assimilate practice to collective work that can be detailed in activities (Orlikowski 2002), episodes (Hendry and Seedl 2003, Maitlis and Lawrence 2003), or core micro-strategies (Salvato 2003). In a parallel movement, agents can be grouped in communities of practice (Wenger 2003), as a meso-level of analysis, between the individual and the organizational. The risk of such perspectives is the impossibility to go beyond a description of activities/practice/action and to actually understand and account for practice. This risk has been highlighted by Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007) who ask "so what?[…] S-A-P studies, with their strong forces on the empirical detail through which strategy is constructed, may lack an outcome" (Jarzakowski et al.2007: 14). Chia and

MacKay (2007) deplores the "lack of clarity about what practice really is in relation to processes and individual activities" (Chia and MacKay 2007: 219) and invite us to bypass the dominant process-based paradigm by considering practice as a 'post-processual' challenge. Sharing the perspective of these authors, practice itself is the central concern here. The 'practitioners', taken as agents, are of importance, but precisely because of their involvement in practice through their situation in the field. They are initiators of practice, but in return they are themselves affected by practice. Practice, as the site where individual and collective components, logical and unreflexive aspects, structural and personal conditions meet, is the first concern.

The equilibrium and completeness of this framework also avoids to mix different theoretical backgrounds, with the risk of contradictions between them. Moreover, it helps to connect various concepts that we can find in the strategy-as-practice approach. For instance, Whittington (2006) and, building in his work, Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007) distinguish three concepts in his theory of practice: praxis (what people really do), practices (taken as routines and norms) and practitioners. In his model, these three concepts are isolated; each of them induces a different analytical perspective. Strategy is presented as a conscious and reflexive process. Culture, routine, tools, are said to be potentially mobilized through the practical lens, but they are not integrated in the model. This conducts to isolate interconnected phenomena and to keep the false dichotomies between theory and practice, action and reflection, collective and individual levels that the strategy-as-practice approach tries to avoid.

A broad conception of strategizing

The conception of strategizing drawn on the habitus-field-practice framework is rather open. It exceeds the explicit making of strategy, with specific artifacts and activities, such as strategic planning, annual reviews, strategy workshops and their associated discourses (Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2002, Laine and Vaara 2007, Paroutis and Pettigrew 2007). It refers to everyday situations that will impact strategizing possibilities. As a consequence, it is important to look at a wide range of people and not to limit to the corporate level.

Enlarging the perspective on strategizing, the Bourdieusian approach allows to take into account the external stakeholders, and in particular the clients. Through an homology relation between the two fields of companies and their clients, and the « spontaneous orchestration of practices" (Bourdieu 2005: 73), it can account for the match between supply and demand, between firms and customers, which is completely ignored by the strategy-as-practice approach. The macro level always refer to inter-organizational relations or to an institutional

level, but does not include other stakeholders, and particular the clients, which are a major concern and stake in strategizing.

Agents in strategizing, middle-managers and struggles

As claimed by Mounoud and De La Ville (2006), "all the members of the firm contribute to draw the trajectory of the organization" (Mounoud and De La Ville 2006: 99). The role of agents external to the organization is a challenging issue too. For instance, Lorrain (2007) highlight the role of finance analysts, consultants and rating in his study of the field of electricity. Their power is oligopolistic and it mainly derives from their ability to influence the definition of the "right" policies and the production of information prior to decision-making. Other important participants has been identified and studied, such as senior consultants by McKenna (2006), Whittington et al. (2003), and Babeau and Golsorkhi (2006), or bankers and owners (Fligstein and Brantley 1992). There are still large opportunities to investigate these key agents.

The participation of middle-managers has now been largely acknowledged (Westley 1990, Samra-Fredericks 2003, De La Ville and Mounoud 2003, Rouleau 2005, Vogler and Rouzies 2006, Belmondo 2006; Besson and Mahieu 2006; Laine and Vaara 2007,). However, the role of middle-managers in strategizing looks more complex than the result of decentralization and empowerment in organization. Within a Bourdieusian framework, we can hypothesize that the involvement of middle-managers reveals the symbolic violence between dominating and dominated agents: involving middle-managers in strategic workshops can place them in difficult situations with their colleagues; it can be a way to legitimate decisions or to reinforce the power of top managers. Little research has investigated this point, but the works on the forms of resistance by middle-managers suggest that they do not necessarily benefit from their participation to strategy and do not agree with the role top managers would like them play. As a matter of facts, Vogler and Rouziès (2006) detail various forms of control on strategizing, from the dominating agents but also the attempts of middle-managers to control strategizing: they highlight forms of resistance from middle-managers, particularly in decentralized units and networks. They distinguish nine situations illustrating the relations between top management and middle-managers, according to the nature of control and the resistance or cooperation of middle-managers in strategizing. Stensaker and Falkenberg (2007) identify five responses middle-managers give to corporate change : convergent response, divergent response, unresolved sensemaking, creative response, and non-compliance. Laine and Vaara (2007) evidence struggles in strategizing: They highlight how corporate management mobilize and appropriate specific sorts of strategic discourse in order

to keep controlling the orientations of the organization and neutralize other agents. In return, dominated agents answer by creating other kinds of discourse as a form of resistance and a creation of margins of freedom. Their research is one of the few in the developing strategy-as-practice perspective emphasizing the struggling nature of strategizing. The forms of symbolic violence remain to be studied.

