Helsinki University of Technology

Industrial Management and Work and Organizational Psychology

Dissertation Series

No 5

Espoo 2003

Champion, citizen, cynic?

Social positions in the strategy process

Saku Mantere

Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Science in Technology to be presented with due permission for public examination and debate in Spektri/Duo, Luna Auditorium at Helsinki University of Technology (Metsänneidonkuja 6, Espoo, Finland), on the 7th of February, 2003, at 12 noon.

Helsinki University of Technology

Department of Industrial Engineering and Management

Laboratory of Work Psychology and Leadership

P.O. Box 9500

FIN-02015 HUT

Finland

Phone: +358 9 451 3651

Fax: +358 9 451 3665

© Saku Mantere

Cover and illustrations Aleksi Salokannel, Sisin

ISSN 1459-1936

ISBN 951-22-6284-3

Monikko Oy

Espoo 2003

Abstract

This study is focused on the social positions of individual organizational members in organizational strategy processes. Strategy is a social practice existent in a wide variety of different organizations, influencing, either directly or indirectly, a large number of organizational members. Strategy research has, however, largely neglected the individuals, whose actions and practices make up the strategy process, concentrating on organizations as seemingly homogenous entities. There is even less research exploring the contributions of middle managers and employees acting as strategic agents.

The objective of this study is to understand and illuminate the variety of social positions assumed by organizational members from the CEO to the operative employee level in organizational strategy processes. The research is built around a set of 301 qualitative interview texts from 12 organizations. The interviewees are treated as knowledgeable agents capable of reflecting their social positions and roles in the strategy process.

The data is analyzed in a grounded theory -setting. The data analysis consists of three 'encounters' with the interview texts. In the first encounter, a three-dimensional schema is created for analyzing the social positions. In the second encounter, 20 social positions are identified and explored under the categories of champion, citizen and cynic. In the third encounter, the 20 positions are divided into three performance categories: role-players, role-seekers and bystanders. Roles performed and reasons for not performing a desired role are traced and discussed.

The research contributes to strategy research a viewpoint on the role that the social practice of strategy plays in the work of various organizational members. Through the exposition of social positions and performance categories, it deepens the understanding on why strategies succeed or fail in being enacted by individual organizational members. Furthermore, it allows a large group of organizational members to use voice in the discussion on strategy. The practical contribution of the research is associated with such issues as the communication of strategy, participation in the strategy process, as well as dissent and cynicism in the strategy process.

Tiivistelmä (Abstract in Finnish)

Strategiaksi kutsuttu sosiaalinen käytäntö on läsnä lukuisissa erilaisissa organisaatioissa. Se vaikuttaa suorasti tai epäsuorasti suureen joukkoon organisaatioiden jäseniä. Tästä huolimatta strategiatutkimus, jonka lähtökohta on organisaatiotasoinen tarkastelu, on kiinnittänyt varsin vähän huomiota *yksilöihin* strategian toteuttajina. Keskijohdon ja operatiivisen henkilöstön toimintaa strategiaprosessissa koskevaa tutkimusta on vieläkin vähemmän.

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on ymmärtää ja kuvata sosiaalisia asemia, jotka kuuluvat strategiaprosessiin liittyville yksilöille ylimmästä johdosta operatiivisen henkilöstön tasolle. Tutkimuksen aineisto koostuu 301 haastattelusta, jotka tehtiin 12 organisaatiossa. Haastateltavat nähdään toimijoina, jotka kykenevät reflektoimaan rooliaan ja sosiaalista asemaansa.

Analyysitapa on aineistolähtöinen. Analyysi tehdään kolmessa vaiheessa, kolmessa *kohtaamisessa* aineiston kanssa. Ensimmäisen kohtaamisen tuloksena syntyy analyysikehikko yksilöiden sosiaalisten asemien erittelyyn. Toisessa kohtaamisessa eritellään kaikki 301 yksilön kuvaukset omasta sosiaalisesta asemastaan, minkä tuloksena syntyy 20 luokkaa, jotka ryhmitellään *aktivistin*, *kansalaisen* ja *kyynikon* kategorioiden avulla. Luokat kuvataan tarkasti. Kolmannessa kohtaamisessa 20 luokkaa ryhmitellään kolmeksi toiminnalliseksi kategoriaksi sen mukaan, kokevatko yksilöt voivansa toimia oikeaksi katsomassaan roolissa.

Tutkimus tarjoaa strategiatutkimukselle vastauksia melko tutkimattomaan kysymykseen, minkälainen asema strategialla voi olla eri yksilöiden työssä. Käsittelemällä yksilöiden sosiaalisia asemia ja toiminnallisia rooleja strategiaprosessissa, tutkimus syventää ymmärrystä strategian toteuttamisen onnistumiseen tai epäonnistumiseen liittyvistä tekijöistä. Lisäksi tutkimus antaa äänen lukuisille organisaation jäsenille, joiden näkökulma strategiaprosessiin on aiemmin pysynyt piilossa. Tutkimuksen käytännöllinen anti liittyy kysymyksiin strategian viestimisestä, strategiaprosessiin osallistumisesta ja strategiaan ajoittain liittyvästä kyynisyydestä.

Acknowledgements

It all began with a project. This dissertation is a representation of work carried out in the STRADA project at the Laboratory of Work Psychology and Leadership, Helsinki University of Technology. I came to work in the project as a junior researcher, first writing a master's thesis commissioned by the project. Three years have gone by and I have come to regard the STRADA project as well as our whole laboratory as a rather special entity. I will no doubt look back at my three years as a researcher as a special episode in my personal narrative. During the last three years, I have never regretted having to go to work and have rarely craved for a break. All the people in our laboratory in general, and a few people specifically, have contributed to the completion of this dissertation.

Professor Veikko Teikari has been my thesis supervisor. He is the father figure of our laboratory, who always has an encouraging word and a kind comment. He has given me freedom and responsibility, as well as provided me with the role model of a wise and generous human being. Professor Matti Vartiainen, for whom I did my minor topic, has given the support of an experienced and educated senior researcher, commenting each of my manuscripts with the commitment of really getting to the bottom of things, beyond formal nonsense. I will regard his resolve to understand things as another fine example set by a senior researcher and will look forward to many more discussions.

Dr. Miia Martinsuo was the best instructor I could have imagined. She read through one manuscript after another, offering sharp criticism as well as truly helpful constructive insight. Her enthusiasm and curiosity for my topic were inspiring as well as flattering. It may well be that Miia was the single most significant person for my completing this dissertation. If I will ever instruct anybody else's work, I will look at Miia as a prototype.

And now – to the project itself. My colleagues in the STRADA project became my friends in a relatively short time, and this dissertation owes a lot to their support. Petri Aaltonen is the ideal leader for us: a perfect information provider, an encouraging motivator and a thorough manager (his spreadsheet training is legendary). Virpi Hämäläinen is a rare combination of a curious researcher and a skilled diplomat. Heini Ikävalko has in many senses been the creative force behind the team, coming up with ideas nobody else would think of. Kimmo Suominen has enlivened our work with his youthful enthusiasm and sharp thinking. While it has been a while since she left us, Mari Ventä's kind spirit and warm character still hovers above our team. Our main financiers, the National Productivity Programme and the Finnish National Workplace Development Programme have the gratitude of the whole STRADA project team.

While I have enjoyed having discussions with many colleagues at the laboratory, Jouni Virtaharju and Paul Buhanist have significantly contributed to this dissertation. Jouni, helped out in a number of stages, driven by his sharp wit and energetic character. Paul lent me his vast experience as a researcher, coaching me through the process of the public defense.

I am indebted to Professors John Sillince and Pauli Juuti for their acting as preliminary examiners. Their insightful and analytical comments were very helpful in developing my work. Furthermore, I have enjoyed my personal discussions with Professor Sillince a great deal. Having a world-class academic like John to discuss your ideas with is a rare delight.

My friend Aleksi Salokannel did me a considerable favor, producing the illustrations contained in this dissertation. I have no doubt that his excellent work will greatly enhance the possibilities of many readers of making sense of the text. Ruth Vilmi checked and corrected my English, using her art to give my thoughts a graceful form.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the kind cooperation of the 301 individuals we interviewed. I am greatly thankful for all of the interviewees for sharing their time, experiences and wisdom. They helped me learn a lot.

I gained my first insights into strategy and leadership during my years at the Helsinki University of Technology Student Union. The executive teams I was privileged to be a part of gave birth to my present urge to understand organizations better. I got to be a part of a unique and precious organizational culture and to share that experience with exceptional people.

While this is an academic dissertation, it also represents the conclusion of an episode in my personal life. The most significant part of my personal life is constituted by the people closest to me. My parents, Soili and Seppo Mantere, through their love and support, helped me to develop into a person. Aki Mantere, my brother, shared that journey with me. Lauri Saariluoma taught me the meaning of friendship and trust. Teemu Laajasalo shared the process of my intellectual awakening as well as taught me how to interact with other people. Mikko Arvas has always been my fellow scientist. Aleksi Salokannel has been my model of a civilized human being. Tuomas Pernu has been my brother in philosophy. The list must stop somewhere, and a lot of good people will be left unmentioned.

My wife Outi constitutes the center of my Lifeworld. I will not flatter myself by thanking her for patience and understanding during this project, since *I* am the one who has had the pleasure of sharing her company. She makes my existence meaningful. I look forward to many more years with her, full of what is really essential in life: discussions, music and love. I am a very fortunate man.

Espoo December 2002

Saku Mantere

Table of contents

PERSONAL PROLOGUE: WHY I AM INTERESTED IN STRATEGY 1

1. INTRODUCTION. INDIVIDUALS IN STRATEGY PROCESSES 5

2. THE STRATEGY PROCESS. FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THEORY 9

2.1 What is strategy? 9
2.2 What is the strategy process? 13
2.3 Strategic intent 15
2.4 The critique of strategic intent as collective intent 21
2.5 The strategy process as a process of structuration 23
2.6 Is or ought? Strategy on the ontological level 27

3. INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS IN THE STRATEGY PROCESS. SECOND ENCOUNTERS WITH THEORY 31

3.1 A linear model of strategy implementation 31
3.2 Sensemaking in the strategy process 34
3.3 Power in the strategy process 39
3.4 Agent activity 42
3.5 Social positions in the strategy process 44
3.6 Research on organizational roles and social positions 48
Top management roles 49
Middle management roles 54
Employee roles 55
3.7 Individual positions in the strategy process: a summary of the two encounters with theory 58

4. INTERMISSION: ENCOUNTERING THE DATA 60

4.1 Phenomenology as paradigm 61
4.2 Data 64
4.3 Grounded theory as an analysis approach 66

5. A SCHEMA FOR ANALYZING SOCIAL POSITIONS. FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DATA 71

5.1 The three spheres 73
5.2 The schema 77

6. CHAMPIONS, CITIZENS, CYNICS. SECOND ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DATA 82

6.1 Strategic champions 83
Excluded champion 85
Abandoned champion 89
Discontent champion 92
Empowered champion 97

Champion under stress 104
Disregarded champion 107
Puzzled champion 110
Overwhelmed champion 114
Strategic champions: a summary 117
6.2 Citizens of the strategy process 121
Recluse citizen 122
Neutralized citizen 126
Satisfied citizen 129
Citizen in need 133
Troubled citizen 136
Unenlightened citizen 140
Lost citizen 144
Citizens in the strategy process: A summary 147
6.3 Cynics of the strategy process 151
Hopeless cynic 151
Surrendered cynic 155
Disinterested cynic 158
Dislocated cynic 160
Passive cynic 164
Strategic cynics: a summary 167
6.4 Champions, citizens, cynics. A summary 169

7. ROLE-PLAYERS, ROLE-SEEKERS AND BYSTANDERS. THIRD ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DATA 172

7.1 Role-players 175
7.2 Role-seekers 177
7.3 Bystanders 183
7.4 The link of social positions to strategic performance 184

8. DISCUSSION 188

8.1 Contribution 188
8.2 Implications for practitioners 191
8.3 Limitations and the Issue of Credibility 193
8.4 Suggestions for further research 199

LITERATURE 202

APPENDICES 210

Appendix 1. The interview outlines 210
Appendix 2. Coding guidelines for secondary coders 219
Appendix 3. Quotations in Finnish 223
Appendix 4. Statistical description of the data 232

Personal prologue: Why I am interested in strategy

The researcher is a research instrument, especially in a qualitative study like this one. I therefore feel the need to give a short account of my personal history together with the topic of my research, exposing some of my personal biases and peculiarities. I hope this will help the reader to assess whether I have managed to be aware of these while writing the text.

