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AUTHORS: Refika BAKOGLU

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THE ROAD, THE ROADBLOCKS AND DIVERSIONS ON THE WAY TO TODAY'S STRATEGY CONCEPT

Refika BAKOĞLU

M.Ü. İ.İ.B.F. İşletme Bölümü, Öğretim Görevlisi, Dr.

Özet: Bu makale, yoğun olarak tartışılan strateji kavramının günümüz dünyasındaki görüntüsünün geçmişte bir yolculuk yapılarak yeniden yorumlanması ve sentezlenmesi yoluyla oluşturulmuştur. Çalışma "deneysel" ve "keşifsel" bir çabaya dayalıdır; Strateji kavramının gerçekleştirilme mekanizmaları olarak sırasıyla strateji süreci ve stratejik işbölümü kullanılmış ve bu görece somut kavramlar aracılığı ile strateji kavramı önce soyut düzeyden somut düzeye indirgemiş daha sonra tekrar somut düzeyden soyut düzeye yeni bir yolculuk yapılarak, sonuçta kavramın daha geniş düzeyde hangi sorulara yol açabileceği gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Kullanılan bu yöntemle, günümüz strateji kavramını kavrama yolunda yeni yaklaşım ve bakış açıları gündeme getirilmiştir. Özde bu çalışma, günümüz gerçeklik ve algılamalarını kavrayıp yeni bakış açıları ve yaklaşımları yakalayabilmek için geçmişin hiçbir "ön kabul" olmaksızın yeniden düşünülmesi ve sırasıyla soyut-somut-soyut bilgi düzeylerinde yolculuğun yapılmasının yararlı olabileceğini göstermeyi de hedeflemektedir.

I. INTRODUCTION

To be able to understand the strategy concept of today's world and the strategy process, it is essential to have a fresh look at the continuos theoretical discussions on strategy formulation versus strategy formation, and the assumptions underlying this discussion. These categories have lead and brought to the surface, the other related categories, such as; conventional versus contemporary strategic processes, planning versus incrementalism perspective, snoptic versus incremental, strategy as patterns of decision versus strategy as patterns of actions and deliberateness versus emergentness etc. The central question here is whether strategic "thinking" and "acting" are separated and sequential processes are formulated before implementation .To answer this question, we need to revise the current theoretical arguments that seem to be categorised in two opposite patterns as planning and incrementalism perspective, and by trying to understand the historical evolution of perception of the strategic work division at the same time. In order to view the complete picture of today's strategy we have to consider the six following points:

1. Planning perspective of strategic process will be reviewed.

2. Planning perspective and emergentness perspective will be discussed by showing the reason why categorising them in two extremes becomes the roadblocks on the way to today's strategy process and concept.

3. The chronological trend of strategy process and strategic work division are reviewed.

4. The latest discussion about the strategy process will be covered.

5. The duality (intermediate) perspective of strategy process derived from the latest strategic management literature will be introduced.

6. The current discussion of strategic work division will be introduced as an example and realization of duality perspective.

7. In the conclusion, new findings and interpretation of the strategic process and broader level questions will be highlighted.

II. EMERGENT VERSUS DELIBERATE STRATEGY

Mintzberg emphasised that today when we ask, "What strategy is?" strategy will be defined as a kind of plan, "an explicit guide to future behaviour" [1]. This clearly indicates how our minds have been shaped, and gives an idea about the paradigm we have had, and still have. Planning perspective has shaped our minds and we have long assumed that we must first think before we act or as Mintzberg put it "to act first we must know what we want to accomplish" [2].Until now we have not questioned that "logic", apart from a few writers on strategic management. The question how that this logic has been adopted into the strategy process, will bring the famous "conventional" strategic work division, the

