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SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

Strategy processes and practices: Dialogues and intersections

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Research Summary: Building on our review of the strategy process and practice research, we identify three ways to see the relationships between the two research traditions: complementary, critical, and combinatory views. We adopt in this special issue the combinatory view, in which activities and processes are seen as closely intertwined aspects of the same phenomena. It is this view that we argue offers both strategy practice and strategy process scholars some of the greatest opportunities for joint research going forward. We develop a combinatory framework for understanding strategy processes and practices (SAPP) and based on that call for more research on (a) temporality, (b) actors and agency, (c) cognition and emotionality, (d) materiality and tools, (e) structures and systems, and (f) language and meaning.

KEYWORDS

SAP, SAPP, strategy practice, strategy process, strategy-as-practice

1 | INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the two influential strategy process–themed special issues in the *Strategic Management Journal* (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992; Pettigrew, 1992) over 25 years ago, a lot has changed. The real world of organizations has been transformed, with markets achieving global reach and unimagined opportunities due to new technologies, especially digital. At the same time, there have been substantial advances in research: in particular, we see a new appreciation of process research (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013), a turn toward practice theory in the social sciences (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012), and the development of new innovative methodologies (Arora, Athreye, & Huang, 2016). This special issue on Strategy Processes and Practices will address many of these changes. Our argument will be that this is a particularly apt moment for

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exploring intersections of Practices and Processes, and that indeed it is both possible and desirable to combine them into a joint research stream that we shall call "Strategy as Process and Practice" (SAPP).

Chakravarthy and Doz (1992) made a distinction between research on strategy content, concerned with strategic positions and competitive advantage, and research on strategy process, concerned with how strategic decisions are shaped and implemented. This content–process distinction was quite common through the 1990s. Even at that point, however, there were already voices that challenged the usefulness of separating strategic positions and advantages from how strategies came about and were realized. One could even argue that Bower (1970), Mintzberg (1978), and Burgelman (1983b), who were among the founders of the strategy process research tradition, were always seeking to understand *both* process and content, treating strategy content as a dynamic phenomenon that evolved over time. Similarly, Pettigrew (1992) pointed out that understanding processes over time could inform many content topics that had previously been analyzed largely in static or comparative static terms. In parallel, Porter (1991), from the content side of the field, called for more longitudinal research in understanding the origins of competitive advantage.

Fast-forward to today; it has become well-established that drawing boundaries between the content and process subfields is unduly limiting: process is potentially relevant to all strategy topics. The value of a processual approach has been amply demonstrated for a range of traditional content topics, for example, in the research on dynamic capabilities (Helfat et al., 2007; Teece, 2007; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), dynamic managerial capabilities (Adner & Helfat, 2003; Helfat & Martin, 2015; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015), organizational ambidexterity, paradoxes, and innovation (e.g., Burgelman & Grove, 2007; Raisch, Birkinshaw, Probst, & Tushman, 2009; Zimmermann, Raisch, & Birkinshaw, 2015), and even in such classical content topics as acquisitions and alliances (Graebner, Heimeriks, Huy, & Vaara, 2017; Hoffmann, 2007; Laamanen & Keil, 2008).

The topical domain of strategy scholarship has been significantly extended during the last decades. When it comes to levels of analysis, the dominant concern two or three decades ago was the firm, often seen in terms of its "decision processes and administrative systems" (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992). Pettigrew (1992) emphasized the importance of actors and action, but his focus was also mainly on "managerial elites" at the top of these firms. Since then, research on strategy process has increasingly opened up a range of different strategic actors within the firm, most notably middle managers, whose interests and actions cannot be always automatically identified with the organization as a whole (Floyd & Lane, 2000). There is also a broadening of the units of analysis, with a growing appreciation of the interorganizational phenomenon in which strategy processes take place across organizational boundaries (e.g., Doz, 1996; Jemison & Sitkin, 1986; Whittington, Cailluet, & Yakis-Douglas, 2011).

In addition, the strategy field has seen increasing diversity in terms of methodology. Strategy process researchers initially converged on longitudinal case studies, either standalone or comparative. Since then these have been complemented, for example, with simulations and mathematical modelling (Davis et al., 2009; Zott, 2003). Further opportunities have been opened up by the methodological innovations coming from the Strategy-as-Practice (SAP) research, building on different units of analysis and forms of data.

The emergence of the SAP research community was inspired by the contemporary practice turn in social theory, led by figures such as Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007; Whittington, 2006). One theme has been to go "inside the process" (Brown & Duguid, 2000) to examine the activities ("praxis") involved in strategizing episodes, including, for example, boardroom meetings or strategy retreats (Hendry & Seidl, 2003). A second theme has been

to examine further the variety of actors ("practitioners") involved in strategizing episodes, going beyond managerial elites and even middle managers to include ordinary employees, strategy staffs, and strategy consultants (Angwin, Paroutis, & Mitson, 2009; Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Paroutis & Heracleous, 2013). Finally, SAP researchers have also examined the common tools of strategizing episodes including, for example, social tools such as strategy reviews, material tools such as information technology, and discursive tools such as different modes of strategic text and talk (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015; Kaplan, 2011; Vaara & Whittington, 2012).

Research on strategy practices has shifted units of analysis in two directions: on the one hand, it has gone down to the micro-level of activity episodes *inside* firm-level processes; on the other hand, it is increasingly looking *outward* to the macro-level of widely diffused practices and generic categories of practitioner (e.g., consultants). These new micro- and macro-level units of analysis have stimulated the introduction of new research methodologies from other related fields of research into the strategy field including, for example, discourse analysis (Vaara, Sorsa, & Pälli, 2010), narrative analysis (Fenton & Langley, 2011), analysis of socio-materiality (Dameron, Lê, & LeBaron, 2015), and video-ethnography (Gylfe, Franck, Lebaron, & Mantere, 2015).

Despite these developments on multiple fronts, opportunities for cross-fertilization and for exchanging new research methodologies between the strategy process and practice communities have until recently been inhibited by their distinct development paths. As we shall argue later, strategy practice researchers have tended to take two divergent positions with regard to strategy process research: a *complementary* view, in which the focus on practices and practitioners rather than firms was seen to add a different, but complementary, perspective to traditional processual approaches; and a *critical* view, in which strategy process researchers were criticized either for missing out on the activity that really mattered or neglecting the powerful effects of strategy practices upon practitioners and their activity.

Recent developments in a "strong process ontology"[1] (Langley et al., 2013; Langley & Tsoukas, 2010) provide a path toward a *combinatory* perspective on strategy process and practice themes. The strong process ontology casts processes, practices, and actors as all equally made up from ongoing activity. The consequence of this has been to reduce distinctions between the units and levels of analysis favored by the two communities and to introduce a fundamental compatibility that allows for a more comprehensive exchange of questions, concepts, and methodologies between them. Boundaries between the strategy process and strategy practice communities can now be seen as unhelpful as the earlier boundaries between strategy content and strategy process research traditions. Therefore, the main thrust of this Special Issue Introduction is to develop the case for this combined approach that we label the "Strategy as Process and Practice" (SAPP).

We will next provide a brief review of some of the main developments in strategy process and practice research in the past 25 years, develop further the combinatorial approach, and show how the various articles in this special issue contribute each in specific ways to this new SAPP approach. We conclude by providing a research agenda for the future.

[1]Langley et al. (2013) discuss the different ontological approaches to process research in the *Academy of Management Journal*'s Special Research Forum on Process Studies and Change in Organization and Management. They distinguish two main ontological views. In the traditional view, change patterns are seen as something that happens to organizations that are themselves viewed as fixed entities. In contrast, in the strong process ontology view the world is viewed "as made up of processes rather than things." Accordingly, organizations and structures are not seen as fixed entities, but as temporary instantiations of ongoing processes in the continuous state of becoming. This is also consistent with the portrayal of strategy process research by Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006), who viewed static and dynamic organizational characteristics both as antecedents and outcomes of strategy processes.