My educational background is twofold. I have master's degrees in philosophy and in electrical engineering, though I did the latter thesis in the field of work psychology and leadership. I regard the topic of strategy as a kind of a contingent middle ground between these two extremes. Strategy is philosophically interesting because of the deep sociological/action-theoretical question involved: How is it that organizational actions can be regarded as portraying properties normally attributed to intelligent behavior? Can organizations be intelligent? What is the relation between the individual agent and organizational action? On the other hand, strategy is one of the key issues of organization studies toward which I gravitated at the end of my engineering studies.

Phenomenology versus positivism

My philosophical upbringing was largely analytical, which reflects many ideas social scientists prefer to call 'positivist'. For the duration of my undergraduate studies in philosophy, I was drawn toward naturalist and realist streams of thought in the philosophy of science, i.e. I regarded natural science as the model for all good science.

Any reader will probably soon notice that I have wandered quite a long way from these ideals. As I was recruited more or less by chance to a project involving research on strategy implementation from a work psychological standpoint, I ended up being faced with a subject that was largely unexplored. I realized that the only way to understand the social science of strategy implementation was by talking to people and trying to understand what they said about it. I did not have specific questions I wanted to include in a survey, not to mention the fact that we did not want to try to find quantified measures for phenomena that we did not really know about.

In this process, I started to shift towards phenomenology. While I still hold many enlightenment ideas dear, I have started to believe that there is a radical difference between social science and natural science in terms of ontology. In social science, the roots of many of the phenomena lie in the individual Lifeworld, which constitutes something wholly different from the natural world.

There is an uneasy alliance between analytical philosophy and phenomenology in my style of analysis and writing. I regard explicitness and conceptual clarity as the best parts of analytical philosophy, while phenomenology has the upper hand in accounting for the topics that are really important in social science. I tried to keep a wary eye open as I wrote the text, trying to avoid superimposing too many ideals from analytical philosophy onto a phenomenological framework.

My personal experiences with strategy

The most important formative experience during my undergraduate studies was the year I spent as president of the Helsinki University of Technology Student Union. The Student Union is an organization that was at that point 126 years old, with approximately 10 000 members and assets of approximately 50 M€. The Student Union executive board is elected every year, so the post of the president was for one year only.

I became fascinated with the functioning of the Student Union as an organization. As a person with a philosophical streak, I started trying to explain to myself why the organization existed (the executive board also had the task of rewriting the regulations for the Student Union that year). With the executive board, we went to a cabin in the woods to write *the strategy* for the Student Union for the next five years. We ended up with a ten-page draft. We had a succession of meetings in which we managed to compress it into one page (the font was smallish). We felt we really had come up with the direction our organization should follow, the reasons it existed and what it should do to best serve its members.

At the same time, I discussed the strategy paper with ex-activists of the Student Union, many of whom were practicing managers. They generally felt that I should not really worry about strategy, but rather concentrate on ‘doing good stuff’ at the more

operative level. I thought we did that already, and found their belittling attitude somewhat infuriating.

A few years have gone by and I have ended up giving today's activists the same advice that I was given: do not concentrate your efforts too much on strategy but rather on action. The Student Union has an infectiously strong culture that guides individuals to carry out its purpose. I ended up creating a strategy process that created a strategy paper. I am happy that it has been carried on from generation to generation for the five years of its scope. I learned a lot doing that. But the time I really learned a lot about reality was when we *acted;* when we *acted* we *did good stuff,* as when we built an ad hoc bus service at the time of a transportation strike that prevented our members getting a bus to the campus, i.e. when we had an *emergent strategy* to carry us through.

The moral from my experiences with strategy was that action really counts. I have a philosophical affection toward strategy as it represents issues that go beyond everyday thinking, but I also have an inherent suspicion toward it, in as far as it has the potential to transcend talk.

Leaders and followers

As president, I got to be the leader in the Student Union. I was responsible for assembling and chairing a board of smart, enthusiastic people, as well as working in close cooperation with the employees of the Student Union. I loved being a leader, but ended up despising the role as well. It was immensely gratifying to be able to look at the ‘big issues’ and facilitate discussion to reach smart conclusions. I got to be very close friends with the executive board. On the other hand, I felt I had to understand and support everybody, while nobody really understood what I had to go through. I had to answer for things I had no possibility of knowing about (of course, I was glorified on similar accounts as well). As my year was over, I felt really gratified at having done it. But also gratified of being freed of having to worry about being politically correct all the time. Regaining the privilege of just worrying about my own business. All in all, I think I learned to appreciate the hardships of being a leader, and have even tried to be a better follower in my days as an employee.

On the other hand, I have really grown tired of management rhetoric. There is a lot of literature on management hovering between practice and science that is particularly arid in this sense. I feel the main problem is that there does not seem to be room for *uncertainty* in the managerial worldview. Every issue has to have a quick, simple, and very causal solution. Organizations are bewilderingly complex human systems often operating in extremely complex environments. I find the confidence of managerial rhetoric alarming, especially when it becomes apparent in managerialist scientific discourse. Leaders are central figures in the strategy process, but I think I am biased towards them in two ways: I am quite sympathetic towards their hardships, but the rhetoric they use worries me.

I have discussed my personal history as it relates to my topic of research, touching on my potential prejudices and biases. I will try to be aware of them as I go along. But now, let the journey begin.

1. Introduction. Individuals in strategy processes

Organizational strategy is a phenomenon with an abstract streak. The organizational strategy process is also a flesh and blood phenomenon, affecting a multitude of agents. The objective of this thesis is to elucidate the organizational strategy process from the standpoint of an individual organizational member. I want to understand how organizational members perceive the strategy process and the role they perform as part of the strategy process. The research question I seek to answer is: *In what ways can an individual agent be socially positioned in an organizational strategy process?*

The research question itself, and the concept of *agent*, already give away something about the scientific paradigm of this thesis. Agents are persons who are capable of carrying out action, i.e. intended behavior, and of reflecting on the reasons and consequences of their actions (Giddens, 1984). The social positions of the agents in the strategy process are constituted of the roles the agents perform as members of the strategy process, along with their own conceptions of those roles (ibid.)

This is a microsociological account of the strategy process, centered on the level of analysis of an individual agent. More specifically, it is a phenomenological study, centered on the viewpoints on the strategy process of *active*, knowledgeable agents, that is, on the role the strategy process plays in their Lifeworlds. Furthermore, while strategy literature is typically centered on managers making decisions, this thesis places its interest in agents from all levels in the organizational hierarchy.

What, then, is the motivation for a thesis such as this? Strategic management is the dominant trend in management sciences, yet questions as to how organizational members perceive the strategy process as well as their individual positions in the process remain unanswered. Issues concerning strategy and strategy process have been widely discussed on the organizational and broader levels of analysis, yet have not been explored on the level of the individual, at least if we are willing to regard other organizational members as the senior management having something to do, or at least being affected by, the strategy process. The absence of the individual in the strategy process is a problem noticed by authors corresponding to a new school of thought that regards *strategy as practice* (cf. Whittington, 1996; 2002). Social

positions constitute the nexus of practice that lies between the individual and the strategy process. The inquiry on social positions here is also intended to service the emerging practice school.

The literature on strategy implementation has been curiously lacking in its discussion on how individual organizational members *adopt* strategies. It has become more and more evident that finding the right strategy amounts to nothing if no change takes place in organizational actions, i.e. in organizational members (Alexander 1985, 1991; Noble 1999; Beer & Eisenstat 1996, 2000; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Hamel, 2000). The strategy textbooks (Higgins, 1990; Hrebniak & Joyce, 1984; Johnson & Scholes 1999; Judson, 1990; Pearce & Robinson, 1996; Yavitz & Newman, 1982) address questions of implementing strategy by listing a large number of managerial actions centering on systems and structure, yet they neglect the *experience of strategy* shared by a large number of operative organizational members, contending to remind managers that issues such as *leadership* and *communication* are important. Emphasizing the importance of leadership and communication is all very well, but both ends of such interactive processes are essential if prescriptions are to rely on a real understanding of the phenomena they are intended to affect, i.e. the actions of the organizational members. So, if implementation is to affect the actions of organizational members, we must understand how individual actions come about. I will argue that an understanding of the social positions of the agents is the key to understanding how strategic action is produced.

What should happen in order for implementation to be successful? In a mechanistic model of implementation, the answer offered is that whatever the strategic content is, it should be realized in organizational action. But what if the strategy formulated is wrong? What if the implementers notice a need to change the strategy in order for the organization to perform better? Clearly, the possibility of adjusting strategy as it is implemented should exist, as has been argued by such authors as Mintzberg (1994) and Hamel (2000). Understanding how strategy is adjusted in the strategy process requires an understanding of such notions as dissent (Dooley & Fryxell, 1999), i.e. how people disagree, and cynicism (Dean et al. 1998; Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997; Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000), i.e. who stands in opposition and why. Literature on these phenomena in strategy literature has been nonexistent, especially

when the discussion has concerned other stakeholders as the top management team. A residual trace of the implementation as overcoming resistance to change, a dubious concept nowadays (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Piderit, 2000), hovers above many normative models of implementation.

A further motivation stems from the fact that strategic management is an ideology in its own right that affects organizational members. Since organizational members are people, the effect strategic management plays on people can, and should be, discussed. Strategic management has been criticized by many authors (e.g. Hardy, Palmer & Phillips 2000; Knights & Morgan 1991; Lilley, 2001; Shrivastava, 1986; Whipp, 1996) for implicitly advocating managerialism, non-reflexivity and overt masculine power. While I will do my best to present my results from a value-free standpoint, and while the research design is not set to induce change in those organizations participating in the research, the results of this study may be used to critically examine the phenomenon of strategic management.

