Strategy emergence

A journey through modernism, semeiotic, complexity and nonmodernism

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Abstract

The idea of Modernism as a drive for scientific innovation is currently being challenged. Alternative ways of thinking are explored to deal with scientific innovation. The process often starts with deconstructing modernism as a premise for a search of perspectives on change and transformation. Rationales for such turnaround are addressed from many sciences, such postmodernism (Derrida, 1973, 1978, 1981, 1982), complexity (Stacey, Griffin and Shaw, 2000; Stacey, 2001) and anthropology (Latour, 1991).

By deconstructing the metaphysics of presence, Derrida overturns the idea that science is rooted in the observations of facts, as simple, homogeneous and self-conscious origins of truths. Besides, by asserting the very impossibility of language to represent reality, he advances that discourses are continuously re-created by way of difference.

In management theory it is possible to show that deconstruction is a sound way to move from a perspective of continuity to a perspective of transformation, which considers continuity as epiphenomenon of transformation. Such turnaround also shows that research on change very often is biased from the paradox of exploring change from an epistemology of stability and order.

By asserting that “Nothing exists beyond texts”, however, Derrida ignores individuals and society, as well as nature. This is why we will also introduce the basic dynamics of relation.

Such an approach can be found in the works of Stacey et al.(2000) and Stacey (2001), both inspired by the natural sciences of complexity. These works find in the complexity sciences a compelling analogy for explaining the emergence of organizations as joint relation between individuals, rooted in both self-organization and the assumption that future is unknown. The complexity approach to the emergence of novelty superimposes the natural upon the social define individuals as entities of a particular nature, that made of body rhythms. In this approach, than, innovation loses sight of the role that individual, society and meaning may play as independent sources of innovation.

Instead, the possibility of this ample mediation is suggested by Latour’s nonmodernism (1991). His distinction between both specialization (purification) and mediation (translation, substitution) and Nature-Society-Discourse may become the starting point to conceive innovation as a perpetual construction of hybrids and networks. In this perspective purified sciences become ex-transcendences, objects of mediation. The statement of a strategy becomes than one of these objects, which loses his ontology in the process of emergence of hybrids objects-subjects.

Strategy, in fact, becomes a process itself, one that involves the co-evolution of discourse-nature-individual and society.
Introduction

Literature on strategy emergence has a long history. The first attempts to bring the strategy field into a processual perspective can be traced back to the very beginning of the Sixties (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Lindblom, 1968). Since then these attempts have multiplied (Bower, 1970; Bower and Doz, 1979; Burgelman, 1983; Quinn, 1978, 1980, 1982; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Mintzberg, 1978, 1987; Mintzberg and Waters, 1984, 1985, 1990; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Pettigrew, 1985). The process view of strategy has been revived in the Eighties by Mintzberg work on "Crafting strategy" (1987), and later by the work of Hamel and Prahalad on 'Strategic Intent' (1996). The subject of emergence has also got more attention following the contributions of Weick from the semiotic field (Weick, 1989). However, until the middle Nineties, no significant shift in the way of thinking about strategy has occurred; rather, the opposition between design and emergence has radicalised. Innovation in the field has moved incrementally maintaining traditional divides, such as those between content and process, definition and implementation, strategic versus and operational decisions. In practice, under the 'Modern Constitution', scholars have assured the purity of the economic perspective and faithfully remained attached to the metaphysics of presence. Dealing with emergence and change, as a consequence, has implied that strategy field has drawn in the paradox of dealing with change and the creation of strategy from a philosophy of continuity and simple location (Whitehead, 1929). In 2001 Gary Hamel explicitly states:

“Strategists may have a lot to say about the context and content of strategy, but in recent years they have had precious little to say about the conduct of strategy – that is the task of strategy making. ... We must start from scratch. The challenge is to invent anew the conduct of strategy in ways to make it intensely important to companies struggling to maintain their vitality in the innovate-or-die environment of the new economy” (2001, p. 186).