"formulate before implement" logic, to the surface. Logic is seen to materialise with a long "formulation phase", including extensive analysis of the situation, drawing up of a number of rough designs, evaluation of these alternatives and selection of an alternative to be executed; then the "execution phase", implementing the "decided" alternative into practise; and later the "controlling phase". Finally, the "evaluation phase" that is to feed next formulation phase. As it is known that this logic is applied in functional management (such as marketing, public relations, finance, etc) as well as strategic management, this is one reason why planing perspective can be interpreted as a basis of the paradigm that is mentioned above. The planning perspective is based on the basic premise, that the "entire process can be disassembled into a number of distinct steps, that need to be carried out in a sequential and orderly manner" [3] this process is realised in an organisation as Nutt underlies it. Top-level executives or the top management team formulates strategy and then delegate's implementation responsibilities throughout the rest of the organisation [4]. The strategic "thinking" and "acting" is perceived as separated and sequential stages by the planning perspective advocators. According to this strategic division of work, top level managers, as perceived, are the ones who are at the position of creating strategic ideas, which are formulated into plans to be carried out by others, since it is assumed that strategic thinking is a top management's "issue" and at their province. Middle managers, lower level managers and individuals are perceived for their lack of strategic perspective in organisations. Therefore middle management positions are seen as a kind of channel within organisations, putting plans into action, monitoring and controlling activities.

As a contrary to the planning perspective, incrementalism or emergentness is advocated as a way to describe, "how actually a strategy develops" within an organisation. These approaches are too extreme and have opposite patterns for describing strategy process or furthermore indicating the strategic work division. Conceptualising strategy process as dichotomies may lead to future problems;

1. By concentrating on the extreme patterns, "the intermediate forms" that involve both patterns at a various degree can be missed out. In the strategic process, planning perspective and the emergentness perspective represent rival points [3] and trying to perceive strategic process into conflicting patterns, missing out the historical evolution and perspective of it, may cause us not to see the fact that we actually discuss the " Intermediate form" or "duality form" for strategic process. As this can be interpreted from De Witt and Meyer's statement, which is " in the discussion the crucial issue is whether strategy making process should be more deliberate or more emergent" [3]. In other words, what is being done at the moment is to describe the intermediate form that represents stability, coming from the deliberate strategy, and change, coming from the emergent strategy.

Therefore it seems strategic management theoreticians are in the search of the duality form without realising it clearly. As an example, Mintzberg [1,2,5,6] and Burgelman's [7,8,9] theoretical and empirical studies give us insights that in especially large, complex and high performing firms both features exist together and therefore such organisations have neither perspectives solely but also a degree of intermediate form. However it can be not interpreted to what extent the both perspectives exist within such organisations from their works, they prove that both patterns can be seen within a single organisation, the strategy concept consist of both patterns, and further emergent strategy, or what Burgelman calls it as autonomous strategic initiatives, causes differences in strategy concept of an organisation. More importantly there seems a tendency moving from planning perspective to the emergentness perspective since it may fit the description of the environment of the future. Currently, the theoretical "emergentness" perspective is being established, rather than applied into practice. It is not generalised at business level, in the sense of finding examples in numbers and types of organisations, and organisational level. Even within a single organisation it depends on some individuals, "responding to the environment naturally" in a dynamic way. The environment is a highly dynamic, complex, and hostile, we describe, and we expect even denser complexity, dynamism and hostility in the future. For this reason, I think that the emergentness perspective is the "ideal typology", as Max Weber uses, representing the "summit" "we" would like to reach to. This point is another reason why we are in the search of the intermediate form.

2. Finding "pure examples" of the both patterns might be difficult in "the real world" since these patterns are extremes. Despite the fact that emergent nature of strategy has been discussed and receiving intense attention recently by strategic management theoreticians, it seems as if it could be quite difficult to find a "pure example" of a organisation whose strategy solely emerges unintentionally and is only action driven in the complex environment. The Honda example [10] seems to fit the situation but it is a single example and further more it could be interpreted a good example of a new market entrance to a completely unknown market without having any deliberate strategy. Despite this fact, it may give us insights about how an organisation should respond to highly complex and dynamic environments and how strategy might be forming in the future if our presumption about the future is correct. For this reason it can be claimed that the Honda Effect cannot be generalised as an example of today's strategy process. This is not to deny the emergent nature of strategy, but to emphasise that "purely emergent" strategy seems not to be a realistic picture of the strategic process "at the moment". The same may also be said for the theoretically established conventional perspective. Today it appears difficult to find any organisation whose strategy process only relies on deliberate strategy unless the environment is stable.