My research is presented in three main parts. First of all, theory is explored in two sequential *encounters with theory*. In the first encounter the link between strategy and the individual is explored by moving 'downward' from the strategy towards the individual. The concepts of strategy and the strategy process are explicated first. The individual/strategy process link is explored through a review of literature on action theory, based on a conception of strategy as a *collective intention*. The collective intention view is criticized from various viewpoints, and a better link is sought from the theory of *structuration*, created by sociologist Anthony Giddens. In the second encounter with the theory the individual/strategy link is studied further, now moving 'upward' from the individual viewpoint toward strategy, starting with *sensemaking* literature by Karl Weick. The exploration is continued by supplementing sensemaking with literature on power, moving toward literature on roles in the strategy process. The individual/strategy process link is finalized as a study of *social positions* adopted from Giddens.

A short intermission is taken, in which my data is described, with a discussion on methods, epistemology and ontology. The text from 301 semi-structured interviews is analyzed in three *encounters with data*, and social positions described in the subsequent chapters. In the first encounter, a conceptual schema is created for

analyzing social positions. In the second encounter, 20 social positions are described and discussed. In the third encounter, a final categorization of the twenty positions is drawn, and a link to individual performance explored. Finally, the results, along with the credibility and limitations of the study, are discussed.

2. The strategy process. First encounters with theory

In the first encounter with theory, I will be exploring the link between the individual and strategy by moving 'downward' from strategy toward the individual.

2.1. What is strategy?

Strategy is one of the main questions in organization studies these days. As Lyle as put it:

> *"'strategic' has become a buzzword for all disciplines, trying to stress the importance of their work." (Lyle, 1990: 363)*

Strategy is a popular topic in management schools all over the globe, in MBA programs and in top journals. In a way, strategy seems to be the Holy Grail researchers and practitioners alike are seeking in order to understand why organizations succeed or fail in their aspirations.

On the level of analysis at which it is often presented, strategy is quite easily understood. We can think of it as *the collection of choices the organization makes in order to survive and succeed in its environment*. This is a definition given by many contemporary textbooks (e.g. Johnson & Scholes, 1999; Shrivastava, 1994; Thompson & Strickland, 1995). When we think back to the meaning strategy has in the contexts from which it has been adopted, i.e. game theory and warfare, this definition fits quite well. The master chess player makes choices when making his individual moves, with the aim of winning the game. The general, in whose art lie the etymological roots of the concept strategy[1], orchestrates his troop deployment with the intent of winning the war.

My definition above is not complete, however. Strategy is more than a mere *collection* of choices. What we understand by strategy would seem to imply a very ordered set of choices, choices that form a *coherent* whole. It is not sufficient to say that strategy consists of whatever choices are made that lead to success. Beginner's luck, for example, does not tell of strategy, however successful the lucky individual's

[1] *Strategos*, the art of the general

actions may be. Furthermore, the choices have to be directed towards reaching a *goal* of some sort, often related to economic success in organizational contexts.

Inkpen and Choudhury (1995) address this question in their discussion of strategic absence. They argue that in order for a firm to have a strategy, there has to be some sort of logic to the decisions and actions, a pattern to hold them together:

> *"For example, if no decisions have been made about organizational goals, scope and competitive strategy – or those decisions exhibit no pattern or coherence – is there a strategy? While an organization may have a product line, this paper argues that the existence of product lines and markets is insufficient to support the argument that all firms have strategies." (Inkpen and Choudhury, 1995; 314.)*

The definition above would seem to lead to a conception of strategy in which a rational, goal-directed scheme directs the choices made in the organization. Indeed, this is the classical viewpoint on strategy. It reflects Ansoff (1965) on strategic planning, Andrews (1971) on SWOT analysis, and Porter (1980) on strategic positioning.

The classical position has been attacked from various positions. This stems from the fact that the world is no chessboard and even if it were, human beings are not chess players in everyday life. The discussion on rationality in decision-making was brought to the discussion from the realm of political theory by such classical authors as March & Simon (1958) and Cyert & March (1963). By now, pretty well everybody agrees with the notion that human beings are not purely rational as decision makers. The interesting question is whether decision making in organizations is somewhat rational (bounded-rational) or not rational at all, moved by the whims of political movers and shakers (the garbage-can model) (cf. Eisenhardt and Zbaracki 1992.) In other words, this means that it would be fascinating to discover the level of rationality strategists can be claimed to have in their decision-making.

While human beings are not purely rational, the environment also poses quite a few challenges for the strategists. Almost everybody agrees that the world organizations exist in today is certainly no chessboard, with *complexity* and the increased rate of change resulting in *uncertainty* (e.g. Emery & Trist, 1965; Courtney, Kirkland & Viguerie, 1997; Hatch, 1997a; Löwendahl & Revang, 1998). The environment seems to challenge human cognition, making strategic decision making extremely challenging or even obsolete in various contexts.

Social constructionist authors on organizations (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985; Weick, 1995; Daft & Weick, 1984) go even further, arguing that the environment/organization border may not exist at all. They claim that since the organization constructs its own environment, the environment exists within the organization, thus annihilating the whole organization/environment-distinction. In the more center-field discussion on strategy, there has been a shifting of power from theorists emphasizing environment as the key determinant of strategy (e.g. Porter, 1980), to the resource-based view (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney 1991; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994), which claims that strategy is based on the exploitation of internal organizational resources, such as core competencies (cf. Farjoun, 2002).

Another stream of criticism emanates from the viewpoint that successful strategies need not be formulated *beforehand*. Strategies can emerge from action and can be observed only after they have been realized (e.g. Mintzberg, 1978). This viewpoint is very close to that of social constructionist sensemaking writers, most notably Weick (1995), who claim that thinking and acting in organizational decision making are intertwined and the rationale behind them can only be made sense of in a historical framework (see also Mintzberg, 1995). The only problem of marrying sensemaking authors with emergent strategy authors would seem to be the fact that sensemaking writers often refuse to talk about strategy at all – Weick (1987) has even taken steps to assure his readers that "any old map will do […] too much strategy can harm an organization".

This discussion would seem to indicate that strategy is a concept that cannot be used in a uniform manner, i.e. it has no single distinguishable meaning. Strategy would indeed seem to be a cluster concept (Putnam, 1975; Wittgenstein, 1951), the meaning of which does not consist of any one-core definition, but a set of definitions, like the individual threads in a rope. Mintzberg (1995) has proposed that we can mean five different things when we use the term 'strategy': plan, position, ploy, pattern or perspective. He has elsewhere (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1999) proposed that strategy has been studied from ten distinct schools of thought. Chaffee (1985) offers a simpler categorization of strategy, based on three models: the linear, the adaptive and the interpretive. All in all, it would seem that no unified conception of strategy could be easily distinguished from the field.

Whittington (2001) conceptualizes four conflicting viewpoints on strategy. He argues that there are no easy solutions to account for differences between classical ("analyze, plan and command"), evolutionary ("keep your costs low and your options open"), processual ("stay close to the ground and go with the flow") and systemic ("play by the local rules") approaches to strategy, as he divides the schools of thought. Whittington goes on to argue that each of the four viewpoints on strategy has different implicit assumptions and valuations that one should be aware of. In this, he assumes a different stance as, for example, Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1999) who seek to unite all the different schools in a unified framework in their "configuration" school. I tend to agree with Whittington on this – it would seem that to think that strategy is an "elephant" (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1999) which exists in itself, and the different models present different parts of the elephant, would be to disregard any possibility of real *conflict* between the models. I seriously believe that different models of strategy represent different ideologies, and that between these ideologies, there is an inherent conflict (Shrivastava, 1986).

A further way of searching for a definition of strategy is determining what kinds of issues strategy researchers deem important. Rumelt, Schendel & Teece (1994) claim strategy research has a particular affinity with three distinct scientific principles, namely economics, organizational sociology, political science. They propose the following four fundamental questions for strategy researchers:

- How do firms behave?
- Why are firms different?
- What is the function of, or the value added by, the headquarters unit in a diversified firm?
- What determines success or failure in international competition?

This thesis is set to answer a particular sub-field of the first question, while the three others clearly fall outside its scope. It should be noted that all the questions are posed at the organizational level of analysis, which is typical for most strategy research. This thesis, in contrast, is centered on the level of the individual agent in the strategy process. This focus connects the thesis to an emerging tradition of *strategy as practice*. The focal point of this stream of research is the *practitioner* of strategy, and her activities of strategizing (Whittington, 1996; 2002).

In this thesis, strategy is addressed as a social practice, a phenomenon consisting of social action and cognition. Strategy is a body of choices and actions, the way an organizational member thinks and acts in a manner that is regarded as coherent and goal-directed by others and herself. The nature of this social practice is elaborated further as I go along.

2.2 What is the strategy process?

The discussion on the nature of strategy has dealt expressly with the *content* of strategy. The main goal has been to understand what kinds of strategies organizations have and, of course, what kinds of strategies they *should* have. The soup thickens somewhat when one moves from strategic content to *process.*

The question of the strategy process arises at the latest when one starts to ponder questions related to strategy *implementation.* From a managerial standpoint, it is self-evident that strategies amount to nothing if they are not realized. From the standpoint of a researcher on the other hand, the process in which the organizational actions are molded to facilitate the realization of strategy is of great interest. The development of interest from the mere content of strategy to the process in which strategy is formulated and implemented has in a way split the field of strategy literature into two: the content and process literatures (Pettigrew, 1992; Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992). The latter, younger, process field consists of a plethora of sciences, from sociology and social psychology to economics (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992.)

The process authors interest themselves in the whole process in which organizations formulate *and* implement strategies. The topic can be approached from various disciplines: classical strategists (e.g. Chandler, 1962; Rumelt, 1974; Miles & Snow, 1978) argue that “structure follows strategy”, i.e. organizational structure should be molded to best serve the content of strategy, while political theorists argue that strategy execution is a question of power (e.g. Pettigrew, 1990; Eden, 1992), and interpretivist authors emphasize the role of communication and collective sensemaking (e.g. Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Liedtka & Rosenblum, 1996).

This thesis, being placed in the field of strategy as practice, regards the strategy process from the viewpoint of organizational *microsociology*. Giddens (2001) defines

the scope of microsociology as the study of everyday behavior in face-to-face interaction, at the level of the individual or the group. He characterizes the role of microsociology as:

> *"Micro studies are […] necessary for illuminating broad institutional patterns. Face-to-face interaction is clearly the main basis of all forms of social interaction, no matter how large-scale the context. Suppose we are studying a business corporation. We could understand much about its activities just by looking at face-to-face behavior. We could analyze, for example, the interaction of directors in the boardroom, people working in the various offices, or the workers on the shop floor." (Giddens, 2001: 83-84).*

As noted earlier, strategy is typically conceived at the organizational level of analysis.[2] Without individuals, there are no organizations, however. If one is willing to embrace a holist (e.g. Durkheim) and functionalist (e.g. Parsons) position, one may be willing to reduce individual actions to social structures (such as organizational structure and systems). My taking the individual in the strategy process as the focus of my research arises from my unwillingness to adopt such as position. This thesis is therefore a part of the strategy process literature in its interest in the whole process of strategy: both formulation and implementation. It is not placed in the center field of strategy process research, but in a sub-field that has been poorly illuminated so far: the emerging micro-sociological field of strategy as practice.