In this article we claim that, in order to move in this direction and beyond, we must, first of all, challenge the very foundations of the way we create paradigms. Very often, the perspective of reason, objectivity and reality drives research at the expenses of consciousness. We assume in this case that data are pure, free from theory, language and interpretive bias; that reality and facts are objective and man’s faculty volition is strictly limited; that logic and concepts are the only means for discovering and identifying reality (Ghate and Edwin, 2003, p. 254, 256). Nonmodernism indicates that in this case researchers stand for purification under the perspective of Nature. Nonmodernism advises that purification applies also to a social perspective, that of Society. Both act as transcendences that drive the search for truth; in other words, they dictate the principles for evaluating natural facts and social constructions. The sphere of Nature relies on the axioms of
existence, that of Society on the axioms of consciousness. Both are in search of primacy, therefore, whatever innovation in the one sphere can be criticized from the other.

By advancing the perspective of nonmodernism (Latour, 1991) this opposition is overcome by separating and then reuniting the level of purification and that of mediation. Mediation occurs in experimentation and practice, where objects, subjects, discourses and society are intertwined. Separating these levels allow maintaining legitimacy to purified spheres; the emergence of events and knowledge is instead located in the practice of mediation. This level is made primary over purification, by moving any ontological status from purified spheres and disciplines into the hybrids objects-subjects-discourses. As a consequence the very purification becomes dependent on mediation.

Our search to innovate the strategic paradigm has ended up to the anthropology of nonmodernism as a way to reconcile objects and subjects. By recognizing and studying the primary role of mediation in paradigm building nonmodernism allows connecting different irreducible sphere in the level of purification. This is why we have been able in this effort to embed in nonmodernism also the perspectives of postmodern deconstruction and complexity. Throughout the analysis and the comparison of all these perspectives we have come up with a processual view of strategy, which makes it compelling to enlarge the bases of research by encompassing a multidisciplinary view.

In this article we analyze how the postmodernist deconstruction, complexity perspectives and nonmodernism drives our way of thinking about strategy emergence. Except for nonmodernism, all these perspectives provide a purified perspective, one that is built on a concept of rigor, meant to avoid any influx from other spheres. Because of this irreducibility, the only possibility left to confront perspectives is critique.

Nonmodernism, instead, provides rationales for thinking about strategy emergence from the very process of linking objects and subjects and discourses. The purified parochial perspectives, then, turns to be useful in that they provide clues for understanding how the autonomies of naturalization, socialization, individualization and discursivization enact innovation. Together, these approaches justify the need for a processual definition of strategy; all these perspectives invite to abandon the idea of strategic blueprints for the management of future courses of actions and decisions, except nonmodernism, which, instead, helps recognizing that the a strategy blueprint has an important role to play in the management of companies. This is because the concept of mediation relies on the recognition that objects and facts and paradigms have, like subjects, the power to enact change.

In order to understand how strategies emerge, however, most important than that is the very fact that within mediation blueprints loose their ontological status. In other words, in the process of connecting transcendences are allowed to evolve. Strategy emergence then can be seen as a way any strategy paradigm evolves from its formal discursivization into a personalized organizational
strategy through facts, discourses and politics from recursive cycles of subjectification and objectification. The exploration of strategy emergence then moves from an helicopter view of organization and competition to the way naturalization, discursivization and socialization create and manage differences in micro-relations.

Comparing those processual perspectives, we also realized that purification drives researchers into exploring transformation as epiphenomenon of continuity even after moving from a perspective of substance/presence to a processual one (Chia, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999). Instead, providing mediation with ontological status, nonmodernism elects uncertainty and ambiguity as the very transcendence; as a consequence, purification can be conceived ad dependent on the experience of mediation for advancement. Purification, in other words, becomes temporary and always incomplete. Within nonmodernism, paradigms, and strategies, now become objects always in movement and change can be conceived primarily as transformation.

By relaying directly on the very fields of philosophy, epistemology, anthropology and other second-order spheres of knowledge we could easily effectively run into radical innovation. This approach helps to take distance from established perspectives. These meta-perspectives, in fact, evolve in order to challenge our way of thinking about the world, rather than a specific scientific perspective, such as organization, strategy, sociology, and so on.

This kind of search for a transformative processual perspective can also be a way to actively participating in the conversation about second-order knowledge, drawing from the novelty emerging in the midst of a specific field. By interrogating more than one processual perspective, in this paper, we understood that this is possible. Most of all, by comparing perspectives, we could avoid the partisan approach of espousing one perspective over any others, using it as absolute way to drive research into the discovery of truths. Research aiming at understanding empirical facts while creating paradigms and transforming meta-paradigms, once restating the problem of rigor, in fact, brings in more opportunities for creativity and innovation.