3. Since patterns are extremes, it might be difficult to generalise any of these patterns theoretically. For mentioned reasons above, neither planning perspective nor emergentness perspective seems to represent today's strategic process on its own, especially for large and complex firms with complex environments, but both of them together seem appropriate perspectives for describing the strategic process for large and complex firms.

4. A construct involving "change" or time dimension, such as strategy making process or strategic work division, might consists of one pattern, that is theoretically established and applied into practice in various forms, the planing perspective of strategy making process, and the other, that is theoretically being established and therefore there is vague understanding of the pattern such as emergent perspective of strategy making or emergent strategy. Trying to understand such a construct categorically may be problematic since categorical understanding may take out the time dimension, and cause not to be seen evolution of such concepts.

Table.1. Bourgeois and Brodwin's Five Models in Brief

Model	The CEO's Strategic Question	CEO's Role
I. Commander	"How do I formulate the optimum strategy?"	Rational actor
II. Change	"I have a strategy in mind; now how do I implement it?"	Architect
III. Collaborative	"How do I involve top management to get commitment to strategies from the start?"	Co-ordinator
IV. Cultural	"How do I involve the whole organisation in implementation?"	Coach
V. Crescive	"How do I encourage managers to come forward as champions of sound strategies?"	Premise-setter and Judge

Source: L. J. Bourgeois and D. R. Brodwin, "Strategic Implementation: Five Approaches to an Elusive Phenomenon," **Strategic Management Journal**, Vol.5, 1984, p.242.

For these limitations, it can be claimed that categorising the strategic perspectives as dichotomies may cause some problems with "fitting in" with the "real world". Today, subtlety and balance between these two perspectives might be needed as Hamel and Heene point out [11]. This is to say that large and complex organisations will have time to adapt themselves to complex environments in a dynamic way, without having any deliberate strategic planes. Despite these limitations,

the dichotomy may give us insights to realise that we are on the verge of shifting the existing paradigm or our paradigm has been changing. This dichotomy may bring some very important question into one's mind: Are we getting familiar with emergent strategy more and more everyday and is the duality becoming an "everyday fact" of our lives?

Before discussing the current theoretical arguments on strategy process, Bourgeois and Brodwin's five different strategy making typologies are to be reviewed since the models show the historical evolution of the strategy "formulation" to the strategy "formation". Bourgeois and Brodwin's five different strategy-making typologies might be used as an indicator of the history of the strategic work division, and "a rough chronological trend" [12] from formulation to formation. It could be interpreted from Table.1. that the degree of involvement of organisational members rises from the commander model to the crescive model. As the authors put it, the first three models assume implementation as after-the-fact [12]. Formulation and implementation are thought completely separated and that there are a few formulators, and the rest of the organisation is manipulated into implementation of those models, the planning perspective. The two other models presume involvement of the whole organisation in strategy process, but they differ from each other by the way they see formulation and implementation of strategy. In contrary to the first three models that relate to a rationality dimension, the cultural model reflects interpretative aspects of strategy [13], keeping the strategic work division valid. In the model, "strategy developers and implementers" still exist with a slight difference such as the "thinker's" emphasis on shared values. As a contrary in the crescive model, it seems that there is no such division and "strategy grows within the organisation" [12], organisational members play the critical role in the development of strategy [13]. As a natural result, strategy develops from "down to up" within the organisation with symbolic leadership of top managers in this model, as a contrary to the other models.