I tend to think that we should approach sociological issues, strategy being no exception, with the general approach laid out by von Wright (1971) – i.e. the teleological approach, seeking to *understand* the intentions behind actions, not trying to explain them merely by resorting to socially determined "covering laws". At this point, I also want to stress that I am not attempting to discredit other authors, but am trying to shed light on an area that has not been properly explored yet. While I realize that my approach is far from the center field in strategy research, this is not due to my regarding strategy classics or strategy content authors as unimportant. It has been widely argued (e.g. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1999; Whittington, 2001) that the whole strategy field consists of various viewpoints. I concur with the authors that this has to be accepted – we have to live without one unifying theory of what strategy is, at least for now. In sociological theory, it has been argued often that there can be

[2] Except perhaps in those cases in which strategy is regarded as the conception of a single visionary leader (i.e. Mintzberg's *entrepreneurial* strategy: Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

no unified theory of society, but we are nevertheless bound to grapple with the issues from the various viewpoints (Giddens, 2001).

2.3 Strategic intent

I have discussed what is meant by strategy and strategy process. The discussion so far has concerned the organizational level of analysis. In order to understand individual social positions in strategy processes one needs to understand what strategy means at the level of the individual agent, how the individual thinks and acts strategically. To approach such individual strategies one needs first to understand *intentions*, the traditional building blocks of rational agency[3].

If the term 'strategic' is used to describe a decision or an action, a certain intention is implied. It is not required that the intention be consciously present for the organizational actors at the time of action, however. Strategy can be formed beforehand as classical authors suggest, but retrospective sensemaking can trace an emergent strategy (Mintzberg, 1978) from past action, as noted by Weick (1995). Still, if the term 'strategy' is used, the sensemaking will result in the description of an intention, uniting action. If sense is made of action afterwards, and the term 'strategic' is used in characterizing a stream of decisions and actions, the actions are characterized *as if* they had a guiding intention. The presence of this guiding intention makes the actions seem rational, and thus strategic.

The first definition I gave for strategy was drawn from textbooks and was based on the concepts of *choice* made by an organization in order to succeed. I am not very happy with that definition, however. As I noted above, there should be a way of approaching the *coherence* and *goal-directedness* one expects to see in a set of choices or actions made by a strategist in order for them to gain the attribution 'strategic'. One promising way of looking at this would be to look at the *intention* behind strategy. If these intentions are acted out by organizational members, a real strategy process can become visible.

[3] Philosophers use the concept 'intention' while psychologists tend to favor the concept 'goal', as in 'goal-directed behavior'. I have chosen to discuss intentions because the fundamental definitions in action theory are philosophical in nature. I will, however, address the relation of goals and intentions as I go along.

What exactly is intention? Intention is a type of *intentional states*, i.e. mental states that are directed to the world[4] in some way (Searle, 1983; Anscombe, 1963). Intentions are closely tied to the discussion of goal-directed behavior in psychology (cf. Frese & Sabini, 1985). Intentions direct actions, performed in order to reach goals (Searle, 2001; Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985). Heckhausen & Kuhl note that people have goals of different orders, i.e. goals form systems in which larger goals break down into smaller ones. The same can be said of intentions – I intend to do eight hours of heavy writing today, because I intend to complete my thesis. The same idea can be rephrased as my having a sub-goal of doing eight hours of writing, which in turn can be traced back to my master goal of becoming a Ph.D.

How is this related to strategy? Strategies are often spoken of as if they were master intentions or objectives of large magnitude. My goal of becoming a Ph.D. constitutes a large enough project to be called my strategy for becoming a Ph.D. In the context of rational agency, my strategy should break down into a subset of intentional actions, one of them being the writing of this chapter.

Intentions, goals and the sort are associated with the general discussion on rationality in action theory. The discussion dates back to Socrates and his students, and involves the problematic relation between forming, having and carrying out intention in action.[5] Searle (2001) illustrates this by claiming that there is a *gap* in rational decision-making. Searle argues that the gap manifests itself in three distinct contexts. The first context in which the gap can be perceived is between the *deliberative process* and the *decision* itself, i.e. the thinking of goals and needs and the sort, and coming to a decision. The second manifestation is between the *intention* to carry out the decision and the *action* that takes place. The third and final manifestation of the gap is between *individual intentions and their causes* and is extended to carrying out *patterns of action*, such as writing a Ph.D. thesis (Table 1).

[4] I admit that this is somewhat imprecise. There are intentional states that are directed to other mental states as well. I may intend to be happy in the future, or believe that I am happy, for example.

[5] One of the key issues in this classic discussion is the question of *akrasia*, the weakness of will.

Table 1. Searle's (2001) gap in rational agency

Context	Manifestation of the gap
The making of an individual decision	Between deliberation and decision
Once a decision has been made	Between intention and action
In the midst of a larger project	Between individual intention and action; and the pattern of action

Searle argues that the gap reflects a

> *"Feature of consciousness, that feature whereby our conscious experiences of making up our minds and our conscious experiences of acting (the exercise of the will, the conscious feeling of effort – these are all names for the same thing) are not experienced as having psychologically sufficient causal conditions that make them happen (ibid. 63)."*

The link to strategy should be obvious here. The last manifestation of the gap illustrates in essence what strategy is all about – the forming of coherent patterns of individual actions, guided by meta-intentions. The formation of coherent patterns of action has been called *plans* by Bratman (1999a), who has argued that individual actions can best be understood through their roles in larger plans.

I have given a tentative account of how the strategies of an individual can be understood. The understanding of organizational strategy, however, is still at least a few steps away. What is the link between organizational strategy and individual strategy? Organizational strategy is a phenomenon at the *organizational level of analysis*. Whether it can be reduced to individual strategy (goals, intentions), is at least in part related to the functionalist claim that individual action can be explained by social structures. Most authors who discuss the role different organizational members play in the strategy process are unwilling to admit that structure dictates individual actions in a fatalistic fashion.[6]

If social structures in organizations do determine individual actions, strategy execution is indeed a matter of transforming organizational structure as proposed by Chandler (1962) and others (e.g. Porter, 1980). The tricky part is that these authors

[6] This would basically mean any author who admits that the individual organizational member has significance in the strategy process. Many authors attribute significance to upper management (almost everybody), but also to middle management (Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Floyd & Lane 2000; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). A recent discussion has been started by Hamel (2000) who argues that *any* organizational member can be a strategic change agent, or *revolutionary*.

who discuss strategic content do not discuss individual organizational members at all. How is it that organizational structure, molded to facilitate strategy, creates a shared strategy, a shared strategic intent?

While many authors such as Porter maintain a silence on this matter, some authors (e.g. Higgins, 1990; Hrebniak & Joyce, 1984; Pearce & Robinson, 1996) have attempted to form models of strategy implementation to facilitate structural determination. They usually avoid the question of shared intentions by talking about *behavior* instead of action. Shared intent is irrelevant. The relevant question is how top management can create structures and control mechanisms that create behavior in their subordinates that implements strategy. Implementer cognition is regarded as irrelevant. Desired behavior is brought about by mechanical means, such as rewards and punishments, e.g. in Hrebniak & Joyce's model:

> *"Appropriate incentives are critical to the successful implementation of strategy […] Our view of motivation and the employment contract enables us to develop a straightforward stimulus-response-reinforcement model of the application and use of incentives and controls in organizations." (Hrebniak & Joyce, 1984: 185, 189.)*

The problem of structural-behavioral models of strategy implementation is that the psychology they are based on has become extinct with the demise of behaviorism in the 1950's.[7] If human beings are not stimulus-response-automata, why should they be regarded as such in organizations? In leadership literature it is commonly held that one of the key roles of leaders is *the management of meaning* (cf. Bryman, 1996). Ghoshal & Bartlett (1994) have even concluded that top managers should move from strategic planning to communicating the purpose of the organization. They criticize strategic 'managerialism' as follows:

> *"In its constant struggle for appropriating value, the company is pitted against its own employees as well as business rivals and the rest of society." (Ghoshal, Bartlett & Moran, 1999: 12).*

It would seem that structural behaviorism has not managed to eliminate the question concerning shared intent.

[7] Chomsky's (1959) critique of Skinner's theory of verbal behavior was in many senses the final blow to behaviorism.

Is organizational strategy, then, an organizational intention? What is the connection between organizational intent and individual intent? Mintzberg & Waters (1985) also speak of certain strategies of having an intent behind them. They call these *deliberate* strategies, naming *entrepreneurial* and *planned* strategies as strong examples. Hamel & Prahalad (1994) have expressly spoken of *strategic intent*, on the organizational level of analysis. Hamel & Prahalad (1989: 64) define strategic intent on as

> *"…a [sustained] obsession with winning at all levels of the organization",*

i.e. a shared, long-term commitment for achieving a major goal. They do not address the question of what is meant by shared intent, however, or what the linkage between the organizational and individual levels of analysis is. They do note that strategic intent exists at all levels of the organization, but the nature of this shared intent is not elaborated on.

There is, however, a discussion of collective intentions in the theory of action. In this field, discussion rages over whether collective intentions can be reduced to individual intentions or not. Tuomela & Miller (1988) offer a positive (individualist) account, defining collective intention as:

> *"A member A_i of a collective G* -conditionally we-intends *to do X if and only if*
>
> *there is a condition C_i such that A_i intends to do his part of X, given that C_i obtains;*
>
> *A_i has a belief to the effect that the joint action opportunities for X will obtain, especially that at least a sufficient number of the full-fledged and adequately informed members of G, as required for the performance of X, will (or at least probably will) do their parts of X;*
>
> *A_i believes that there is (or will be) a mutual belief among participants of G to the effect that the joint action opportunities for X obtain." (Tuomela & Miller, 1988: 382.)*

According to Tuomela & Miller's account, collective intentions consist of individual intentions joined by beliefs that other members of the collective are also intending to do their part. Bratman (1999b) has given a somewhat similar account in his planning-based theory of collective action. Bratman has argued that individual intentions can best be understood in the context of the roles they play in larger *plans*, just as my intention of writing eight hours today can be understood through its role in my plan of completing my Ph.D. studies. Bratman uses the concept of planning to explain collective intention. He argues that the intentions of other agents can play a role in an

agent's plan, resulting in a collective plan consisting of a network of multiple agents' intentions.

Gilbert (1989) argues for the holist position opposite from that of Tuomela & Miller and Bratman, i.e. that collective intention is indeed an ontologically collective phenomenon, which cannot be reduced to individual intentions. She argues that social groups constitute *plural subjects*, and collective intentions consist of individuals placing their individual intentions into a *pool of wills*. The plural subject is expressed by the group members' use of the pronoun 'we'. While I am not willing to put my money on either the holist or the individualist position just now,[8] Gilbert provides an enlightening passage on organizations as plural subjects:

> *"Clearly, in* ***some*** *organizations there is a clear sense of what is being achieved by the firm and that it is being achieved by the efforts of all. There are firms in which it would be natural enough to members overall to refer to what we do in referring to the organization. I could argue, therefore, that it is this aspect of some organizations and firms which could lead organizations in general to be put on some list of social groups."(Gilbert, 1989; 231.)*

So, some organizations are social groups and **some are not**, depending on whether the organizational members can meaningfully speak of the whole organization as 'we'. By 'meaningful', I wish to transcend mere figures of speech such as those used in managerial rhetoric. The fact that many managers speak of their organizations as 'we' does not make the plural pronoun meaningful for all organizational members. Organization size would seem to impact quite heavily on the issue: it would seem that in a small start-up firm, for example, it is much easier to speak of 'we' than in a large multinational company.