1. Exploring emergence from purified perspectives

In this paper we have first explored contributions that the purified approaches of both postmodern deconstruction and complexity may provide in order to move towards a processual transformative approach to strategy emergence. We have also explored how the encompassing view of nonmodernism links objects and subjects according to the practice of either scientific experimentation, or living experience and, more specifically, management.

Derrida’ deconstruction is a purified perspective of the Discourse sphere. It builds on the premise that “Nothing exists beyond texts”, thus cutting any relation between discourse, on one side, and
subject and object, on the other side. Evolution and change is then driven only by language in the process of meaning emergence, as an undecidable postponement of differences among terms of a discourse (*difference*). The complexity perspective brings into the emergence discourse the natural sphere. It builds upon the self-organization of relations between entities moving towards an unknown future. More specifically, for this latter perspective, we have relied on the works of Stacey, Griffin and Shaw (2000) and Stacey (2001), which provide an attempt to superimpose the natural perspective of complexity upon the sociology and psychology of organization. Nonmodernism, instead, gives primacy to the practice of science, where connection between objects and subjects is of primary importance, and purification within a specific sphere of science is a direct consequence of mediation.

More specifically, Derrida’ deconstruction is focused on subverting paradigms under the premise that the logic of reason often silences other viewpoints. By pointing out to its hidden regions, a paradigm gets overturned. This process may appear endless if, according to the process of *difference* — the postponement of differences among words in time - writings are seen as independent from writers and dependent on the contextual circumstances of interpretation. Most followers of postmodernism have dropped this assumption by giving individuals the responsibility to justify their paradigms (Letiche, 1996).

According to the principles of nonmodernism in scientific mediations deconstruction is deprived of its ontological status, then, it is possible to overcome its nihilism and to convey the benefits of deconstruction in the process of paradigm building. In fact, many achievement of deconstruction are actually relevant beyond that nihilism. It is, for instance, an effective way to learn how to recognize and build distance from our own and others perspectives. In strategy emergence this capability allows avoiding the risk of remaining attached to established strategy despite internal and external changes has made it unproductive or less productive.

Deprived from radicalism, deconstruction teaches that the emergence of a paradigm is also a matter of discourse building. In the meanders of emergency there are moments in which discourses become actions in themselves, linking with other actions and subjects of past and future only by means of language. Discourses for paradigm building then may become a way for creativity driven by transdisciplinarity, as well as by impinging on both paradox and the need for deparadoxization.

However, the perspective of discourse is only part of what in practice drives the emergence of strategy. Strategy originates also in action; therefore the discourse perspective needs to link to the natural perspective of facts, concepts, objects, as well as to processes of both naturalization and socialization.
Through the works of Stacey, Griffin and Shaw (2000) and Stacey (2001) we have brought into our discourse the natural perspective. These works provide rationales for both a Transformative Teleology and a Theory of Complex Responsive Processes of Relation (TCRPR). This latter specifically elaborates on knowledge emergence, by making knowledge coinciding with emergence (Stacey, 2001).

These versions of a natural perspective are of great interest for our research on strategy emergence, first of all, because they deal with the emergence of novelty from a processual perspective. Actually, these theories fall short of dealing with paradigm emergence, giving a simple operational content to the concept of novelty. Emergence, in the end, applies just to the hypothesis of continuity rather than transformation. Despite so, Transformative Teleology and TCRPR have a great relevance, first of all, because both point out that the seeds of novelty are located in the very micro-processes of interaction; secondly, because they give a deep account of the reasons why individuals and groups in organization often loose sight of internal and external dynamics. Through self-organization, interaction, in fact, creates unpredictable identities and forms of interaction.

The starting point of these natural perspectives is a critique to the system approach. According to them, when conceived as systems, organizations can no longer be attributed the capability to create the truly novel. In fact, within a system approach there is no point for the emergence of novelty; this can only be a given, imposed on the organization by top leaders, who can take this responsibility only by temporarily moving out of the system. The system may be thought of as either a mechanism or an organism. Organisms, however, are conceived as natural; they can only choose among different ways to attain a given causality. This reasoning is also applied to System Dynamics and Chaos Theory because, whatever dynamic is included in the system, the latter always depends on some blueprint, which actually embedds the true novelty.

According to the TCRPR, organizational theory can account for novelty emergence only if individual freedom is recognized after getting rid of the system concept, which have turned individuals into objects.