2 | REVIEW OF PRIOR RESEARCH

2.1 | Strategy process research

During the past 25 years, following the publication of the previous two strategy process themed special issues, strategy process research has been enriched with the emergence of a number of new research streams. Pettigrew (1992) called for researchers "to extend the themes pursued by process scholars beyond the still important but limiting areas of decision making and change" (p. 6). The field responded to this call with a vengeance, leading Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006) in the opening paragraph of their subsequent review of process research to remark that strategy process research "is characterized by an ever-increasing plurality of concepts and frameworks" (p. 673). A major contribution of their article was an organizing framework that embraces a wide range of factors encompassing strategy process research. These included on the one hand, *antecedents* in the environmental, strategic, and organizational contexts, strategists, issues, and action sequences, and on the other, *outcomes*, including the altered strategic context, resulting static and dynamic organizational characteristics, and organizational performance.

Using this demarcation of the strategy process research domain, our review of the literature published during 1992–2016 found the following main themes of strategy process research: (a) strategic decision-making and decision processes, (b) actors involved including the CEOs, TMTs, boards, middle management, venture managers, team leaders, and other employees, (c) cognition, including attention, behavioral dynamics, and emotion, (d) strategic renewal and the evolution of competences and capabilities, (e) configurations of strategic planning, control systems and other formal processes, (f) organizations as ecologies of strategic initiatives subject to the selection forces of (guided) evolution, (g) and strategic issue management. As we do not have sufficient space here to review each of these research streams in depth, we comment only briefly on some of the most important advances.

2.1.1 | Strategic decision-making research

Although research on strategic decision-making processes and decision quality was already a well-established research stream in the 1970s and 1980s (for a comprehensive review, see Rajagopalan, Rasheed, & Datta, 1993) with a focus on different strategic decision-making process characteristics, such as comprehensiveness (e.g., Fredrickson, 1984; Fredrickson & Mitchell, 1984) and consensus (e.g., Bourgeois, 1980; Dess, 1987; Dess & Origer, 1987; Wooldridge & Floyd, 1989), researchers have continued to be intrigued by the factors affecting the quality of strategic decisions (Baum & Wally, 2003; Dean & Sharfman, 1993, 1996; Dess & Priem, 1995; Elbanna, 2006; Iaquinto & Fredrickson, 1997; Markoczy, 2001; Nutt, 1993; Papadakis, Lioukas, & Chambers, 1998). In recent years, some of the most visible contributions to this research stream have related to the characteristics of the CEOs (e.g., CEO personality) and other top decision makers, and how these are reflected in the decision quality, grandiosity, and other features of executive decisions (e.g., Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Hiller & Hambrick, 2005). This stream of research is closely connected to the related research streams that focus on actors in strategy processes and cognitive and behavioral biases, as discussed below.

2.1.2 | Actors in strategy processes

Whereas the CEOs, TMTs, and board members have continued to receive significant attention through the research on board processes (e.g., Finkelstein & Mooney, 2003) and TMT behavioral integration (e.g., Lubatkin, Simsek, Ling, & Veiga, 2006; Ou et al., 2014; Simsek, Veiga,

Lubatkin, & Dino, 2005), it is now well-established that other employees also play important roles. In particular, there has been an increasing interest in middle managers and how their participation in strategy processes can enhance the quality of strategies and strategy implementation (Ahearne, Lam, & Kraus, 2013; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992; Raes, Heijltjes, Glunk, & Roe, 2011; Wooldridge, & Floyd, 1990). In recent years, there has also been an increasing recognition of the importance of involving other employees beyond the management ranks in the strategy processes (e.g., Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Regnér, 2003), consistent with the emerging concept of "open strategy" (Hautz, Seidl, & Whittington, 2017).

2.1.3 | Cognition, attention, behavioral dynamics, and emotion

Research on cognition, attention, behavioral dynamics, and emotions has contributed in important ways to strategy process research. For example, the work on framing contests (e.g., Kaplan, 2008; Kaplan & Henderson, 2005) has deepened our understanding of how strategy content can be contested within organizations. Similarly, the attention-based view has made an important contribution to our understanding of the role that attention plays in strategy processes (Ocasio, 1997; Ocasio & Joseph, 2005, 2008) and how the attention focus of the organization can be influenced through different types of discourses (Ocasio, Laamanen, & Vaara, 2018). While already the early research on the interplay of action and cognition in the internal corporate venturing process (Burgelman, 1984, 1988) showed that strategy-making can be understood as a multilevel social learning process, research on behavioral strategy has deepened the understanding of how biases and managerial cognition relate to learning processes (e.g., Gavetti, 2012; Laureiro-Martinez, 2014; Reitzig & Sorenson, 2013). Finally, organizational emotions have also been found to play a role in how strategy is developed and implemented (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Vuori & Huy, 2016).

2.1.4 | Strategic renewal and competence and capability evolution

Although research on competencies and capabilities did not originate in the strategy process domain, when one looks at the way Teece et al. (1997) originally defined the concept of dynamic capabilities as "*distinctive processes (ways of coordinating and combining), shaped by the firm's (specific) asset positions (such as the firm's portfolio of difficult-to-trade knowledge assets and complementary assets), and the evolution path(s) it has adopted or inherited*" (emphasis added) the parallel to strategy process research is quite evident. Also the way Teece (2007) defines the microfoundations of dynamic capabilities as a process of "sensing, seizing, and managing threats/transforming" and the research on dynamic managerial capabilities (Adner & Helfat, 2003; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015) have a distinctive process characteristic.

Researchers in the strategy process domain have been quick to recognize such parallels and become increasingly interested in capabilities and competencies as outcomes (e.g., Floyd & Wooldridge, 1999; McGrath, MacMillan, & Venkataraman, 1995; Montealegre, 2002) and process as a capability (e.g., Bingham, Eisenhardt, & Furr, 2007; Hart & Banbury, 1994).

2.1.5 | Configurations of strategic planning control systems and processes

Research on how strategy processes and strategic planning and control systems are configured in the organization can in some ways be seen as the core of normative strategy process research. There has, however, been surprisingly limited research on this topic since the foundational debates by Ansoff and Minzberg on how strategies emerge and the role of formal strategic planning (Ansoff, 1990; Mintzberg, 1981, 1990, 1991, 1994). Debate about the relationship between formal strategic planning and organizational performance continued well into the 1990s (Miller & Cardinal, 1994).

Despite the critical views of Mintzberg regarding the rise and fall of strategic planning (Mintzberg, 1994), formal planning processes and practices still seem to be alive and well (e.g., Joseph & Ocasio, 2012) although their role has changed dramatically over the years (Grant, 2003; for a review, see Wolf & Floyd, 2017).

2.1.6 | Organizations as systems of initiatives and guided evolution

One of the most active streams of strategy process research has been the research focusing on the role of the organizational context in strategy processes and strategy emergence. Building on Burgelman's (1983a, 1983b) and Mintzberg's (1978), Mintzberg andMcHugh (1985) and Mintzberg & Waters (1985) research in the 1970s and 1980s, this stream has advanced our understanding of organizations as internal ecologies of different types of strategic initiatives (e.g., Burgelman, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2002; Noda & Bower, 1996). Based on this research, we have gained an improved understanding of how strategic initiatives emerge, evolve, and how this evolution can also be guided by the top management team (e.g., Kreutzer, Walter, & Cardinal, 2015; Lechner & Floyd, 2012; Lechner, Frankenberger, & Floyd, 2010; Lovas & Ghoshal, 2000).