Concerning strategy, the question of plural subjecthood would also seem to cover the question of collective strategic intent. If the organization is small and culturally tight enough to constitute a plural subject in Gilbert's sense of forming a social group, it may have collective intentions, phenomena typical of plural subjects. It would seem, however, that in most organizations this is not the case. In most organizations, organizational members do not know the intentions of agents other than those placed

[8] I find the reasoning of Tuomela & Miller convincing in the sense that it is really hard to account for the ontology of a holist we-intention. Above everything, I wish to avoid the notion of a group consciousness hovering above us all. Yet I do agree with the argument of Gilbert and Searle (1991) that I can meaningfully state 'we intend' without stating anything about my beliefs of other group members.

in their immediate vicinity, such as in their own unit. Something more than a shared intention is needed to explain how strategies can be shared.

2.4 The critique of strategic intent as collective intent

It should be easy to see that strategy cannot easily exist as a collective intention in most organizations. Or it can, according to Gilbert, but in that case the class of strategic actions has to be classified into a group so small that each member has to know the other members, e.g. the executive board. A similar conclusion can be drawn from individualist accounts – Tuomela & Miller set beliefs of other members' intentions as a condition, which is also included in Bratman's planning model.

Social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) does dictate that individuals construct parts of their identities through the collectives in which they belong to, but few organizational identities can be regarded tight and homogenous enough to be called plural subjects. While Albert & Whetten (1985) describe organizational identity as central, distinctive and enduring, they do not explicate the link between individuals and organizational identity, and it seems unlikely that their concept of organizational identity would be as strong and as binding as a plural subject would demand. Furthermore, in recent discussion, the centrality of organizational identity has been challenged in the discussion of multiple identities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000), as has its enduringness in the discussion of identity change (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000).

The first difficulty with the collective intention approach is dealing with the small size of the group of strategic actors that it warrants. In a corporation, the strategic actors would in principle be the executive board, while the whole organization would consist of passive puppets who have no active role in bringing about the organization's goals. To take this as granted at the definitional level would be to accept structural behaviorism at face value. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) have argued that *planned* and *entrepreneurial* strategies do exist, but are limited to very few companies – if we regard strategy as something that really constitutes organizational action. Hart (1992) has argued that a form of strategy process that regards individuals as "sheep" is likely to result in worse performance than processes in which organizational members are "active players".

The emphasis on structure in implementation implies a vote for functionalism. Functionalism has faced harsh critiques directed towards its emphasis on value consensus[9], as well as its reduction of individual actions to social structures (e.g. Giddens, 1984; Garfinkel, 1967). The view on strategy implementation as a business of redesigning structures has been subjected to a more specific critique by Mintzberg (1995).

While the first form of critique concerns conceptual issues, the collective intention viewpoint on strategy can be criticized from various *practical* viewpoints as well. The planning conception of collective intention can be subjected to Mintzberg's (1994) critique of strategic planning, for example, which is based on evidence that, on one hand, many successful organizations do not build their strategy on planning (the critique of rational decision making), and, on the other, that planning is not a very good model for creating success, being rigid and slow for more and more turbulent environments (e.g. Hannan & Freeman, 1977). The critique of planning is emphasized by the fact that strategic planning has largely been abandoned in real-life organizations (cf. Mintzberg, 1999; 1985).

The notion of strategy as a collective intention can be subjected to an even more intensive critique, often given by authors with a postmodern streak. They have claimed that strategy is a form of rhetoric used by management, drawn from military language in order to project a masculine form of power and sense of confidence in one's ability to make the correct decisions (Lilley, 2001; Knights & Morgan, 1991). Strategy can be seen as a rhetorical tool that can be used to warrant managerialism. As Lilley puts it:

> *"Strategy is up there. Right up there. At the top. And, above all, the language that it mobilizes, and is mobilized by it, is what puts it there."*

To think of strategy in terms of collective intention could deepen the managerialist non-reflexivity even further. If strategy were a shared intent, based on managerial

[9] The basic critique is typically given by *conflict* theorists (cf. Giddens, 2001). Furthermore, from a sociological point of view, it seems strange to assume that some people's actions were determined by structure, while others could escape this determinism and even mold new structures. Why would top managers be categorically free of structural determination?

intent, the researcher would have to use managerial intent as a basis of her inquiry, thus falling into the trap of implicit managerialism.

While the notion of strategy as collective intention can be criticized at the organizational level of analysis, it can also be subjected to a critique concerning the *rationality* of individual action. This stems from the fact that in most situations individuals do not (1) formulate an intention and then (2) try to realize it, but action is a complicated system, consisting of an interplay between interpretation and *praxis* (e.g. James 1950; Heidegger, 1997; Dewey, 1997; Mead, 1934; Giddens, 1984; Weick 1979, 1995).

This critique would seem to indicate that the strategy process, the process in which strategy is created and realized, couldn't be definitively linked to an individual agent through the notion of collective intention. The strategy process has to exist as a *structure* in addition to a shared intent, yet mere functionalism is not a satisfactory explanation either. Nor will a structural-behaviorist view do either, as noted before.

A famous attempt to bridge the gap between functionalist and individualistic sociological theory has been made by the British sociologist Anthony Giddens. His theory has had a direct influence on the study of organizational structure (Ranson, Hinings & Greenwood, 1980; Riley, 1983), in the bridging of managerialism and critical theory in organization studies (Heracleous & Hendry, 2000), social systems theory (Whittington, 1992), organizational identity (Sarason, 1995) and fighting the incommensurability of varying metatheoretical approaches (Weaver & Gioia, 1994). Structuration theory has also had a major impact through its effect on such notable theorists as Pettigrew (e.g. 1987).[10]

[10] The action/structure debate is a classical debate in social science that is still a topic of heated discussion in organization studies (cf. Bouchikhi, Kilduff & Whittington, 1997). Knights (1997) has argued that the whole notion should be deconstructed, and not transcended as is done in a structuration framework. My choosing the structuration framework thus communicates my unwillingness to adopt such a radical postmodernist approach.

2.5 The strategy process as a process of structuration

The strategy process is a process of social interaction. Social interaction is *linguistic* in nature (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969). Consider Wittgenstein's (1951, §18) beautiful description of language:

> *"Do not be troubled by the fact that languages (2) and (8)*[11] *consist only of orders. If you want to say that this shows them to be incomplete, ask yourself whether our language is complete; whether it was so before the symbolism of chemistry and the notation of the infinitesimal calculus were incorporated in it; for these are, so to speak, suburbs of our language. (And how many houses or streets does it take before a town begins to be a town?) Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses."*

The "city of language" in organizations shapes the paths of its citizens (organizational members), yet the citizens also shape the city. I think this metaphor gives us an introduction to Giddens's theory of structuration. Giddens's main argument is that while societies consist of individual, conscious agents who are capable of transforming structures, their actions are in turn defined by those structures (cf. Giddens, 1979; 1984).

Giddens's ontological position is interesting in the sense that he argues that structures only have existence through their instantiation in everyday interaction. On the other hand, agents' *knowledgeability* of structures of various kinds is what makes meaningful interaction possible in the first place – failure to pay attention to a number of rules attached to different social situations would be to disrupt the interaction completely:

> *"The way forward in bridging the gap between 'structure' and 'action' approaches is to recognize that we* actively make and remake *social structure during the course of everyday activities […] all social action presumes the existence of structure. But at the same time structure presumes action, because 'structure' depends on regularities of human behavior." (Giddens, 2001: 688-689.)*

Structuration theory can be used as a link between the strategy process and the individual agent. The strategy process is a social structure, acting as the channel

[11] Languages (2) and (8) are primitive languages existing in communication between a construction worker and his apprentice. The vocabulary of the languages consists of the names of construction items. When the construction worker utters a name denoting an item, the apprentice picks the item up and brings it to his master.

through which organizational action is directed. This channel in part defines the context for the agents, yet the agents in turn influence the process – if only because the only reason the process exists is through instantiation in the agents' actions. This is to say that the 'citizens' of the strategy process 'city' can actively shape their city, building new suburbs, and even tearing down old buildings and starting anew: but they are also defined as citizens through living in the city. Just as a cyclic diagram portraying an organizational strategy process has only some marginal form of existence if nobody adheres to it, a city is only a collection of buildings if it has no citizens.

Structuration theory has been utilized in the study of strategy by Andrew Pettigrew, one of the founders of the strategy process school. He has argued (1987) that the *content* of strategy can only be understood in association with the *process* of how it came about as well as the unique organizational *context*, which the organization constitutes. As noted by Sarason (1995) structuration fits in quite nicely with issues closely related to the strategy process such as an organizational identity: social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) clearly echoes Giddens's claim that social structures act in the definition of individual identity, a claim echoed by such notable proponents of the dynamic conception of individual identity as the pragmatists (Dewey, James), the proponents of narrative subjectivity (cf. Polkinghorne, 1988) the symbolic interactionists (Mead, Blumer, Goffman) as well as many psychodynamic authors on organizations (e.g. Brown & Starkey, 2000) and sensemaking theorists (Weick 1995). Strategy is closely linked to organizational identity in the sense that strategy should correspond to organizational identity in order for it to be felt as sensible (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

The theory of structuration has answered most of the challenges that was posed for the collective intention –conception of strategy. In structuration, the agents are affected by strategy, but also mold strategy, so the only way strategy may exist is through instantiation in the agents' social actions. While this grants emergent strategy a foothold, it does not rule out pre-intended strategy. Giddens (1984) notes that in social settings people with legitimized positions are enabled to mold structures, resulting in the creation of a strategy, resulting in the possibility of classic strategic management.

Structuration does not necessitate a strict *awareness* or *beliefs* about other organizational members' intention as the collective intention-schema would seem to necessitate. Instead of a demand to have knowledge or beliefs about other people's intentions, which would result in the group of strategic actors being very small, structuration places a demand on the *knowledgeability* of organizational members. Knowledgeability concerns the rules that social structures pose on everyday situations, which can be shared by a large group of people.

On the other hand, the theory of structuration does not advocate a "structure follows strategy" schema, in which social structure is designed to pre-determine the actions of the majority of an organization's members. Agent knowledgeability allows for the molding of strategy by individual agents in the strategy process.

The final critique concerning the rationality of individual action does not affect the theory of structuration either. Giddens bases his whole model on the notion that while people do maintain a "theoretical consciousness" of their actions in everyday discourse, the flow of action is based on reflexive monitoring, an interplay of action and interpretation.