The proposed Transformative Teleology then excludes the need for a causality and relies on both the trascendence of self-organization and the hypothesis of unknowable future.

Drawing from these two principles Stacey envisages a concept of organization as interaction among individuals. In the process of emergence now the very form of this interaction is at stake, as well as the evolution of individual and social identities. Novelty mainly arises in the play of differences between choosen rules at local levels.

In order to describe self-organization between and among entities, the TCRPR eliminates any hierarchical causality between individual and social: both are supposed emerging simultaneously as singular and plural of the same process. According to this paradigm, then communication is defined as a process of cooperation attained when “one person can calls forth in himself or herself
a similar response to that called forth by a gesture in another” (Stacey, 2001, p. 91). Language is always a medium for communicating; it has nothing to do with paradigms, but just with revealing identity changes and forms of interaction. The gesture-response communication may become more sophisticated by encompassing symbolic communication, reflection-in action, reified symbols and abstract thinking. Narrative taking place in communication is not a \textit{a posteriori}, but a process in its making, strictly representing actions. Finally, power relation attain to the inclusion ad exclusion of individuals in the self-organizing mechanism. Actually, all these processes explain how self-organization works. In the end, they appear to be adjustments for this very purpose, while the attention to individuation and socialization gets lost.

Driven from the fortunes of self-organization, individuals cannot decide for transformation, which then arises only from limited combination of given natural differences; radical changes comes mostly from mutations, errors and misunderstandings. Besides, according to the gesture-response definition, interaction looks for immediate agreement. This means that emergence in TCRPR relates mainly to continuity and only ‘potentially’ to transformation. The novelty arising at each turn of self-organization has, then, nothing to do with paradigm change and transformation. Actually, within this natural perspective the very need for strategy is dropped, first, because it represents a blueprint, second because no reason is seen to provide one at each turn of self-organization, since it immediately becomes obsolete.

Because of its view on paradigm emergence and transformation, TCRPR has become, at first, a challenging terrain from which looking at ways to reinstall strategy in a processual perspective, which affirms to be transformative. This work has, in fact, turned out to be a first attempt of mediation, since we, actually, tried to link in some way the spheres of Society (individuals), Discourse (paradigm) and Nature (action).

TCRPR later has also become the best way to understand how enhancing this can contribute to a better understanding of the very practice of mediation. TCRPR, in fact, represents an effective way for describing semicycles of naturalization.

The process of this scientific mediation is described in the following paragraph.

\textbf{2. Innovating the strategy paradigm by mediating between discursive and natural perspectives}

Deconstruction has been of a great importance in the process of building a processual and transformative perspective. By itself, it points to the fact that emergence is not necessarily natural, as would affirm a perspective based on natural science. It tells, in fact, that this process can be
both individually and socially enacted. Since enacting implies the deployment of transformative capabilities, transformation can be traced back to anyone, leaders and not leaders, who possess these capabilities, though leaders should be in a better position to perform this task. The paradigm of deconstruction theorizes how to subvert paradigms as well as that this process can and should be continuous to ensure company’s resilience. As a consequence, deconstruction challenges the primacy of the logic of implementation. In the end, it appears to fill particularly well the emerging need for innovating business and organizational strategies in the short run.

Deconstruction has also a parasitical nature: it can be seen as a universal method for subverting any paradigm by revealing its internal contradictions. In this respect, it has helped us to discover the contradictions inherent to complexity sciences when they deal with novelty, subjects, human relations and transformation. It has also driven our reflection into the process of reconnecting discourse and nature. In doing that we have come closer to the multifaceted reality of strategy emergence.

Transformative Teleology, TCRPR and deconstruction are all processual perspectives. They share an emphasis on avoiding transcendence, as well as a focus on micro-processes. Processes are also the very cause of change, \textit{differance} in the first case, and self-organization in the second one. Both advance solid foundations on which their own purification rests and build barriers for any possible integration with other perspectives.