Today it is argued that this conventional view so-called "command-and-control" model of strategy no longer applies by especially learning theory as a basis for describing how new strategy is actually created [2,5,6,7,14,15]. Particularly Mintzberg and McHugh's Grass Roots Model, Mintzberg's "Crafting Strategy", Quinn's Logical Incrementalism and Burgelman's Corporate Entrepreneurship Model describe strategy development as a learning process. Seeing strategy development as a learning process means in general that new strategies largely emerge over the time gradually with "the iterative process of action-reaction-reconsideration [3]; "the process is dynamic, with no define beginning or end" [16], "action drives thinking" and "one idea leads to another until a new pattern forms" [1] and therefore "strategy formulation is an emergent process characterised by changing roles and fluid participation by organisational members" [17]. Instead of

using the terms formulation and implementation to describe the strategic division of work, formation, a more holistic term, has been adopted to describe the process. Particularly Mintzberg has been insisting on the term of formation in his several writings. After the author observed the strategies of Volkswagenwerk from 1920 to 1974 and the U.S. Strategy in Vietnam from 1950 to 1973, he concluded, "the dichotomy between strategy formulation and strategy implementation is a false one under certain common conditions, because it ignores the learning that must often follow the conception of an intended strategy" [5]. In his other article, he defines separation of formulation from implementation as a basic form of rationality that simply depends on formulating before implementing [2]. He also highlights that such dichotomy is based on "very ambitious assumptions" e.g. "the environments can always be known" and "the environment is sufficiently stable, or at least predictable", and "the formulator can be fully, or at least sufficiently, informed to formulate viable strategies" [2]. In the Grass Roots Model, Mintzberg and McHugh show how "implementers" become the "formulators" by working out on a collective basis in organisations dependent on sophisticated expertise, such as high-technology firms, hospitals, and universities [6]. Quinn and Voyer claim that "many recent attempts to devise strategy using approaches that emphasise formal planning have failed because of poor implementation", and come to a conclusion that "strategy formulation and strategy implementation interact in the organisation's continuing stream of events [16]. Pascale shows how Honda's response to a completely unknown market, how their strategy emerged from action, in other words how "action draw thinking" in his "The Honda Effect" article [10].

Despite the fact that some academicians try to make two opposite categories out of the theoretical arguments mentioned above, such as planning versus incrementalism perspective, snoptic vs. incremental, strategy as a patterns of decision versus strategy as patterns of actions, deliberateness vs. emergentness, top down versus bottom up processes, it seems that it is agreed that in large and complex organisations with complex environments strategy process involves the both opposite patterns together in reality. This clearly means that there is an agreement on the premise that strategies can form as well as be formulated. Mintzberg claims that conclusion by showing how a realised strategy can emerge in response to an evolving situation, or deliberately planed trough the process of formulation followed by implementation [1,2,5,6,18]. Bower observes that "Top down" theory, that later conceptualised as strategy as patterns of decision, deliberateness, planning perspective, conventional strategic process etc., is unrealistic, in fact both theories, top-down and bottom up, are true and their relationship is not contradictory, but complementary [19]. As Burgelman interpreted Bower's planning perspective, "the strategy making is both a bottom-up and top-down process" [7]. Burgelman clearly shows that to be able to maintain both needed "diversity"

and "order" for there viability, large diversified and complex organisations have strategic activities, the autonomous and the induced strategic behaviour. According to his researches results, "diversity" results primarily from autonomous strategic initiative of participants at the operational level; "order" results from imposing a concept of strategy on the organisation [7,8,9]. It can be interpreted from these results that as long as organisations require both stability and diversity or change at the same time together, strategy-making process will remain to involve both opposite patterns of deliberateness and of emergentness together. In other words, such firms will have to have dual and intermediate forms, which require the both planning perspective and emergentness perspective together in the strategic process. Therefore organisations should remain planning deliberately as well as encouraging organisational learning in order to manage "diversity" and adapt to their changing environment.

To be able to understand how successful or high performing organizations manage diversity and stability simultaneously, or in other words how they manage to materialize the duality perspective, the current discussions of strategic work division should be reviewed. Today, it is commonly accepted that strategies develop over time through successive iterations of decisions and actions instead of developing from the minds of top managers or individuals, as the evidence suggests. Thus all the members of any organisation have to think and act more strategically, and all of them has changing roles and participates fluidly in strategy formation [17]. Due to their centrality and unique position between the top and the operating level and their knowledge, middle managers are claimed to be the key actors in the strategic process [7,15,20,21,22,23,24]. They are linking actors between the firm and its environment and between strategic and operational decision-making. It is accepted that this linking function is crucial in deploying and gaining advantage from existing capabilities, in accumulating methods and broadening their firms' capability to change and innovate.