2.1.7 | Strategic issue management systems and processes

Research on strategic issues and strategic issue management systems can be seen as a parallel track to the research on strategic initiatives. It also complements well the work on the annual strategic planning processes of firms by developing an understanding of the processes and systems related to the management of emerging strategic issues (Ansoff, 1980; Camillus & Datta, 1991; Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Dutton, Fahey, & Narayanan, 1983; Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987; Thomas & McDaniel, 1990). Strategic issue management research has advanced our understanding of the strategy processes of firms by showing that the categorization of issues as threats or opportunities, for example, plays an important role in deciding whether and how strategic issues should be addressed (Barreto & Patient, 2013; Chattopadhyay, Glick, & Huber, 2001; Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Gartner, Shaver, & Liao, 2008; Julian & Ofori-Dankwa, 2008). Furthermore, this research has also provided an improved understanding of how individual employees can engage in issue-selling actions to promote a particular strategic issue onto the strategic agenda of the company (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton, Ashford, Wierba, Oneill, & Hayes, 1997) and how overload in the strategic issue management system can impair the system's effectiveness (Laamanen, Maula, Kajanto, & Kunnas, 2017).

2.2 | Research on strategy practices

Research on strategy practices emerged from the work of a group of scholars that were interested in how sociological theories could be applied to the study of strategy-related phenomena (Golsorkhi et al., 2015; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). While the early roots of this research stream can be dated back all the way to Knights and Morgan's (1991) pioneering article entitled "Corporate Strategy, Organizations, and Subjectivity: A Critique" and Whittington's article entitled "Strategy as Practice" (Whittington, 1996), the main thrust of this research stream came with the publication of several special issues in different journals.[2]

[2]These included two *Journal of Management Studies* Special Issues entitled "Micro Strategy and Strategizing: Towards an Activity-Based View" (Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003) and "Strategy as Discourse: Its Significance, Challenges and Future Directions" (Balogun, Jacobs, Jarzabkowski, Mantere, & Vaara, 2014), *Human Relations* Special Issue entitled "Strategizing: The Challenges of a Practice Perspective" (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007), *Long Range Planning* Special Issue entitled "Crafts of Strategy" (Whittington & Cailluet, 2008), and a *British Journal of Management* Special Issue on "Materializing Strategy and Strategizing Materials" (Dameron et al., 2015).

The strategy practice research (also called as "strategy-as-practice" or "sap" research) has traditionally focused on strategy practices (routinized types of behavior and tools that are used in strategy work), strategy practitioners (actors that are involved in strategy work), and strategy praxis (strategic activities conducted in organizations) (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Whittington, 2006). In our review, we identified five streams or substreams of research on strategy practices (a) social and organizational practices in strategy-making, (b) roles and identities of the practitioners, (c) sensemaking, discourses and narratives, (d) sociomateriality and strategy tools, and (e) power and criticality in strategy work.

2.2.1 | Social and organizational practices

Research on the social and organizational practices of strategy-making can be regarded as the core of the SAP research. Jarzabkowski et al. (2007) define strategy practices as "*routinized types of behaviour which consist of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge*." According to Whittington (2006), an important defining characteristic of strategy practices is that they are multilevel. They are embodied in the routines, operating procedures, and cultures of organizations. However, at the same time, they are extra-organizational too. For example, the use of SWOT analysis (Jarratt & Stiles, 2010; Wright, Paroutis, & Blettner, 2013), PowerPoint strategy presentations (Kaplan, 2011), strategy projects (Paroutis, Franco, & Papadopoulos, 2015), or strategy retreats (Johnson, Prashantham, Floyd, & Bourque, 2010) all represent extra-organizational practices adopted by multiple firms as part of their own strategy practices. Thus, although strategy practices can be observed as micro-level activities in strategy processes, they can also be viewed as broader society-level practices that are adopted by many organizations (Whittington, 2007).

2.2.2 | Roles and identities of the practitioners

Research on strategy practices defines strategy practitioners as "actors who shape the construction of practice through who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon" (e.g., Jarzabkowski et al., 2007, p. 11). While CEOs and TMTs are regarded as central architects of a firm's strategy practices also in SAP research (Jarzabkowski, 2003, 2008; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002), this body of work emphasizes even more the roles and identities of managers and other organizational members engaged in strategy work. Thus, a significant amount of attention has focused on the role of middle managers and the ways in which their actions impact strategy-making (Balogun & Johnson, 2004, 2005; Fauré & Rouleau, 2011; Mantere, 2005, 2008; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Thomas, Leisa, & Hardy, 2011). Another stream of work has concentrated on the social construction of the identity of strategists (Dameron & Torset, 2014; Dick & Collings, 2014; Laine & Vaara, 2007; Mantere & Vaara, 2008)—often linked with a focus on power as discussed below. Moreover, researchers have also become increasingly interested in the roles of the chief strategy officers and other strategic planners as key strategy roles in the company (e.g., Menz & Scheef, 2014; Paroutis & Heracleous, 2013; Whittington, Yakis-Douglas, Ahn, & Cailluet, 2017), as well as, the emergence of strategy as a profession (Whittington et al., 2011).

2.2.3 | Sensemaking, discourse and narratives

Another stream of strategy practice research has focused on the role of language and communication in strategy-making. It has highlighted the importance of both sensegiving and sensemaking in strategy work (Balogun & Johnson, 2004, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). In addition, recent research

has linked strategic sensemaking with politics (Mueller, Whittle, Gilchrist, & Lenney, 2013) and emotions (Liu & Maitlis, 2014). Relatedly, research on the discursive[3] aspects of strategy-making has attracted particular attention in recent years (Balogun et al., 2014; Ezzamel & Willmott, 2008; Hardy & Thomas, 2014; Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Paroutis & Heracleous, 2013; Phillips, Sewell, & Jaynes, 2008).

Researchers have elucidated key issues such as participation in the strategy process (Mantere & Vaara, 2008) and power in strategy-making (Ezzamel & Willmott, 2008; Hardy & Thomas, 2014). In addition, there has been a proliferation of research on narratives and storytelling in strategy-making (Brown & Thompson, 2013; Barry & Elmes, 1997; Fenton & Langley, 2011; Vaara & Pedersen, 2014). While some have focused on discussions and conversations in strategy-making (Samra-Fredericks, 2004, 2005; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011; Westley, 1990), others have concentrated on the role of strategic plans and strategy texts (Cornut, Giroux, & Langley, 2012; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011; Vaara et al., 2010).

2.2.4 | Sociomateriality and strategy tools

We have also seen a growing interest in sociomateriality, the entanglement of social and material in organizational life, in strategy practice research (Dameron et al., 2015; Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015; Kaplan, 2011). For instance, Whittington, Molloy, Mayer, and Smith (2006) demonstrated how physical objects can serve as means of communication, Heracleous and Jacobs (2008) illustrated how material artefacts, such as Lego bricks, can be used in organizational change interventions, and Spee and Jarzabkowski (2009) argued that strategy tools, such as Porter's five forces, may become important boundary objects for enabling or constraining knowledge sharing across organizational boundaries. Based on this research, there is an improved understanding of how strategy tools can both enable and constrain strategy-making and the benefits that practitioners get from strategy tool use (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015; Kaplan, 2011; Wright et al., 2013).

2.2.5 | Power and criticality in strategy-making

As mentioned above, SAP research has developed alongside more critical perspectives on strategic management interested in strategy as the means for power and politics. In particular, Knights and Morgan's (1991) critical view has inspired a number of scholars to examine topics such as ideology and power in strategy and strategy-making (Ezzamel & Willmott, 2008, 2010; Grandy & Mills, 2004; Vaara, 2010). Recently, we have also seen an increasing interest in historical research adopting a critical perspective on strategy and strategy-making (2013; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016).

Overall, the research on strategy practices has contributed to the revitalization of the study of how strategies are made by introducing sociological theories to this area of strategy research, by challenging the way performance is measured, and by contributing to the development of new methods for studying strategy-related phenomena, including participant observation, action research, photography, video-ethnography, research subject diaries, and work shadowing (Vaara & Whittington, 2012).