However, they are very different on the matter of strategy emergence. First of all, Deconstruction theorizes paradigm change, while Transformative Teleology and TCRPR state the irrelevance of strategy. While this latter issue of strategy relates to the dominant concept of strategy as a blueprint, we have realized that within these natural perspectives a processual view of strategy is anyway opposed by both, emphasis on routine, and a limited exploration of the local-global link in this very routine. Our research has shown that personal interaction is actually driven by mediation, as the reference of actions to powerful personal perspectives. Those perspectives make the past and global present in the way of thinking. Therefore, it has no to do only with the relation on hand. Deconstruction has also allowed discovering a fundamental inner contradiction in Transformative Teleology and TCRPR: that of stating the need to move individual freedom within the organization, while conceiving human beings, from a neuroscience perspective, as body rhythms. This choice has maintained self-organization the only determinant of novelty emergence from the interaction of different local rules. In this paradigm novelty thus appears to be whatever emerges from the natural interaction of bodies. By relying only on natural events, however, radical change becomes a matter of accident, something actually not yet understood, as is the case of mutation. Disregarding the possibility of individual enactment of organizational transformation and paradigm change Transformative Teleology and TCRPR rule out uncertainty from the very process of
emergence. Their deconstruction thus reveals that not always a process view accounts for
paradigm emergence; more specifically, it underlined that, as long as a transformative perspective
is not purposefully assumed, our theories on change are driven from the perspective of continuity.
A process view of transformation and strategy emergence, instead, requires that primacy is
consciously assigned to transformation, as is stated in the philosophy of deconstruction and
postmodernism.

However, within Deconstruction individuals are decentred; they just enact the role of differance.
Assigning a transformative role to individuals brings in the issue of irreducibility among purified
perspectives according to which objects, subjects and discourses must be kept separate. Theory
appears now in need of mediation.

In order to understand the emergence of strategy in processual terms, we should rely on both
discourses and entities transformation. We need to understand how they link in the process of
strategy emergence, but we do not know how to overcome the barriers that each field has built
around itself in order to preserve its purity.

This is the very impression we get meeting Letiche’ theory of coherence (1996). He stands on the
Discourse side specifically rejecting any extremism. As a consequence, he can introduce
individuals and social relations in the very process of building paradigms. Individuals are back
humans engaged in a linguistic game by virtue of their disciplinary perspectives. The game is a
process of continuously justifying personal paradigms and the way they change while relating, up
to the point when emerged paradoxes and contradictions are solved by creating new domains of
interaction. Now the role of individuals is of paramount importance. The emergence of paradigm
depends, in fact, on the quality of justification, which in turn is related to a deep knowledge of
reality, as well as to the variety of perspectives in hand and to the competences needed for
justification. The process is mainly cognitive and one of transparency. However, after stating
individuals’ relevance, Letiche sends us advices on two issues, that this should happen without
turning individuals into transcendences, and that he does not know how this latter is possible (p. 6).
This problem will be solved by the versatility brought about by nonmodernism. Meanwhile the
deconstruction-complexity comparison shows that the complexity perspective needs to deal with
transformation in a dedicated way. Letiche theory of transformation helps in this direction by
providing the concept of justification. We can, then, replace the gesture-response dynamic of
forced cooperation with one of forced transparency, despite the risk of interaction ruptures.

Immediately, the theory becomes transformative by specifically engaging in paradigm
deconstruction and reconstruction. We can still rely on self-organization; however, now enacting
and selecting for the sake of transformation prevail over evocation and provocation (Stacey, 2001,
p. 91).
The emergence of novelty now relates to paradigms and can account for human awareness, volition and responsibility, as well as for self-organization to account for what may occur naturally. The concept of relation may take into account the process of building coherence from paradoxical thinking. Transformative Teleology and TCRPR appear in need to add theoretical reference that help translating this kind of relation in to the mechanism of self-organization. Besides, we still need to explore how discursivization, naturalization, individuation and socialization link in the micro-processes.

3. Mediating through a teleology of mediation

A general answer to this problem can be found in Latour’s nonmodernism. This is because nonmodernism accepts purification, but assigns primacy to the practice of mediation Nature-Discourse-Society. Latour often relates to mediation as the process of tracing hybrids objects-subjects and subjects-objects. These account for the possibility of objects, as well as subjects, to enact processes. In other words, mediation is the recursive tracing of hybrids, symmetrically, half-object and half subject, movements in a space that no longer belong to society, neither to nature (Latour, 1991). Hybrids populate an independent “Middle Kingdom”, situated on a level below that the poles of purification in the sphere of Nature and Society. In this space any transcendence of Nature and Society can play a role, but it loses its ontological status. Thus, theories can be part of mediating processes, but they are governed according to the needs of either scientific experimentation or any other practice of living, as in management and strategy emergence. In other words, mediation uses purification by getting rid of its ontological status and by assigning this status to hybrids. Innovation of purified theories in any sphere now appears dependent on the experience of mediation. Purified perspectives suddenly become unstable, incomplete and temporary achievements of science. However, they are essential in advancing the very practice of mediation, since the deeper and broader the understanding of purified viewpoints, the greater the opportunities for mediation (Latour, 1991).