One of the reasons structuration theory fits in so nicely with the study of strategy process is that it combines many elements often not found interlinked in organization studies: organizational structure and individual interpretation, power and sensemaking, etc. This is probably the reason for the appeal of Giddens's work in a larger context as well: structuration is an attempt at building a bridge between traditions that would at first glance seem incommensurable. There is, however, the fear that the theory of structuration will take strategy so far from its roots that many people may be tempted to abandon the notion altogether. In the framework of structuration, the strategy process is truly a process, constantly changing, tough to predict, hard to control, only existing if reflected in actions, laced with uncertainty and contradiction. Some strategists may feel that strategy involves a notion of control and prediction to the organization in order it to be strategy. Whittington (1992) has argued that it is through careful manipulation of the tensions between contradicting structural principles that managerial action in organizations is enabled.

2.6 Is or ought? Strategy on the ontological level

One important question remains: what is strategy, really? By this I mean: is it ultimately just a normative concept for decision makers to use as a tool or is it a phenomenon to be found in organizational action? In Section 3.1, I noted that I regard strategy as a social practice. What does this mean?

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel (1999) have spoken of *normative* and *descriptive* approaches to strategy. The first of these is concerned with the managerial need to find the correct strategy for her organization and influence it to execute that strategy. The latter is concerned with giving a description of how strategy comes into existence, and is implemented.

As a student of the strategy practice paradigm, my interest is of the descriptive kind. I have therefore to address a tough ontological question: in reality, is there a phenomenon in organizations one can call the strategy process, the understanding of which furthers the understanding of the organization's actions? Not many authors really address this question, leading Inkpen & Choudhury (1995) to argue that researchers often claim to see strategy where it is not, and thus a theory of *strategy absence* should be created.

The question would be easier to answer in a normative framework: "sure, managers say they have strategies, they speak of strategy in their organization, my job is to invent them concepts that they find useful and that help them manage the organization into success." Some (e.g. Porter, 1996) say that this is all that strategy amounts to, i.e. that strategy is a normative concept and nothing more, while if it is included to cover process issues, the concept becomes too vague.

In a sense I agree with the position that strategy is purely normative. Indeed, it can be said that much of strategy language is the type of masculine jargon that managers employ to make it seem as if they have more answers than they really do have (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Lilley, 2001; Barry & Elmes, 1997). Strategy as a shared intent may be futile in many organizations in an ontological sense. But it may be fruitful in other senses - in the sense that organizational members have a hunger for a sense of a shared vision and purpose (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1994; Kotter, 1996;

Westley & Mintzberg 1989), for example. Even if they may not be able to share an intention in the strictest sense, they may be more motivated in their work. Or, perhaps we can think of strategy in the same manner as Tsoukas & Chia (2002) think of the organization in general: strategy is an *accomplishment* in a continuous effort of finding common direction. Strategy, as the organization, is not a static construct, but is in a constant state of 'becoming'.

On another hand, there is something in existence, something that people enact when they speak of strategy, the *social practice of strategy*. The theory of structuration enables coherences and structures in action that can be regarded as strategies being created and executed. It would seem that what the strategists *want* to enact is a collective intention of some sort, but the reality of a strategy process is a structuration process in which action and intention are negotiated in a continuous process. The process is polyphonic, with lots of voices joining, interlinking and conflicting (Hazen, 1993). The voices compete for the position of the *narrator*, the voice that tells the story of strategy (Barry & Elmes, 1997).

So a lot is being done in real-life organizations under the "strategy process" label. The outcome of these activities is crucial because the activities constitute a large amount of managerial activity. They also touch upon the work of lots of other people. This is why I am interested in understanding individuals in the strategy process. It is at the individual level where the fundamental descriptions can be made.

This study is concerned with shedding light on how strategy, a normative concept, takes form at the individual level of analysis, more precisely in the individual Lifeworld. This is exciting, because this level of analysis is not well known. We really don't know what strategy turns into when it reaches the individual. I am inclined towards a phenomenological analysis of organizational phenomena. I am not so much interested in the "official" realities the organizations claim to exhibit, but the phenomena the organizational members, the individuals in the strategy process, perceive in their respective Lifeworlds (Husserl, 1999). I regard strategy as too often treated implicitly as a grand narrative (Lyotard, 1985) that can be understood just by asking those in power and seeing their power points, whereas I think a lot can be learned when one looks at the micro narratives, accepting the polyphony that they create in organizational narrative (Boje, 2001).

So, finally, is there a strategy process that takes place, involving a large number of organizational members, uniting their actions? I would answer the question that *something is being done in the name of strategy*, so normatively speaking; the social practice of strategy certainly exists. On the descriptive level, there are Giddensian structures, constantly in a state of flux, polyphonic strategic narratives unfolding. If the descriptive level can really be considered 'strategic' in the final ontological sense, I think Shrivastava's (1986) description of strategic *praxis* is a good one:

> *"If organization is conceived of as the continuous self-transformation and dialectical reproduction of both subjects and objects, then organizational strategy may be viewed as praxis, consisting of thoughtful, theoretically informed actions that guide this self-transformation. In this sense, strategy serves as an organizing principle and becomes fundamental to defining goals, product-market domain, internal structures, and management control practices." (Shrivastava, 1986: 372).*

Because this thesis is concerned with the individual in the strategy process, my emphasis will be the descriptive study of the normative concept of strategy from the individual standpoint. The strategy process is present as a normative artifact in organizations and my emphasis is the understanding of how this artifact is reflected by organizational members.

In the first encounter with theory, I have discussed the strategy process as a phenomenon largely at the organizational level of analysis (see Table 2 for a summary), moving downward toward the individual. This has been necessary in order to understand the concepts *strategy* and *strategy process.* In the second encounter with theory the movement will be reversed, from the individual towards strategy. The discussion will be centered on the individual level of analysis. The second encounter will arrive at individual positions in the strategy process.

Table 2. Summary of the first encounter with theory

Main concepts	Strategy, strategy process, strategic intent
First model linking the individual and the strategy process	Strategy as collective intention
Critique of the first model	Organizational level of analysis: Critique of planning, managerialism, small possible number of strategic agents Individual level of analysis: Critique of rational action
Second model linking the individual and the strategy process	Theory of structuration, linking the individual action and strategy as structure
The strategy process as an object of study for this thesis	Things done in organizations in the name of strategy, affecting agents; the ontology of the strategy process is the process of structuration

3. Individual positions in the strategy process. Second encounters with theory

In the second encounter with theory, I will be exploring the link between the individual and strategy by moving upward from the individual towards strategy.

How does, then, an individual come to act as a part of the strategy process? In other words, how does the individual *adopt* strategy? We have all heard stories of communication procedures consisting of dreary briefings with nobody asking questions, and managers e-mailing power point-presentations to subordinates with the order: "communicate this!" Authors with a normative intent often emphasize the need for managers and middle managers to *communicate* strategy (e.g. Beer & Eisenstat 1996, 2000; Noble, 1999; Alexander, 1985; 1991).

The unfortunate thing about many of these writings as well as about many strategy textbooks is that they don't really talk about what they mean by communication in the descriptive sense. Back in the times of Claude Shannon communication was about sending and receiving information, but nowadays the process is somewhat more complex, consisting of interpretation and interaction (Kreps, 1990).

3.1 A linear model of strategy implementation

So what happens when strategies are adopted in organizations? Noble (1999) defines strategy implementation as *communication*, *interpretation*, *adoption* and *enactment* of strategic plans. Noble's definition communicates a willingness to overcome the barriers between the content and process paradigms. It combines the functionalist demarcation between implementation and formulation with concepts from process-oriented literature. This may not be the best of ideas, since this kind of demarcation seems to overrule the possibility of participation in the formulation stage of strategy: if strategy implementation starts with communication, there seems to be some specific informational content to be communicated, which implies a pre-made decision. A further concern is that Noble does not give any indication to the interrelations between his four concepts.

If one uses the concepts of communication, interpretation, adoption and enactment as a succession of steps, one has created a top-down communication model with a linear

view on communication and human cognition, ending up in a situation described in Figure 1 below. I have formed the linear model in order to be able to discuss the complexity of the process in which strategy is adopted.

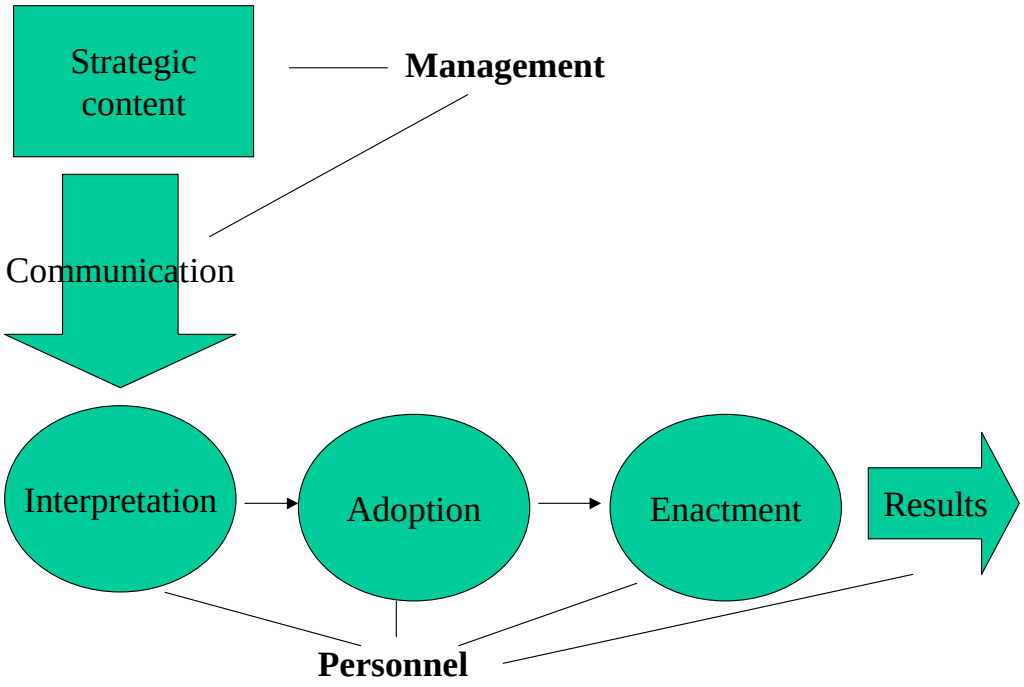


Figure 1. A linear model for strategy implementation.

The normative literature on strategy implementation seems to be split in two with regard to the linear model. The first group consists of more or less functionalist authors who are willing to embrace the model (Higgins, 1990; Hrebniak & Joyce, 1984; Hrebniak, 1990; Pearce & Robinson, 1996; Vasconcellos, 1990). While they note that communication is important, they more or less regard the strategy process as a linear succession of formulation, implementation and control. The second group of normative authors (Beer & Eisenstat, 1996, 2000; Giles, 1991; Hambrick & Cannella, 1989) is in apparent conflict with the linear model due to their emphasis on *dialogue* between varieties of stakeholders, especially during strategy formulation. The problem with these authors in the present context is that they rarely provide any insight into the process of adoption itself, but center on prescribing managerial communicative actions. The other partner in dialogue, the follower, is thus given no attention.