3 | COMPLEMENTARY, CRITICAL, AND COMBINATORY VIEWS

We can identify three broad relationships between strategy process and strategy practice traditions in the recent literature. First is the *Complementary* view, which acknowledges that each tradition is

[3]That is, language, talk, text, and vocabularies used in strategy communication and when talking about strategy.

legitimately examining different, but compatible phenomena, with practice scholars particularly concerned with micro-level activities within larger processes. Then there is a *Critical* view, coming in two forms: firstly, practice scholars suggesting that conventional strategy process traditions miss, or misrepresent, intrinsic features of the phenomena they attempt to describe; secondly, process scholars skeptical about the relevance of formal strategy practices to realized strategy. Finally, there is a more *Combinatory* view, in which activities and processes are seen as closely intertwined, essentially aspects of the same phenomena. It is this view that we shall argue offers both strategy practice and strategy process scholars some of the greatest opportunities for joint research going forward. Meanwhile, we tease out some of the key features and achievements of the three perspectives, starting with the most straightforward one.

The Complementary view accepts that strategy process and practice traditions have different primary concerns and acknowledges that each has explanatory power and value for managers. The strategy process tradition highlights the importance of group- and organizational-level processes related to strategy formation and change, including strategic decision making, executive cognition, and organizational learning.

Normatively, research in the process field is intended to guide managers in the design of appropriate administrative mechanisms (Burgelman, 1983a, 1991; Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000). Theory usually draws from rich description and develops from a combination of case studies (as described by Langley, 1999), inductive theory building (as described by Eisenhardt, 1989), and large sample theory testing (as proposed by Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Meanwhile, strategy practice scholars tend to take on two other levels, above and below the organizational. The larger stream goes below, focusing on "the practice inside the process" (Brown & Duguid, 2000), the critical details of strategy work.

Thus, for example, a strategic planning process involves a host of micro-level negotiations and compromises, which together allow the process to deliver particular outcomes, for instance, integration (Jarzabkowski & Balogun, 2009). In this view, practice scholarship comes very close to the process tradition, differing principally in its granularity: Practice is about "micro-processes" (Sminia, 2009). Similarly, the Bower-Burgelman (B-B) process models of corporate venturing (Burgelman, 1983a) and strategic business exit (Burgelman, 1996) provide detailed documentation of the interlocking micro-level strategic leadership activities at different levels of management that constitute these organization-level processes.

A second variant of this Complementary view takes on the macro level, focusing on practices that are widely used in strategy processes: for example, strategy tools, such as matrix analysis (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015), or society-level discourses, such as debates on the importance of competitive advantage (Vaara, Tienari, & Laurila, 2006). A common application of the Complementary view would be to analyze performance outcomes of commonplace societal practices, such as strategy retreats (Healey et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2010), as part of the strategy process. However, the admission of societal-level practices does also allow for a more critical relationship between strategy process and practice traditions.

From a Critical view, strategy practice scholars are concerned that traditional process scholars fall short in two main respects. Most conventionally, strategy process scholars are alleged to miss the crucial techniques and activities that make strategic processes—such as strategy formation or strategic change—actually function (Johnson et al., 2003). What really matters are the micro-level details of strategy work. In this sense, strategy process scholarship has been argued to be of limited use as focusing on remote and abstract processes that are unamenable to practical action. More fundamentally, some strategy practice scholars have suggested that traditional strategy process

scholarship misrepresents how strategy processes have their effect. Strategy does not work like a simple tool; rather, by naturalizing new organizational purposes, it changes employees' identities, for example, from independent professionals to accountable managers (Ezzamel & Willmott, 2010; Knights & Morgan, 1991). Strategy's effectiveness is achieved through practitioners' internalization of strategic responsibilities and priorities. In this vein, Chia and McKay (2007) call for a postprocessual practice approach to challenge the micro–macro distinctions of process research and reject simplistic characterizations of practitioners.

Parallel to strategy practice scholars' criticisms of strategy process scholarship, however, strategy process scholars have been concerned with, for instance, the failure of practice scholars to come to grips with the often less than effective and bureaucracy-enhancing role of strategic planning practitioners in large, complex organizations (Wolf & Floyd, 2017). At the same time, practice scholars' enthusiasm with a micro-level of activity have been accused by process scholars as having let fascination with the details of managerial conduct distract them from issues with substantive impact on organizational outcomes: too often they have seemed to be doing merely the equivalent of observing individuals "flipping hamburgers" (Mantere, 2005). Some process scholars also maintain that strategic planning and related formal practices actually have very little to do with strategy formation, which is characterized as an emergent, evolutionary process (Mintzberg, 1991).

If we had based this special issue on such mutually critical views, our endeavor to bring strategy process and strategy practice researchers together would have been an awkward one. Therefore, the third view that we build on is the *Combinatory* view, in which the strategy process and practice traditions are not in complementary or critical relationships, but rather can be synthesized into a single, coherent body of research. This perspective has been enhanced by the recent development of a strong process ontology in which everything is seen as process, reflecting continuous activity.

Whereas in weaker ontological views, process is either about transitions from one state to another or about discrete activities such as strategic planning, in the strong ontological view every aspect of the organization is constantly and simultaneously a product of activity. Hence, there are no states and any single set of activities is inextricably part of a larger, moving whole. In this perspective, artificial levels of analysis issues fade and strategic change processes are seen to include all the ongoing activities that not only reform organizations, but also reproduce them over time (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010). From the perspective of strong process ontology, stability is a collective accomplishment rather than a natural "resting state" of the organization. Reproduction requires activity, too; change is not special in that respect. Something similar is true of societal practices. Discursive practices, for example, rely on continuous and adaptive performance for their power and reach (Balogun et al., 2014). This appreciation of all kinds of activity motivates attention to microscopic phenomena in their relationship to context and strategy making. This implies a focus on the incremental shifts, slippages, and corrections that are the natural product of human action and that occur regardless of the deliberate processes of strategic change, for instance. The stability of a seemingly nonchanging organization is similar to the precarious balance of a tightrope walker (Chia & Tsoukas, 2002).

By adopting such a strong process ontology, strategy process and strategy practice perspectives can be combined without violence to either's fundamental assumptions. Activity is essential to both perspectives. As we shall argue, this Combinatory view offers fruitful avenues for future research based on the key intersections of these two bodies of work. Strategic organizations can be appreciated as evolving processes rather than fixed objects with clear boundaries; processes gel with institutional environments that are themselves dynamic. The "organization" that we may regard as a stable entity with boundaries is in itself an accomplishment of coordinated activities of its stakeholders.

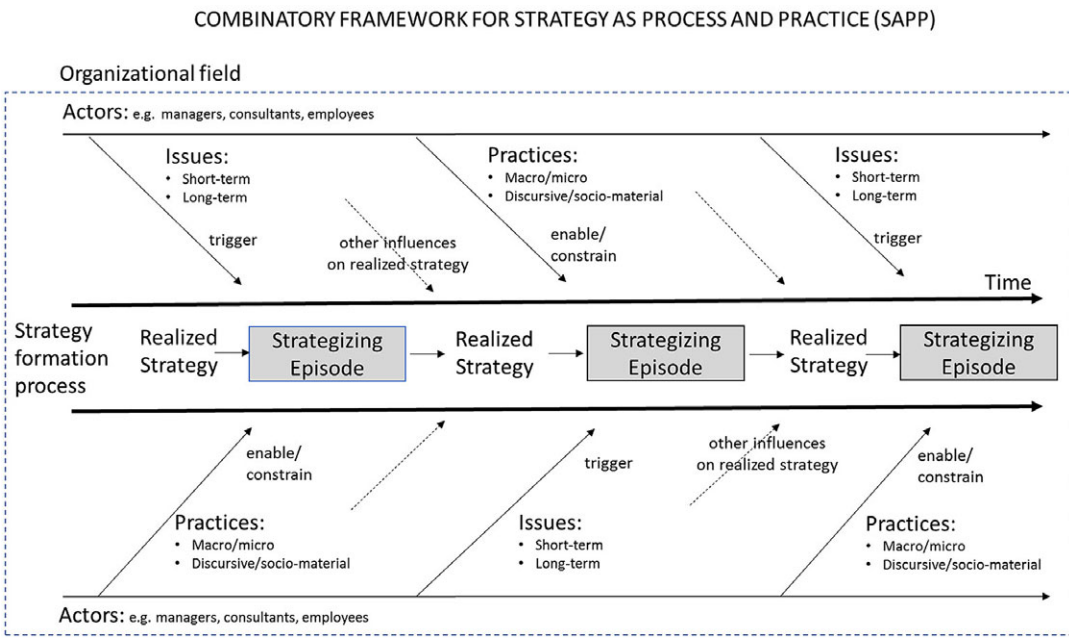

FIGURE 1 Combinatory Model of Strategy as Process and Practice (SAPP)