In our age, it is assumed that firms compete on the basis of knowledge, routines and competencies, as the dynamic competence-based theory of the firm suggests [25,26]. Burgelman shows how autonomous strategic initiatives at the operational and the middle levels of the firms cause dramatic changes in the corporate strategy of large, complex firms[7]. Nonaka claims that neither top managers nor lower level managers create information, it is the middle manager that creates information in organization [27]. He claims that autonomous information creation takes place by expanding from the individual level to the group level and to the organizational level, and it is the middle management who occupies a key position with the ability to combine strategic macro (context-free) information and hands-on micro (context-specific) information. Therefore, middle managers are able to serve as the "agent of change" in the

organization's self-renewal process [22]. Van Cauwenberg and Cool claim that middle management plays a key integrative role in linking activities and ideas between the technical and institutional levels in complex organizations [21]. In their framework for strategic management, they also showed that in the strategy formulation process middle management's role is confrontation of general orientations, based on concepts, coming from corporate level and of specific proposals, based on facts, coming from front-line management. The process of strategy activation following the formulation stage is claimed to be bottom-up process where front line management works out the given confrontation, middle management adapts and the top management approves strategic proposal [21]. Floyd and Wooldridge make more detailed description of the processes of emergent and deliberate strategy. According to them, "emergent decision making from the lower levels (bottom-up strategy) mixes with deliberate decision making from the top (top- down strategy), and middle managers, captain a boat floating precariously in the confluence, buffeted by the currents of both deliberate and emergent forces" [15]. The authors develop a framework detailing the ways middle mangers contribute to strategy and advance the firm's dynamic capability. The framework combines upward and downward influence with behaviours that integrate and support strategies on one hand and diverge from official strategy on the other. The interaction of direction of influence and its impact on existing strategy leads to a description of four strategic middle management roles: championing alternatives, synthesizing information, facilitating adaptability and implementing deliberate strategy [15,23]. Middle managers joint emerging and deliberate strategies by realising these four roles. They implement and synthesise deliberate strategies on one hand and diverge from the deliberate strategy materialising the emergent strategy by understanding the need for change (synthesizing), preparing for it (facilitating), stimulating it (championing), and ultimately, managing the process (implementing) on the other. Middle managers harmonise emergent and deliberate strategies realizing the duality perspective by performing these four strategic roles, that are proved to be associated with high organizational performance by Floyd and Wooldridge [23]. As a result it can be claimed that the duality perspective can be observed directly from middle management level in an organization, and the middle management's strategic roles may give deeper insight into the duality perspective than any other levels in organization.

To be able to judge whether the duality form can be generalised and claimed as today's common model, then both organisation and its environment need to be taken into consideration. As Miller and Friesen suggest the "strategy-making" process should be right for the environment, for it to be able to claim that the organisation selects appropriate strategy [28]. There is a tendency among most of the strategic management theoreticians mentioned above to assume that all

organisations are large and complex, living in highly complex environments with highlighting the assumption or without mentioning anything about it clearly. Although this tendency has its reasonable logic behind it, other variations in organisation's features and the environments should be considered in order to see the whole picture of strategy process in organisations and not to idealise and generalise one perspective, assuming that no other perspectives are applicable. Although there is a gap in this point in strategic management literature, for not having any researches or writings on the relationship among organisation's features (size, complexity, configuration type, etc.), the environments (complexity level) and the perspectives of the strategy process (planning perspective, emergentness perspective and the duality perspective), the matrix below may be interpreted.