In our search for a paradigm of strategy emergence nonmodernism finally provides rationales for conceiving strategy as both a blueprint and a process, as long as we recall that mediation is primary. Strategy as a blueprint acts, then, as a very powerful object, capable of moving other objects and subjects. As object it is able to naturalize subjects and discourses. Within naturalization we can even recall self-organization and apply it to the object-subject interaction in their tracing of hybrids. Analogy and superposition are no longer needed. In the Middle Kingdom, in fact, there is no room for things-in-themselves and subjects-among-themselves, but only objects
together with subjects and an equal degree of objectivity and subjectivity (Latour, 1991, p. 108). Naturalization, in fact, works in semicycles together with those of socialization (p.84). This means that, as soon as a blueprint is given, it enters in the semicycles of naturalization. However, socialization soon takes over it to play its own game. Deviation, transformation and substitution then “knead the collectives into things that no one has made. … Each loop in the spiral defines a new collective and a new objectivity. The collective in permanent renewal that is organized around things in permanent renewal has never stopped evolving” (Latour, 1991, p. 84).

The main research questions now must be related to the way objects and subjects connect in the process of mediation. In the practice of managing and leading we can now introduce any perspective without fear of loosing rigor. In the practice of mediation Nature, Society and Discourse connect despite purification. Transformation now arise because objects, subjects and discourses, in turn, transform what is connected according to their autonomous logic. Thus, in mediating naturalization, discursivization, socialization and individuation keep creating paradoxical oppositions to be deparadoxized. The primacy of transformation over continuity now appears plausible.

We have now a perspective that states <<no innovation without representation>>; it calls back into play the perspective of objects. Despite so, continuity does not overshadow transformation, because both objects and subjects keep striving for creating ways of connecting to each other. Subjects and objects connecting become the core processes of paradigm creation. When social sciences refer to the process of relating between individuals they tell part of the story. We cannot impose individuals upon things, things upon individuals, group upon individuals, individuals upon groups, and so on. Objects and systems can now be seen as playing an active role. Perspectives can contribute to mediation as objects without ontological status. We can consciously use them in the observation of social practices, and see how they integrate to respond to the reasons for practical observation and the work of laboratories. Through nonmodernity we can reassign objects to organization without renouncing to a process view. This is why a statement of strategy retains its importance, despite strategy moves on and transforms in the process of subject-object connection.

The strategic paradigm emerging from justification, self-organization and mediation

Nonmodernity provides a radical, unusual, but obvious perspective on strategy emergence. The processes of strategy emergence tell, in fact, of both hybrids nature-culture-discourse and the movement from “chaos” to “cosmos”. The economic viewpoint is relevant, but partial. If we
consider a purified perspective and a stabilized form of strategy we will be forced to deal with an abstraction and will not understand emergence. Strategy instead is built in process, by the way contents emerge from processes and processes from contents in semicycles of naturalization and socialization. Besides, the stabilized strategy accounts only for contents, even when it describes processes. Actually, it is a discourse, which has torn its link to reality. Such strategy is an object incapable of telling the story of its emergence. Worst of all, it pretends to guide organization conduct towards the future despite this is unknown.

A stabilized strategy blueprint aims to represent companies’ perspective on long-term future; however, strategy keeps changing and is often replaced in the dawn of a semester. It actually moves together with the organization and its environment. Strategy and the emergence of strategy start now to conflate.

Nothing halts the construction of either *a priori* or *a posteriori* strategic maps, but strategy blueprints can slow the possibility of re-creating strategy, if they are not recognized as powerful, ever-changing objects. Besides, since change occurs despite all attempts to fix reality, we can assume that strategy changes, even when a statement of strategy makes it look unchanged.

From a different scientific journey in “ReCreating Strategy”, Stephen Cummings (2002) makes similar assumptions about the interaction between a strategic “map” and the emergence of strategy. To the map he assigns the role of orienting and animating the process of moving outside uncertainty and impasses towards the very task of building a personalized map. The official map, that is strategy as blueprint, must serve as stimulus for the very creation of strategy, which in turn tells that the map is not the strategy, though it is a very important object in the process of building one. Cummings also accounts for the very possibility of using other objects in this process (p. 217).