In order to demonstrate some of these ideas and to provide a basis for a future research agenda, we put forward in Figure 1 a general combinatory framework that integrates the key themes of the strategy process and practice traditions introduced earlier. The framework is selective, but offers one means by which to understand how processes and practices come together to shape strategy. In particular, the combinatory framework highlights key themes, such as *actors*, central to both the strategy process and practice traditions; *strategy formation* and *strategic issues*, themes that are emphasized in process research; and *strategizing episodes* and *practices*, themes that are central in the practice tradition. Recognizing its particularities, our intent is to combine themes from both traditions within a single coherent framework in order to address a shared central question of what the origins of "realized strategies" are, in other words, strategies that are actually enacted (Jarzabkowski et al., 2016; Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985).

We label the framework as a combinatory framework of strategy as process and practice (SAPP). At the center of the figure is the process of *strategy formation* that results in *realized strategy* (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985). Realized strategy allows for both emergent and deliberate strategy. Our inclusion of *strategizing episodes* into the framework acknowledges that over time realized strategy is typically punctuated by endeavors at deliberate strategy-making, whether formal strategy meetings and retreats or informal, ad hoc encounters between decision makers (Hendry & Seidl, 2003; Johnson et al., 2010). The framework recognizes the evolutionary nature of strategy and the temporal recursiveness related to it as the realized strategies of the past feed into the strategizing episodes in the present. While strategizing episodes may not always shape realized strategy in an intended fashion, they represent major investments of managerial attention and have symbolic and regulatory importance. Despite decades of work on strategic planning, further research would be needed to better understand the role and significance of these strategizing episodes; for instance, the influence of strategy workshops on performance outcomes remains an open question (Johnson et al., 2010; Whittington, 2003).

Deliberate or emergent, realized strategy is ultimately the product also of *actors* from within the *organizational field.* The concept of organizational field is a more inclusive one than the concept of industry as it includes also extra-organizational actors, such as strategy consultants, regulators, and government agencies (Whittington et al., 2003). Within the organization itself, we include also the middle managers and lower-level employees that both process and practice traditions have earlier identified as potentially influential (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1997; Mantere & Vaara, 2008).

Actors bring to strategizing episodes two sets of influences. First, they identify and promote particular *issues* (Ansoff, 1980; Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Lechner et al., 2010) that are liable to selectively trigger strategizing episodes. Actors select these issues through the cognitive and organizational processes identified by both the attention-based view of the firm (Ocasio, 1997) and the internal ecology of organizations (Burgelman, 1991), according to the firm's internal systems and processes. Actors' cognitive schemes, sensemaking processes, and emotions influence the selection and interpretation of issues that come to trigger strategizing episodes (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Liu & Maitlis, 2014; Vuori & Huy, 2016).

Second, actors introduce various kinds of *practices,* that is, regular, shared, and legitimate ways of doing strategy work that enable and constrain the treatment of these issues. Some of these practices are macro, such as strategy retreats (Johnson et al., 2010), extending across organizational field(s). Other practices are more micro, such as organizationally specific routines for knowledge management (Leonardi & Neely, 2018). According to their identities and roles, actors carry characteristic practices: For example, consultants are often associated with specific kinds of strategy tools that influence which issues enter strategizing episodes and how they are treated there (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015). Practices may also be embedded either in socio-material artefacts such as PowerPoint presentations (Kaplan, 2011) or in strategy discourse (Paroutis & Heracleous, 2013).

The combinatory framework for SAPP brings together many of the key themes from the two traditions to explain outcomes important to both. As the framework acknowledges, there may be other influences on these strategies, both from within the two traditions and from other traditions entirely (competitive rivalry, for instance). The framework shows one way of combining the two traditions. The aim of the combinatory framework is to allow future research to move beyond the positions introduced earlier: on the one hand, the mutually indifferent position described in the *C*omplementary view, and the mutually critical position manifested in the Critical view. As we shall argue in the research agenda section of this Special Issue Introduction, the Combinatory view enables us to put forward a research agenda based on the six key intersecting areas of interest: (a) temporality, (b) actors and agency, (c) cognition and emotionality, (e) materiality and tools, (f) structures and systems, and (g) language and meaning.

4 | ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

We launched this Strategy Process and Practice Special Issue in the *Strategic Management Journal* to explore the intersections between the strategy process and strategy practice research streams mindful of the potential benefits that the cross-fertilization between the two research streams could create. The call for articles that we put out was met with great enthusiasm and we received altogether 125 manuscript submissions. Based on them, after multiple rounds of the review process, we chose 13 articles for the special issue. We will next discuss how these articles contribute to an improved understanding of our endeavor to cross-fertilize the strategy process and practice research

TABLE 1 Research designs of the special issue articles

Authors	Main focus	Object of analysis	Empirical research design
A. Langley, S. Kouamé	How to link micro-level processes and practices to organizational level outcomes in strategy process and practice research?	Strategy process and practice research	Analysis of 55 qualitative articles that had the intention to link micro-level processes to macro-outcomes
L. Mirabeau, S. Maguire, C. Hardy	How to track and operationalize strategy in all of its different manifestations?	Transient strategy manifestations	Methodology development paper
S. Ma, D. Seidl	How do new CEOs establish and develop their group of immediate collaborators?	New CEOs and TMTs	Longitudinal qualitative multiple case study of eight firms and a dataset of a dataset of 135 interviews
M. Wenzel, J. Koch	How keynote speeches come into being as a staged genre of strategic communication?	Keynote speeches of the CEO / Founder	Analysis of Apple's keynote speeches in the period from 2001 to 2011: 56 keynote speeches transcribed and video analyzed
G. Di Stefano, E. Dalpiaz	Whether and how strategy makers can construct a steady influx of captivating narratives of transformative change?	Narrative construction	Text analysis of the content and authorial elements of the narratives produced over three decades at Alessi, an Italian manufacturing company
O-P Kauppila, L. Bizzi, D. Obstfeld	Do strategic decision characteristics shape the creative process at the organizational micro-level?	Determinants of individual-level creativity in SDM	Multilevel modeling results based on 638 employees from 34 organizations
R. Kannan-Narasimhan, B. Lawrence	How do innovators in large high-technology organizations gain adoption for their innovations?	Intra-organizational innovation initiatives	Multiple case study of 14 large high- technology organizations: 138 interviews, archival documents, and observations
S. Pratap, B. Saha	How does the sudden collapse of a long-standing rule structure tie to renewal and the search for a new rule structure that would guide the organization?	Societal change and strategic renewal	Multisite ethnographic enquiry within a single case company
P. Jarzabkowski, R. Bednarek	How do competitive dynamics unfold within a relational industry context?	Competitive practices	Three-year global ethnography of the reinsurance industry
D. Seidl, F. Werle	How are participants of collaborative sensemaking processes chosen and how does the selection affect sensemaking dynamics?	Interorganization collaboration process	Etnographic longitudinal multiple case study of two interorganizational collaborations and 80 interviews
N. Vuori, T. Vuori, Q. Huy	How do emotion-related factors influence interfirm collaboration in postmerger integration processes?	Emotions in postmerger integration	Single case study of an acquisition integration process: 73 interviews of which 28 interviews in the acquirer and 45 interviews in the target company
E. Knight, S. Paroutis, L. Heracleous	How discursive and material practices shape the strategy process?	PowerPoint crafting	A longitudinal, visual semiotic analysis of PowerPoint slides created during two strategy consulting engagements
T. Neeley, P. Leonardi	How people move from connecting with each other to building trust and to engaging in knowledge-sharing practices in social media?	Knowledge sharing in intrafirm social media platforms	Multiple case study of organizations implementing social media platforms for knowledge-sharing analyzed based on 166 semi-structured interviews

streams. Table 1 summarizes the topic areas, research designs, and objects of analyses of the articles included in the special issue.