The first problem with the linear model is that there are few situations in real life when human beings in organizations act in such ordered ways. Literature on learning underlines this – adoption, or learning new things, happens in an experiential process of interaction with the world (cf. Dewey, 1997; Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983). A second concern is added when one tries to move on from the framework of one person communicating the message and another receiving and processing it into the complex phenomena of a social world consisting of a network of multiple communicators and receivers. The seeming failure of the linear model adds a further, process-minded concern: whether the formulation - implementation distinction is fruitful at all. A third concern is the managerialism of the model. Managers formulate and communicate, while the personnel members interpret, adopt and enact. If discussion takes place, this is only to ensure correct interpretation and compliance, not to mold the original strategic content.

One might also approach the issue by replacing the concepts communication, interpretation, adoption and enactment with related, but better interlocking concepts, such as *learning*, *reflection* (as employed by Argyris & Schön, 1979, Schön, 1983), *understanding*, *commitment*, *motivation* and the like, but it would seem that the linear structure of the model would not do any better. There would seem to be no pre-set ordering of such concepts that would account for all situations. In some cases, the best way to motivate oneself is to fully understand the benefits of an issue; in others, one understands the benefits only after multiple attempts to do things differently. In most cases, the learning process would seem to be a complex combination of multiple approaches.

These problems might be attacked by drawing feedback loops and interrelations in the model's flowchart, but to date I have failed to fully account for the complexity of strategy adoption by simply adding arrows. New counterexamples keep stacking up with each addition of a loop. It would seem that a cyclical representation of adoption, consisting of a dialectic of *sensemaking* and *sensegiving* between leaders and followers, such as the one offered by Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991), would be a more suitable model for adoption. In essence, the primitive phenomenon in adopting new content is interacting with that content in various ways. The key account of this interaction process has been given by Karl Weick in his exposition of sensemaking.

3.2 Sensemaking in the strategy process

I have built the model presented in Figure 1 to illustrate the difficulty of modeling issues related to how people learn and interpret things. The significance of interpretation cannot be denied, however. Human beings give interpretation to informational inputs all the time, regardless of whether the quality and quantity of accessible information warrants interpretation. People make sense of things, whether the things would seem to warrant this or not.

Literature on sensemaking is to my knowledge the most prominent field of literature on organizational communication that is sensitive to the interactive, interpretive and microsociological elements of communication. I take this to mean that sensemaking literature provides the deepest description of communication in the grassroots level. I will therefore choose the framework of sensemaking as my first theoretical framework.

One enlightening example of this notion is presented in Garfinkel's (1967) experiment, in which university students received random yes/no-answers to questions concerning their studies and lives, which they thought came from a student advisor. Regardless of the fact that the answers were given at random, even in cases in which the student asked repeated questions such as "you really think that?" almost all the students thought they could make perfect sense of what they were advised to do.

In many organizations, people have to make sense of complex things all the time. This is especially true if one acts as a part of the strategy process. As was noted in the preceding section, strategy is about making the choices best for the organization, and this may be one complex task! In many cases, the big picture may be incomplete or not available at all. Sensemaking takes place in any case, however.

Weick (1995) has written *the* book on sensemaking in organizations. He provides the following seven properties for sensemaking in organizations.

1. Sensemaking is grounded in *identity* construction

Weick states that sensemaking is based on identity construction. The identity of the individual to be constructed is not a singular, atomic self that goes through changes,

but rather a dynamic construction of different identities in need of definition. An important phenomenon for sensemaking is that people learn about their identities by projecting them into the environment and observing the consequences of this projection. This is not to say that people simply accept the reactions of the environment at face value – they also try to actively influence the environment. This is in essence what is meant by *impression management* (Goffman, 1959), which I will discuss further in the next section in association with roles. Suffice it to say for now that roles and identity are interlinked.

Weick argues that the needs an individual has for her identity are reflected in her organization's identity. This would seem to suggest that an individual is not bound to tolerate large inconsistencies in the values of her organization (or a large identity gap) for long: she either tries to influence the organization, finds a new organization, changes herself or perhaps becomes passive and just "does her job".

2. Sensemaking is *retrospective*

We make sense of past events, not the ones taking place right now. Sensemaking is in a way historical. This point will be easier to demonstrate if one begins by examining two conceptions of time, that of *duration* and that of *experience*. Duration is a stream that cannot be divided into bits. Experience, on the other hand is always singular in nature and placed in the past. We are conscious of our experiences, not of duration as such, and our experiences are always in the past. Sensemaking is based on our experiences, so sensemaking is always retrospective in nature.

Weick connects the notion of the retrospective nature of sensemaking to Mintzberg's (1978) notion of emergent strategy. Reacting is also something that happens *after* the event or action reacted to, so a reactive view of strategy is retrospective in nature.

3. Sensemaking is *enactive* of *sensible environments*

Weick stresses that the environment should not be viewed as singular, fixed and external to the enacting subject, but as a dynamic process including the subject. The subject constructs reality by doing things in the world. Enactment constructs sensible environments because it labels reality with concepts, with sense. That meaning is

created and discovered by acting in the world. The border between the organization and its environment is blurred.

Weick's view on enactment places him in the social constructionist tradition, according to which reality is created by subjects (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). While I agree with the fact that this is true when speaking of *social facts*, I also concur with Searle (1995) that there are also *brute natural facts*, which exist regardless of what we think about them.

4. Sensemaking is *social* in nature

The creation of meaning is essentially social: done by a group of people instead of a single subject. Wittgenstein made this point in an elegant way in his discussion of the impossibility of a private language. The meaning of a concept is its use in language and language is used in social contexts in various language-games (Wittgenstein, 1951). According to Weick, in addition to the nature of sensemaking as the social construction of shared meaning, one must also take into account the redirection of people's *actions* according to that social sensemaking. In addition to *understanding*, there is *action* in sensemaking. I will return to the discussion of action in the next section. The social aspects of sensemaking, as well as his social theory of identity construction, which Weick stresses, also emphasize his intellectual link to the symbolic interactionist tradition from which microsociology has emerged (e.g. Mead, Blumer, Goffman).

5. Sensemaking is *ongoing*

According to Weick, sensemaking is ongoing activity: it never starts and it never stops. People are constantly acting in situations and their actions affect the situations they are in – often against their will. This does not mean that the stream of action is monotonous: there are situations of importance that "crystallize meaning", such as the launching of a new product in an organization. The most important practical finding contained in this notion would seem to be that sensemaking is bound to happen. The organizational members make sense of situations if they are not told to do so – and even if they are told not to do so! A practical example of the inevitability of sensemaking is the case of an organization in which a large transaction is made involving, for example, a new unit bought abroad without the reasons for buying it

being communicated to the personnel. As illustrated by Garfinkel's example, they are bound to make sense of the action no matter what; the conclusions they come to, however, may be very different from what the decision makers had in mind.

6. Sensemaking is focused on and by *extracted cues*

Sensemaking is based on familiar points of reference that can be extracted from chaos. These *cues* act as seeds for new meaning; what is selected as a cue is dependent on context or culture. Here one can see for the fist time sensemaking forming a bridge between culture and process. If culture is to be defined as the totality of meaning in some context, then sensemaking, the creation of new meaning, is dependent on previous meaning and knowledge structures.

Since sensemaking of cues is dependent on culture, sensemaking can be affected in a profound way by the smallest details. Weick notes that since small, recognized cues form an uncertain starting point for sensemaking, this even decreases the role of strategic planning in organizations. People can start enacting new reality from any source that contains some familiar elements. "Any old map will do", he concludes.

As to whether Weick considers strategy important or not is not perfectly clear. It is certain that he does not hold strategic planning in high regard. He does not employ the concept strategy very much in his own theorizing, apparently regarding strategy as a planning-based, normative phenomenon.

7. Sensemaking is driven by *plausibility* rather than *accuracy*

Weick rests on the assumption that people are not looking for accurate accounts of the meaning of concepts. He argues that they are looking for explanations that they can believe and fit into their larger schemas, the ones that serve them. Among the reasons for this are: the high amount of information people are faced with, the ambivalence of meaning of many concepts, the need for speed in understanding new situations, the interpersonal nature of sensemaking and the need for common understanding and also the role of emotions in human decision making.

Weick builds his analysis of organizational sensemaking on four levels of analysis. The first level above the intrasubjective (the individual) is the *intersubjective* level. At

this level, meaning becomes transformed from the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, etc of an "I" into those of a "we", i.e. subjective meanings are transformed into intersubjective meanings through conversation and interaction.

The next level is that of a *social structure*, for example, an organization. At this level, all notions of individual selves are left behind, and are replaced with a generic, shared, self (perhaps one might call this the organizational identity). The final level of analysis is that of *extrasubjective* analysis. There is no generic self any more, but only pure (in a sense, objective) meanings.

Weick argues that organizing lies atop the movement between the intersubjective and the social structure, as a continuous movement between those two levels of analysis. This is where the core of organizational sensemaking takes place. The core of sensemaking is therefore a movement between the intersubjective and structural level of beliefs, values and attitudes; it is the ongoing transformation of meaning between a group self and the organizational identity. Tensions between the innovations of intersubjectivity and the generic control of structure create movement and communication.

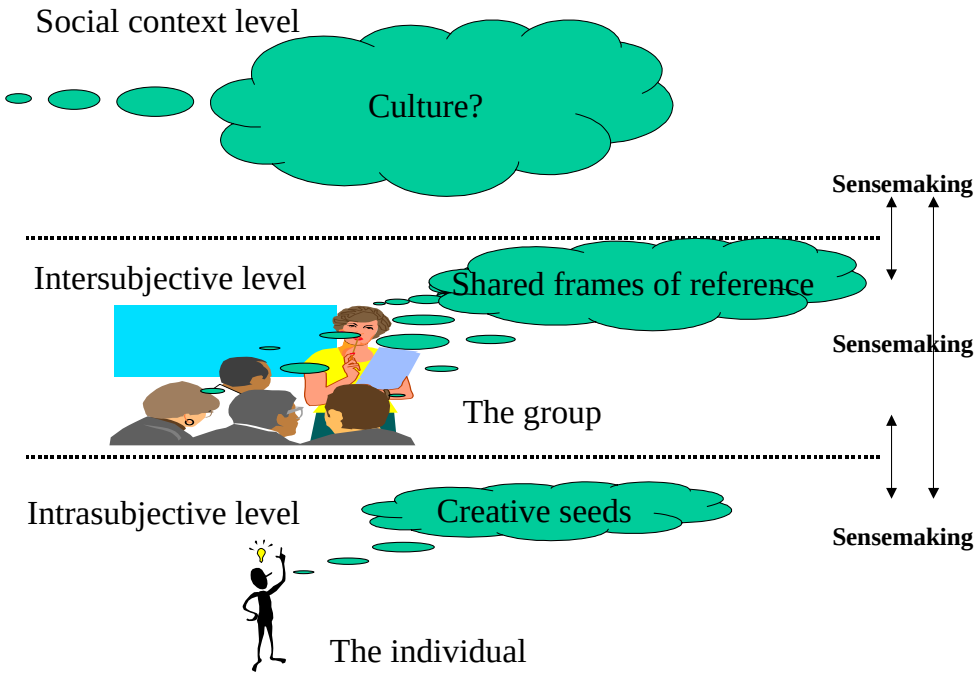


Figure 2. Sensemaking and the levels of analysis.

I think much of what Weick attributes to organizing in general can be attributed to the strategy process. In the strategy process, individual organizational members and groups build social structures, while they adapt their actions in a sensemaking process to shape the organization's path.