In sum, strategy emergence is a story of mediation told *in itinere*. The strategy materializes at any tracing of hybrids; it may be confused in chaotic phases, and become clear with stabilization, though this latter is only temporary, because new objects and subjects create new conditions for innovating the process of mediation.

**Conclusions**

Most works on strategy emergence have not completely moved out of modernism. In the nonmodernist language we could say that researches underneath paradigms on emergence were born within the managerial practice, but afterwards they were translated into transcendences, mostly in the sphere of objectivity, reality and reason. These attempts have innovated the strategic paradigm because researchers have explored empirical reality trying to keep a speculative distance from the dominant perspective. Their narratives of companies’ histories actually show that
strategy blueprints were actually vivified and changed, often dramatically in the course of action. However, moving from the field into purification, paradigms have become logocentric; strategies have then been conceived as universal truths, which have allowed top leaders to keep responsibility for business strategy creation in their hands. Emergence then has been immediately replaced by the issues of implementation, under the implicit assumption that primacy always competes to continuity.

Being oriented by the paradigm of strategy-organization coherence, researchers have often forgotten that strategy has to do with creativity and innovation and both, in turn, with conflicts, paradoxes and contradictions. The emergence of strategy from the creation and/or solution of mismatches, however, still appears unconceivable; meanwhile strategy keeps dealing with leadership and implementation.

In this paper we have analysed alternative ways to overcome those contradictions by referring to the perspectives of deconstruction, complexity and nonmodernism. Comparing these perspectives we have revealed that unconsciously transformation is approached as epiphenomenon of continuity. By making transformation primary, we have turned to explore strategy as a process occurring in a context of uncertainty and ambiguity. At the core of research on strategy then we have located processes first, as the postponement of language differences (difference), from postmodern deconstruction, then, as social interactions, from the natural perspective of Transformative Teleology and the TCRPR, and finally, as the tracing of hybrids objects-subjects, from nonmodernism.

This mosaic of references to perspective on process and change has allowed us understanding strategy emergence as a process of discursivization, naturalization and mediation. We could envisage the possibility of a link between these processes only within mediation, since purified perspectives derive their legitimacy just from their ability to win over other perspectives. Nonmodernism draws its construct about mediation from assigning equal power of enactment to objects as well as to subjects. Objects become then responsible for naturalization and subjects for individuation and socialization. Subjective as well objective transcendences are allowed to play a crucial role on mediation as long as they renounce to their ontological status.

Under this condition advocates of emergence are now liberated from any fear for blueprints. In fact, a strategic paradigm, however powerful, is itself transformed by the mediation. We can now recognize that this change has always occurred even when the primacy was assigned to continuity and implementation. This, in fact, has raised the need for shadow systems in organizations that indicates how the organization must often move against the rules and systems for strategic control in order to survive and to foster innovation.

By recognizing that any strategic paradigm keeps evolving, it may be possible to deal with strategic control within a context for transformation. Naturalization, discursivization and socialization, in fact, do not exclude the creation of control system, but leaves always open the opportunity for change.
by challenging assumptions through reflection and self-reflection. When a paradigm is no longer considered as ideology, it then becomes a crucial resource, from which, however, we can take distance as soon as it becomes obstacle to challenging a paradigm, since then organizations can loose either opportunities for growth or competitive positions.

What is needed for this purpose is redirecting the focus from paradigm implementation to the management of forces of naturalization, socialization and discursivization that modify companies’ route. Since each of these forces can autonomously enact change, silencing them in order to reaffirm a strategic ontological status could imply a serious waste of resources, which paradoxically might increase the need for control.

Within the flexibility allowed to strategy at the level of mediation the choice between continuity and transformation always remains open.

The approach on mediation to management is at its infancy. Its explanatory power needs to be explored in practice. To us continuing this research appears a promising way to refresh our way of thinking about management. One simple reason for this belief is that creativity is enhanced when confronting many facets of the same situation (Foucault, 1991) and many perspectives. One more good reason is that, switching emphasis on emergence brings researchers and consultants closer to organizations. It projects them in the very task of building success among uncertainties and ambiguities. This, however, implies that the attitude of feeling depository for truths be abandoned.

References


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