While the articles demonstrate the diversity of methods that one can use in studying strategy processes and practices, only one of the articles has a classical quantitative hypothesis testing research design. On the one hand, this shows that in order to gain in-depth insights into strategy processes and practices, one commonly needs to go inside organizations to understand what the organizations are doing. On the other hand, it also demonstrates the difficulties involved when trying to get a larger number of companies to reveal sensitive, organizationally embedded information on their practices.

Table 2 summarizes the main findings of the articles and how they relate to the key themes put forward in the Combinatory view above. The articles by Kouamé and Langley, Mirabeau, McGuire, and Hardy, and Ma and Seidl relate most closely to the temporality theme identified above. While the first two articles propose improvements for the way we study processes and practices, the article by Ma and Seidl demonstrates through a multiple case study the power of the temporal view in tracking the behaviors of new CEOs over time.

More specifically, the article by Kouamé and Langley explores and evaluates different ways of addressing the challenge of linking micro-level processes and practices to macro-level outcomes (here organizational) in order to make strategy process and strategy practice research more managerially relevant. The authors draw on a corpus of qualitative process and practice studies to develop and illustrate three micro/macro linking strategies associated with these perspectives: correlation (explaining macro-level outcomes through variation in micro-level processes across comparative units of analysis), progression (tracing diachronically the mechanisms of transformation through cycles of influence between micro-processes and macro-outcomes as they evolve), and instantiation (showing how micro-processes constitute the macro-processes through which the organization exists or is changing). They provide an incisive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the different linking strategies, and propose opportunities for complementarity, combination, and development.

The article by Mirabeau, McGuire, and Hardy presents a novel methodology comprised of three stages that, when integrated in the manner suggested, permits a rich operationalization and tracking of six different ways in which strategy content manifests itself: intended, realized, deliberate, emergent, unrealized, and ephemeral strategy. The authors illustrate the utility of this novel methodology for bridging strategy process and strategy practice research by theorizing about practices that are more likely to give rise to unrealized and ephemeral strategy, identifying their likely consequences, and presenting a research agenda for studying these transient manifestations.

Finally, Ma and Seidl argue that due to constraints on the CEO's abilty to change the top management team (TMT), the composition of the strategic leadership constellation initially tends to differ from that of the old TMT. They show that in some cases, CEOs focus on a subgroup of the TMT; in others, CEOs focus on individuals outside the TMT, such as staff members or lower-level managers. By taking a temporal view and observing the evolution of the leadership constellation and the TMT over time, the authors find that the mismatch between the strategic leadership constellation and the TMT trigger a process of convergence between these two bodies as the constraints on TMT change decrease over time.

In addition to demonstrating the power of the temporal perspective, the article by Ma and Seidl also contributes to an improved understanding of our second key theme, *actors and agency*. While many of the articles in this special issue address this theme, four articles are particularly insightful in this respect. Wentzel and Koch focus on keynote speeches as a genre of strategic communication. By conducting a video-based discursive analysis of Apple's top managers' keynote speeches, they

TABLE 2 Main findings of the special issue articles

Authors	Main Findings	Contribution to the Strategy Process and Strategy Practice Research	Theme
A. Langley, S. Kouamé	Identification of three ways of logically connecting microprocesses to macro-outcomes - correlation, progression, and instantiation - and their combinations	Both process and practice scholars need to emphasize the value of the alternate modes of linking that their specific theoretical perspectives allow	Temporality
L. Mirabeau, S. Maguire, C. Hardy	Identification of six manifestations of strategy intended, realized, deliberate, emergent, unrealized, and ephemeral strategy	Methodology for operationalization and tracking of strategy content for all of its different manifestations	Temporality
D. Seidl, S. Ma	New CEOs often include individuals outside of the TMT in their leadership constellation. There is, however, over time convergence between the constellation and TMT	Showing the detailed process of TMT formation and evolution during CEO succession	Actors and agency Temporality
M. Wenzel, J. Koch	Identification of discursive practices that constitute and reproduce keynote speeches as a staged genre of strategic communication and, thus, through which keynote speakers construct conceptions of a firm's strategy	A conceptual framework consisting of three analytical but interrelated layers: the discursive practices, the embodied enactment of these practices, and conceptions of strategy produced	Actors and agency, Language and meaning
G. Di Stefano, E. Dalpiaz	Identification of narrative dynamics that contributed to three narrative processes—memorializing, revisioning, and sacralizing—used for managing change	A dynamic model linking the simultaneous mobilization of different narrative processes to strategy makers' ability to manage the tension between novelty and familiarity	Actors and agency Language and meaning
O-P Kauppila, L. Bizzi, D. Obstfeld	The positive relationship between tertius iungens orientation and creative performance is reinforced by strategic decision comprehensiveness and weakened by speed	Micro-level value-creation activities are enabled or constrained by macro-level strategic processes	Actors and agency Structure and systems
R. Kannan-Narasimhan, B. Lawrence	Instead of framing external opportunities, there is unique advantage in framing internal resources for gaining adoption	Extension of the Bower-Burgleman process model through an improved understanding of framing practices	Actors and agency Structure and systems
S. Pratap, B. Saha	Organizational fortunes are deeply affected by practitioners' "predispositions" and capital endowments, both acquired far ahead of their organizational innings	Application of Bourdieu's practice theory in connection with the Bower-Burgelman framework	Structure and systems Actors and agency
P. Jarzabkowski, R. Bednarek	There is variation in relational or rivalrous competition by an individual competitor across the phases of a micro-competition, between competitors, and across multiple competitions	A conceptual framework of the recursive dynamic by which implementing strategy shapes, and is shaped by, competitive arena	Structure and systems Actors and agency
D. Seidl, F. Werle	The selection of cues bracketed for sensemaking drives the selection of participants over time. Identification of a mechanism that explains different sensemaking dynamics over time	It is important to manage the process in a way that the participants are kept on board and constructively engage with each other's accounts	Structure and systems Actors and agency

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Authors	Main Findings	Contribution to the Strategy Process and Strategy Practice Research	Theme
N. Vuori, T. Vuori, Q. Huy	Various mundane, concrete task-related challenges trigger emotional reactions among members of the integrating firms	Identification of social-psychological micromechanisms that explicate how macro-level organizational factors influence organization-level	Structure and systems Cognition/emotions
E. Knight, S. Paroutis, L. Heracleous	Identification of visual mechanisms used by actors to capture strategy meanings	A visual semiotic model of the strategy meaning- making process that advances understandings of how actors perform strategy work through visual means	Materiality and tools
T. Neeley, P. Leonardi	Users who participate in nonwork interactions on social media catalyze a cycle of curiosity and passable trust that enables them to connect and share knowledge	Technologies used to implement and enact strategy are core to strategizing practices in enabling or constraining the enactment of strategy over time	Materiality and tools

show how keynote speeches are multimodally accomplished through the use of four discursive practices: referencing, relating, demarcating, and mystifying. Their analysis helps us to better understand the micro-level practices through which strategic ideas are enacted and "sold" to larger audiences. Interestingly, all this involves not only verbal communication but also gestures that play a key role in delivering the messages. Through this analysis, we can see how such keynote speeches constitute important episodes for strategy formation and communication encouraging us to think beyond conventional forms of strategy work episodes to understand the role of top managers in impacting the strategic direction of a corporation.