Strategic tools and artifacts at stake

Emphasizing on strategizing as a site for struggles, a promising avenue for research may be the choice of 'strategic' tools and methods in strategizing: strategic diagnostic method, performance indicators, the choice of a consulting firm, the strategic vocabulary that will be used. The way organizations select the tools to mobilize in strategizing, consider them as 'strategic', define and norm their strategic process is highly relevant. These tools, leading to "pre-packed" practices (Allard-Poesi 2006) are often taken for granted by both managers and researchers whereas they should not. Various pieces of research show that the use of strategic tools is neither rational nor neutral. It is both a stake for struggles and a mean for dominating agents to maintain their control over the organization. Holman et al (2004) explain how major tools exert domination among employees; Mintzberg (XXXX) establish relations between control mechanisms and the powerful part of the organization; Lozeau, Langley and Denis (2002) show how strategic planning in hospitals is used by medical doctors to reinforce their domination over the administrative staff and nurses; as asserted by Mounoud and De La Ville (2006), "l'agir ordinaire déployé par la les membres d'une organisation influence l'émergence de la stratégie et […] en retour l'institutionnalisation de normes et de règles au fur et à mesure que la stratégie prend corps, contraint les pratiques quotidiennes et les capacités d'exploration collective de l'entreprise » (Mounoud and De La Ville 2006 :101)

There is no point why strategizing would escape to the rules of the other social practices, and the organization be a different social field. Much research and most management books generally occult the violent nature of strategizing and propose a rather descriptive and idyllic view of strategizing, where agents involved in strategizing (particularly middle-managers) always benefit from this participation, and with a collective agreement on the pertinence of the tools used. They participate to the development and the implementation of symbolic power and violence.

This also questions our position in the field of strategy as academics. An pertinent study could advance our comprehension of strategizing: the field of the strategy business composed by organizations, such as strategy consulting firms and business schools, and by individual agents such as members of corporate management, academics in the field of strategy, strategic books editors, as indicated by Clark (2004). This would respond to the call

of Whittington (2006: 625) and complement Knights and Morgan's research (1991) on how strategy emerged historically as a new and powerful managerial discourse in the mid-20th century. Knight and Morgan (1991) highlight the change in managers' activities and identity. However, they focus on discourses of strategy within organizations, even if they consider the role of major authors and university MBA. The study of the field of the strategy business could help to understand how and why some models, methods, spread among strategic management, how some consulting firms such as McKinsey dominate the field (Djelic 2004). It would highlight the underlying and embedded stakes of strategy-making, the relations between dominated and dominating agents. It would reveal the link between the field of strategy and the field of power in society, as Dezalay and Garth (2006) note at an international level for the field of econonomy. Djelic (1998) suggests the same when she highlights the role of economic, political and social elites in adopting US practices in the modernization of Europe after the 2nd world war. This would be relevant for the strategy-as-practice community but also for the whole strategic management community.

Passing to organizations as agents, the spread of strategic tools, norms, vocabulary, could benefit from the insights of institutional theory and would provide an opportunity to bridge two perspectives on practice. In continuity with explorations of change, from outside or inside the field (for instance Meyer 1982; Munir 2005; Seo and Creed 2002; Thornton 2002), from powerful actors able to reshape practices (Lounsbury 2001; Scott et al. 2000; Suddaby and Greenwood 2005; Washington 2004), or by institutional entrepreneurs (Boxenbaum and Battilana 2005; Czarniawska-Joerges and Sevon 1996, Lounsbury 2007, D'Aunno et al. Greenwood and Suddaby 2006).

Conclusion

This essay on the possible contribution of a Bourdieusian perspective on strategy responds to Özbilgin and Tatti (2005)'s call to deploy the full power of Bourdieu's sociology: "if Bourdieu were incorporated in Organization Science, we would enjoy an understanding of organizational reality, which allows for a reading of the interplay among individual choices, capacity and strategies with structural conditions in a way that is true to organizations reality's relational and dynamic properties" (Özbilgin and Tatti 2005: 867-868).

This Bourdieusian perspective on strategy emphasizes strategizing as a practice, as the collective doing of agents in the context of a field, with its rules, its stakes, its interests that shape practice. It puts to light the doing in strategy and the link between micro and macro

levels. Most of all, it allows to overrun a simply descriptive stage of the steps and actions in strategizing. As Bourdieu puts it:

"Investigating how decisions come to be taken remain more or less meaningless so long as they confine themselves to the merely phenomenal manifestations of the exercise of power, that is to say, to discourse and interactions, ignoring the structure of relations of forces between the institutions and the agents […] contending for decision-making power, or, in other words, the dispositions and interests of the various directors and the 'strengths' at their disposal for realizing those dispositions and interests." (Bourdieu 2005: 69-70).

The field-habitus-practice framework highlights the relational and dispositional nature of strategizing. Individuals as agents in the field of organization are portrayed in terms of their relative position and trajectory in the field. Their habitus, as a set of dispositions for action, account for the balance between agency and structures, personal aspects and initiatives and incorporated elements. Involved in strategizing, agents are engaged in an actual competition, a struggle for stakes that can be understood only by reference to the field.

As such, this framework emphasizes the complex but fascinating relations between the individuals, their history and their environment; their degree of freedom and the weight of structural constraints, rationalization and non-reflexivity in practice; collective and collaborative work and symbolic struggles. These insights open large avenues in strategy research to better account for what really happens and is at stake in organizations.

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