Despite the fact that these propositions need to be measured and proved, these represent interpretations of the current literature highlighted above. There is also need to rethink the features of the variables: Especially the categorisation of the features of environment should cover the complexity levels from stable to chaotic more accurately. Furthermore both categorisations of features

Table.2. Propositions on the Relationship among Features of Organisation, Features of Environment and Perspectives of Strategy Process

	Emergentness Perspective	Duality Perspective
Turbulent *Features of* *Environment*		
Stable	Planning Perspective	Planning Perspective

Small   *Large*
Features of Organisations

of the organisations and environment should involve middle features as well, such as middle-scale organisation and middle level complexity of the environment. Since the main purpose is not to develop a framework for perspectives of strategy process, these points and discussions about the propositions will be ignored for the moment. Returning to the point of the initial question, it may be difficult to claim that the duality form in strategy process is a common model in today's world, as new researches are needed to be explored. But it can be claimed that neither of the perspectives is the "ideal" and "accurate" perspective, and accuracy should be taken into account in terms of the features mentioned above.

III. CONCLUSION: THE ROADBLOCKS AND THE DIVERSIONS FOUND ON THE WAY

It seems very difficult to clearly see the complete picture of strategy process and further strategic work division of today from the current strategic management literature. However there are many uncertainties on the way to current strategy making process and strategic work division, some new interpretations can be derived from the literature:

1. By generalising any of the three perspectives of strategy process as "the best perspective" and "most accurate perspective" does not seem very appropriate, as not all the variables are being taken into consideration and three different variations at various levels should be included. Both the complexity level of environment and organisation may affect the perspectives of the strategy process. Both the complexity level of environment and organization may affect the perspectives of the strategy process. And the configuration types of organization may also be an important variable to take into consideration in this matter.

2. It can be interpreted from the literature that there is a tendency of popularity of the duality perspective for large and complex organisations with complex environments as being defined more realistic view of the strategic process.

3. It can also be derived from the literature that emergentness perspective seems to the "ideal typology" of strategy process.

4. The organisations, require the two opposite patterns of stability and change together, should have the duality perspective of strategy process. The need for stability will be satisfied by the planning perspective and need for change or diversity will be covered by the emergentness perspective.

Besides these diversions mention above that will be summarised latter in larger context as questions, we encounter roadblocks on the way to today's strategy concept. Categorising a construct as a dichotomy may cause misinterpretation, vague understanding, and not perceiving the fact as it is. We understand, as management scientists, "healthy" changes do not occur from one extreme pattern to the other as incrementalism and learning theory proved, such created categories may not fit the "real world". The Crescendo Model of Rejuvenation of Baden-Fuller and Stopford [29] can be interpreted as a very good example of the nature of change and a successful example of the duality form, indicating the changing paradigm. Since we accept that change occurs incrementally, we should try to understand facts as they evolve and try to conceptualise it more accurately. This is to say that we should reconsider the methodology we are using, time dimension has to be considered in perceiving the facts, and icrementalism may be adapted into the new method of understanding.

Beside these new interpretations, there are seen many other roadblocks and mysteries on the way to today's strategy process and these lead to many new and vital questions, as follows:

1. How likely is strategic work division to be in the future? Is it really changing?

2. What is the validity of the perspectives of the strategic process at the moment and in the future?

3. Are we in the search of the duality form? What features does it need to be materialised?

4. How will we realise the emergentness perspective within whole organisations that require it? How likely is it to be "organisation-wide" effort rather than individual effort?

5. It can be claimed that middle management level may be the most appropriate level to gain insight into the duality perspective and their strategic roles may be a good indicator of performing/ materializing the duality process.

6. Are we actually making the organic organisation with dynamic capability to adapt itself to the changing organisation real? Are we on the verge of realising the organic organisation in any type of configuration?

7. Will the organisational learning help to realise the organic organisation?

8. Will the theoretical studies and discussions lead to materialise the organic structure?

9. Will our perception of the individual change? What kind of person will organisation need in order to realise the organic organisation? Do we need to rethink about Mc Gregor's X and Y typologies?

10. Do we need to change the method of understanding? Can categories help to see us the whole picture of any issue? Can incrementalism perspective be adapted into the method of understanding and will it work better?

11. Is our paradigm shifting in today's world?

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