DiStefano and Dalpiatz provide a narrative analysis of strategic change in the Alessi corporation. Rather than dealing with specific episodes of strategy-making or communication, they focus on how strategy makers (and in particular the owner Alberto Alessi) time and again tell an updated version of the strategic change taking place in the corporation. Based on a longitudinal historical analysis, they identify and elaborate on a set of narrative practices that play a crucial role in such strategic storytelling. These include memorializing (serializing, anthologizing, and curating), revisioning (overshadowing and augmenting), and sacralizing (enobling, prophet-making, iconizing, and anathemizing). This analysis thus helps us to better understand the continuous use of specific practices in the constant updating of the strategy of the corporation and the way strategy communication through storytelling can be used to guide sensemaking regarding the strategy of the firm.

Going beyond the CEO and the TMT, Kauppila, Bizzi, and Obstfeld take a multilevel approach and investigate how the comprehensiveness and speed of strategic decision-making influences the relationship between an individual's combinatory activity and their creativity. Unlike most of the work in this volume, the study employs a quantitative methodology. The analysis is also strengthened considerably by the use of longitudinal and multisource measures. Although practices are not explicitly addressed, the macro process to micro activity focus should make the study also of interest to strategy practice scholars. In addition, the article highlights the continuing need for future research probing into the practices associated with processes such as decision-making comprehensiveness and speed. The article is also one of the few in this special issue to address the relationship of processes and structure.

Finally, the article by Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence reports the results of a multicompany qualitative field study that combines strategy process and practice perspectives to show how innovators can successfully gain adoption of their autonomous innovations by reframing the meaning and

potential of the associated internal resources to create fit with their organization's strategy. By mapping the five steps involved in the resource-reframing process onto the different parts of the Bower-Burgelman process model of strategic change, the authors show that innovators can shape the strategic context for their autonomous innovations before external market validation is available. These findings confirm the unique potential and importance of different forms of discourse in shaping the strategic innovation process.

The articles by Pratap and Saha and Jarbazkowski and Bednarek extend the discussion of the intersections of strategy processes and practices outside organizational boundaries to develop an understanding of the role of societal- and industry-level influences on strategy practices in organizations. Specifically, Pratap and Saha examine the adaptation process of a large manufacturer in the Indian steel industry faced with government-driven radical deregulation. The authors build on the Bower-Burgelman process model, combining it with Bourdieu's praxis theory to explain the emergence of competing managerial initiatives and associated contests within the company's internal ecology of strategy-making. The authors illuminate process–practice pathways through which top management's resource allocation supported changes in the efficacy of the different forms of personal capital in the contest between an established class of elite managers with privileged social-cultural-political backgrounds and a rising class of non-elite managers with strong professional educational backgrounds and work ethics. Besides showing the importance of external macro-level forces on the evolution of the internal ecology of strategy making, the authors highlight the important role that consultants can play in the strategic context determination process, thereby further documenting the usefulness of combining strategy process and practice foci in the same study.

Jarzabkowski and Bednarek focus on the interplay of industry- and firm-level competitive practices. While the study of competitive dynamics represents one of the core research streams in strategy research, the question arises whether an analysis in this domain using the practice perspective can contribute additional insights. Jarzabkowski and Bednarek take up this challenge. With the reinsurance market as context and ethnographic data collection as method, the authors develop the concept of micro competitions as the focus of firms' everyday competitive practices and identify differences across phases of the bidding process and between competitors. The conceptual framework that arises from this study contributes to a novel, finer-grained understanding of relational competition and shows how the strategy practice lens can be focused productively on studying different strategy process phenomena.

The articles by Seidl and Werle and Vuori, Vuori and Huy examine strategy practices and processes in interfirm collaborative settings with a focus on cognition and emotions. By focusing on meta-problems that require interorganizational collaboration due to their complexity, Seidl and Werle examine how the participants of such collaborative sensemaking processes are chosen to ensure the "requisite variety" of interpretative schemes and how the selection of participants is related to the ensuing sensemaking dynamics. Based on two longitudinal case studies, they put forward a process model to explain the interplay between the cues, participants, and interests in the collective, interorganizational sensemaking process.

Vuori, Vuori and Huy examine the dynamics of interorganizational collaboration following an acquisition. They push the envelope with regard to how we understand the role of emotions in strategy formation. Strategy theory tends to prescribe rational calculation and the masking of emotion, and the managers in Vuori et al.'s article seem to follow this prescription. The longitudinal case study demonstrates that it is this very masking of emotion that leads to an escalating conflict that ultimately undermines the merger. The resulting model challenges strategy scholars to better understand productive and malignant approaches to managing emotion in strategizing.

Finally, Knight, Paroutis, and Heracleous and Neeley and Leonardi highlight the role of materiality and tools within the practices theme of our combinatory framework. Specifically, they examine the practices associated with the use of PowerPoint slides and social media in organizations. Drawing on semiotic theory Knight, Paroutis and Heracleous examine strategy consultants' use of PowerPoint in helping a client company to develop strategy. The article demonstrates how the divergent influences of different actors are synthesized into a systemic and tractable representation of strategy in the form of PowerPoint slides. The study is a compelling illustration of the potential contained in visual analyses of organizational phenomena. In particular, the article illustrates the point that communication of strategy is not a mere "implementation" task, but rather the medium through which strategy takes shape. Communication media, be they a particular type of rhetoric or a technological tool, such as PowerPoint, enable and constrain the ways in which strategies can be conceptualized.

Neeley and Leonardi examine the impact of new technologies on strategy practice, specifically the use of social media to enact knowledge strategy. Their in-depth, longitudinal comparison of two multinationals reveals the contribution of social media (the commercially available Jive and Yammer) to build "passable trust" among employees dispersed around the globe. Trust is enhanced by the sharing of nonwork social information, promoting the exchange of strategically valuable knowledge across the two corporations. However, the social media format has negative properties, too, sparking contentious interactions and the perception of frivolous engagement by employees. As a consequence, social media suffered declining usage in both cases. Neeley and Leonardi propose practical measures for the use of social media in strategy, and urge the strategy community to engage in more research on the intended and unintended consequences of material technologies, such as social media, in strategy-making.

5 | AGENDA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

We will next outline a research agenda for strategy process and strategy practice research following the combinatory perspective. The following are necessarily selective suggestions as there are many ideas that can be followed when combining ideas from strategy process and practice research. We will focus here on the six themes that represent the articles in this special issue, and reflect the combinatory SAPP framework: (a) temporality, (b) actors and agency, (c) cognition and emotionality, (d) materiality and tools, (e) structures and systems, and (f) language and meaning.

5.1 | Temporality

Strategy process research has demonstrated the importance of temporality in understanding strategy. This has been a key part of the development of evolutionary views on strategy-making (Burgelman, 1983a) and in coining key terms such as strategy "emergence"' (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). We want to highlight here two specific avenues where the process studies tradition can be combined with insights from strategy practice research. First, recent work on the temporality of strategy-making (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014) has elucidated the various ways in which time is linked with the very practices of strategy-making. Future research could go further in exploring different types of temporal dynamics in strategy work. This could include a better understanding of episodes in longer processes of strategy-making (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008), as well as reoccurring routines and their adaptation over time.

Second, historical understanding has been a key part of strategy process studies, although not always explicitly recognized as such (Burgelman, 1983a, 1983b; Pettigrew, 1985). It has, however,

remained a less important theme in SAP (Ericson, Melin, & Popp, 2015; Whittington et al., 2011). Fortunately, recent articles have sketched ways in which historical approaches can be used in both strategy process and practice studies, and this can involve not only using conventional historical methods but also, for example, counterfactual analysis (an analysis of what could have happened in the absence of a specific event or intervention), the development of microhistories of specific events, or genealogy (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016).

The articles by Koamé and Langley and Mirabeau, McGuire, and Hardy in this special issue provide good guidance on how researchers could deal better methodologically with issues relating to temporality when studying strategy processes. This need for further research on temporality in strategy process and practice research coincides well with other recent calls for more work on time and temporality, for example, in research on strategic change (Kunisch, Bartunek, Mueller, & Huy, 2017), acquisitions and alliances (Shi, Sun, & Prescott, 2012), and the changing role of headquarters in multinational corporations (Nell, Kappen, & Laamanen, 2017).

5.2 | Actors and agency

Strategy process studies have allowed us to better understand how managers make decisions, and they have also focused attention on middle managers (Mantere, 2008; Wooldridge, Schmid, & Floyd, 2008). This stream of work has inspired strategy practice scholars to study issues such as the roles of managers (Mantere, 2008) or their ability to participate (Mantere & Vaara, 2008) in strategy work. While this area is already an example of fruitful intersections of strategy process and practice studies, future research could go even further. There is potential to combine the insights of top and middle management focused process analysis with an understanding of "practitioners" as actors enabled or constrained by the sociohistorical practices of strategy work.

Promising avenues for future research in this area include also research on identity and subjectivity (Ezzamel & Willmott, 2008, 2010; Laine & Vaara, 2015), involving the very question of who can be seen as a "strategist," an issue accentuated by the increasing range of internal and external actors involved in the shift to more "open" strategy-making (Hautz et al., 2017). Another potential question is how the profession of strategic management has developed and how different conceptions of strategy affect how strategy-making is viewed or conducted (Whittington, Yakis-Douglas, Ahn, & Cailluet, 2017).

Power and politics have played an important role in strategy process research from the very beginning (Bower, 1970; Pettigrew, 1973), and several key pieces of work include important insights about the tensions and politics between top and middle managers (Burgelman, 1983a, 2002; Floyd & Lane, 2000; Lechner & Floyd, 2012; Wooldridge et al., 2008). As part of strategy practice research, a stream of work has focused on power in strategy-making (Dick & Collings, 2014; Ezzamel & Willmott, 2008; Laine & Vaara, 2007; McCabe, 2010). Yet key aspects such as resistance have received relatively little attention in these streams of work (Rantakari & Vaara, 2016). Thus, future research actors and agency could build on the insights of the existing work and draw on various new theories of power to develop a more multifaceted and dynamic view on the power and politics and various forms of resistance in strategy making.

5.3 | Cognition and emotionality

Research on cognition has been traditionally an important part of strategy process research—as well as related streams such as microfoundations (Felin & Foss, 2005) or behavioral strategy (Gavetti, 2012; Reitzig & Sorenson, 2013). This tradition has been shown, for example, in the research on

framing contests (e.g., Kaplan, 2008; Kaplan & Henderson, 2005) and in the attention-based view (Ocasio, 1997; Ocasio & Joseph, 2005, 2008). Interestingly, strategy practice research has rarely explicitly focused on cognition beyond the work on sensemaking (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Yet, a closer look at this body of work reveals a great deal of potential in going further in the analysis of cognition in cultural systems as highlighted by Hutchins's (1995) combination of anthropological methods with cognitive theory. There are also examples of recent studies paving the way for the integration of such insights in strategy process studies. For instance, Kaplan's (2011) work has shown how cognition developed over time with the use of PowerPoint and related practices. Also, the attention-based view has recently been extended to include communication practices as a driver of organizationally distributed attention dynamics (Ocasio et al., 2018).

Another related theme is emotionality. It is fair to say that neither strategy process nor practice studies have fully embraced the importance of emotions, mood, or affect in strategy-making. This is unfortunate given the fundamental role that, for instance, enthusiasm may play in strategy work. Nevertheless, there are interesting openings that also offer examples as to how to integrate theoretical ideas from process and practice studies. For instance, Liu and Maitlis (2014) have demonstrated how emotional dynamics are linked with particular types of strategizing processes, Vuori and Huy (2016) have shown how fear may have a fundamental impeding effect on strategy processes, and Balogun, Bartunek, and Do (2015) have illustrated the role of the affective dimension of senior managers' change narratives.

5.4 | Materiality and tools

There are already illuminating examples showing how strategy tools are used in strategy-making (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015; Kaplan, 2011) and the dimensions of strategy tools that managers perceive as useful (Wright et al., 2013). More research would, however, be needed to elucidate their role in different types of strategy contexts, such as acquisitions and alliances, competitor analyses, and the analysis and development of business models.

Moreover, clear research opportunities also exist in connecting other aspects of materiality, such as embodiment and gestures, for example, to the analysis of communication or emotions. The article of Wentzel and Koch in this special issue is a great example of the former, while the article of Liu and Maitlis (2014) is an example of the latter. Finally, with the increasing prominence of information technology tools, information technology can be expected to play an increasingly important role in the strategy processes of firms to enable transparency, participation, or inclusion in strategy processes. From the strategy practice perspective, the article by Neeley and Leonardi in this issue shows well how the practices related to information systems can lead to intended and unintended consequences in strategy making. Overall, the use of social media and other information technology tools in strategy processes represents an important, largely untapped topic area for future research (Baptista, Wilson, Galliers, & Bynghall, 2017).

5.5 | Structures and systems

While the importance of understanding the role of structures and systems is well-established both in strategy process (e.g., Burgelman, 1983a, 1983b; Macintosh & Maclean, 1999) and strategy practice research (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Jarzabkowski, 2008; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002), the process ontology described earlier holds that "*entities (such as organizations and structures) are no more than temporary instantiations of ongoing processes, continually in a state of becoming*" (Langley et al., 2013, p. 5; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). This poses an interesting question for future

research on the dual role structures play both as a context for and as an accomplishment of strategy work.

5.6 | Language and meaning

Finally, while discursive and narratives analyses have occupied strategy practice scholars, strategy communication has remained a somewhat underexplored topic in strategy process research (Whittington et al., 2016). We argue that the time is right to combine insights from the various discursive and narrative traditions in both areas and to enrich our understanding of the dynamics and practices of strategic communication in various contexts. For instance, research on strategic narratives should be able to move beyond analysis of narratives per se in order to understand their role in longer-term processes and the emergence of strategic ideas. Such studies could, for example, build on different aspects of strategic storytelling (Vaara, Sonenshein, & Boje, 2016).

5.7 | Innovative research methods

The articles of this special issue highlight the potential of innovative research approaches and data sources ranging from an analysis of hand gestures in strategy presentation videos, through the tracking of changes in CEOs' closest collaborators, to the development of PowerPoint presentations over time. Even more would, however, be needed. In particular, due to the scarcity of quantitative research that we received, we would in particular like to encourage the development and use of innovative quantitative methods for strategy process and practice research. For example, some of the increasingly advanced sequence analysis methods could be applicable to tracking strategy processes and practices over time (Laamanen, Reuter, Schimmer, Ueberbacher, & Welch Guerra, 2015).

Summing up, the fields of strategy process and strategy practice have made striking progress in the last quarter century. We see great potential for research in the next 25 years as well, particularly as process and practice scholars build on the combinatory SAPP framework in order to explore the kinds of new research areas, novel data sources, and innovative methods outlined in this article.

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