Weick's model resembles Giddens's theory of structuration in many senses. In both models, agents are able to affect social structures, yet they are also bound by those structures. Weick elaborates in organizational life much of which Giddens proposes on the general sociological platform. There is a key element in the theory of structuration, which Weick does not discuss, however.

3.3 Power in the strategy process

Weick's model of sensemaking in organizations fails to address the issue of *power*. In the theory of structuration, power is discussed in addition to interpretation issues, with which sensemaking is largely concerned. If the process in which social action is to be studied completely, from either the individual or the social standpoint, then the relations of power would seem highly relevant.

In the strategy process we need to account for power. In an organization in which there is no joint plural subject for the whole organization, but a number of relevant stakeholders and interest groups, *politics* comes into play. As Eden & Ackermann (1998) put it:

> *"Strategy development will almost always imply changes in the organization – in its relationship with the environment and its relationship with itself. Any organizational change that matters strategically will involve winners and losers… It follows that any strategy development or thinking about strategy will, without deliberate intention, promote organizational politics."*

If Giddens's model in Figure 3 is studied, it will soon be noted that the first column, mediated by interpretive schemes, is largely what Weick's model of sensemaking is elaborating in organizations. The notions of power/domination and sanction/legitimation have not been discussed.

Giddens's ontological position is present in this schema as much as ever: structural processes such as *signification*, *legitimation* and *domination* do determine action, but

only exist by being instantiated in the social interactive processes, i.e. communication, power and sanction, respectfully.

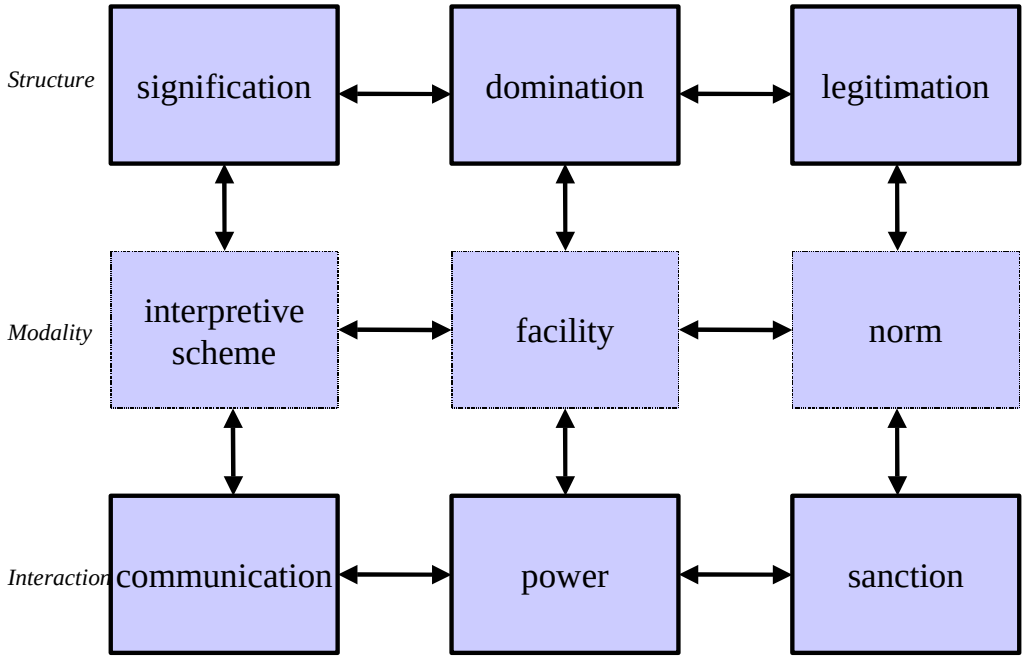


Figure 3. Giddens's model of structuration (Giddens, 1984).

Figure 3 helps to illustrate Giddens's notion of power: it is a phenomenon present at the level of social interaction, reflecting the structural process of domination, being mediated by the notion of facility, being *able* to act in some way. Legitimation can in some ways be regarded as a symbolic sibling of domination (Hardy & Clegg, 1996). It is mediated by norms and instantiated as sanctions on the social interaction plateau.

Weick was not too specific with regard to the role of the individual in terms of power. The attributions he proposed for sensemaking brilliantly describe how meaning is created at the level of the individual as well as the organization, but as we have learned from the study of rhetoric, as well as the genealogy of institutions (Foucault), it is very hard to distinguish power from *knowledge*; which again is very closely related to meaning. Legitimation is a structural concept in which the everyday notions of power and knowledge can be seen to merge: in a sense, power is integrated with symbols in all sorts of normative systems. The omission of power from Weick's model may also explain why it is hard to account for the phenomenon of leadership in the model. Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) have in my opinion touched upon this by

giving an account of how an effective leader can induce sensemaking in her organization via *sensegiving* practices, bringing about strategic change.

Giddens has illustrated how sensemaking and power are related, but we have yet to define power. The classical notion of power, called *pluralist*, can be defined as A having power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do (Dahl, 1957). This notion was criticized as behaviorist in the sense that it required observable behavior to be brought about in order for power to be used. Bacharach & Baratz (1962) criticized this view accordingly and argued for the ability of power holders to keep certain interest from entering the decision-making arena altogether, causing these interests to remain inarticulate. They defined power as the mobilization of bias. Lukes (1974) based his critique of the previous two models of power on the argument that instead of simply keeping some people out of the decision making arenas, power holders may affect the cognitions and preferences of the others. Lukes defined power as A having power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests. This form of power is normally upheld by *institutions*.

Lukes's notion of power is related in some ways to Foucault (e.g. 1979) whose conception of power, while by no means easily identified, is also based on different social institutions. Foucault studied power through the study of the *genealogies* of different institutions such as clinics, asylums and prisons. He argued that the individual is disciplined to monitor herself through institutional discourses. One of Foucault's key notions is *naturalization*, the deeming of certain practices to be natural or self-evident. This notion of bio-power can be interpreted in an organizational context to validate a whole number of practices, such as internal career systems (Hiley, 1987).

One important feature of the interconnection between power and knowledge such as proposed by Foucault and Lukes is that power is not an overtly negative phenomenon that has to be gotten rid of. Foucault (1979) argues that while studying the genealogies of different institutions enables us to better understand the forms of discipline we are subject to, there is no way of freeing ourselves. This doesn't, in itself make power a positive phenomenon, but if one thinks of the quotation from Wittgenstein in Chapter 2.5, describing the city of language, one may come to perceive meaning (signification) itself as connected to webs of legitimation and

domination, as described in the theory of structuration. The language we use to convey meaning is a social phenomenon, and being social, power is always present. Power is a positive phenomenon in the sense that the only meaningful way for us to exist is within all sorts of power structures.

A further relevant notion is whether power can be defined as a *relation* between individuals, as attempted by Lukes and others. Hannah Arendt (1958) has conceptualized power as a collective phenomenon corresponding to the human capability of acting in concert. She notes that power is never an individual property but a group property. Lukes (1974) argues that this is an idiosyncratic conception since power is always about A consciously affecting B in some way. Ball (1993) tries to find a common ground for these authors, as well as for authors as different as Habermas, Giddens and Foucault, by retaining the relational property of power, and adding the property of *communication*, claiming that all use of power requires communication between A and B. This again links the discussion here squarely to the frame of structuration in which the social interaction forms of power and communication are linked (see Figure 3).

3.4 Agent activity

The study of the discourses of strategy can reveal a third dimension to understanding the link between an individual and the strategy process to complement the dimensions of *sensemaking* and *power*. In addition to understanding the agent's sensemaking capacities (understanding of the strategy process) as well as the power in the process (capability of influencing the strategy process), it is also relevant to understand the activity of the agent: whether he/she has put these capabilities to use in the process. The activity dimension is needed to address the quite simple question, whether the individual is doing something to act as in the strategy process. In a sense, we can think of sensemaking and power as enabling factors, and activity as the forms of actually influencing the strategy process.

It is necessary to understand that activity is not isolated from power and sensemaking: indeed sensemaking is rooted in action (Weick, 1995), while interpretation and power are interrelated in structuration (Giddens, 1984), etc. The interconnections have been elaborated by Hardy, Palmer & Phillips (2000). They have built a model of the

discourse of strategy on three interconnecting circuits, namely *activity*, *connectivity* and *performativity*. Their model describes the movement of a new discursive element, such as a new strategic concept, through the three circuits (Figure 4).

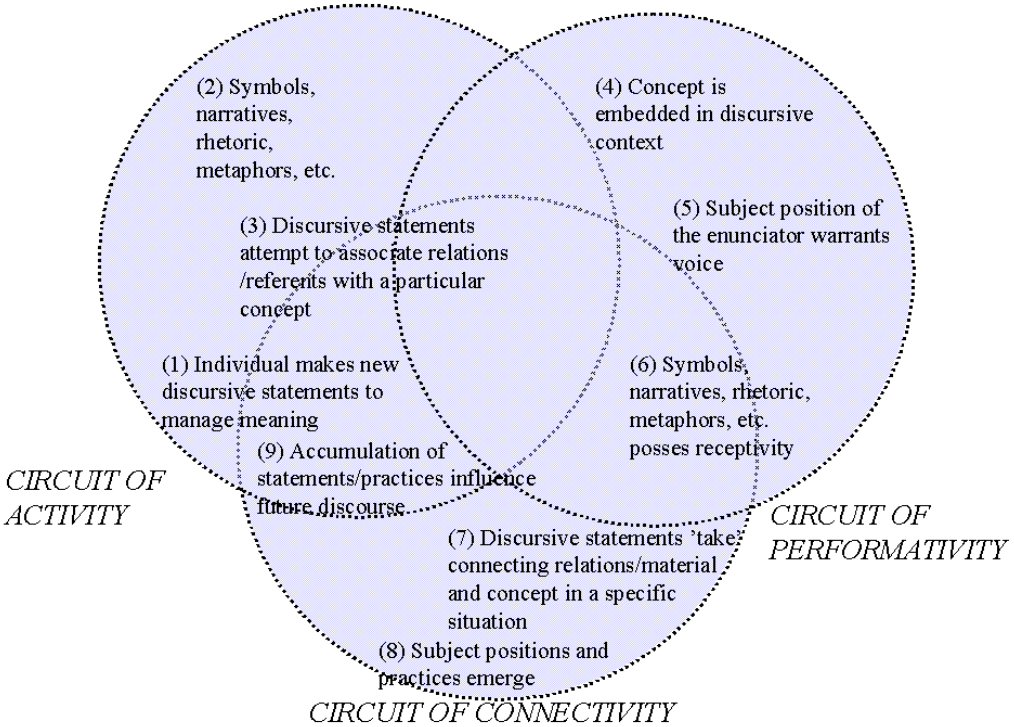


Figure 4. A model of the discourse of strategy (Hardy, Palmer & Phillips 2000).

The first circuit of *activity* represents the individual's possibility of influencing the discourse of strategy through introducing new content. I am reminded of the 'creative seeds' an individual may bring into collective sensemaking, as Weick proposed. The circuit of *performativity* is the circuit in which other people are introduced to the picture, as the *political* processes determine whether the content introduced is adopted by other organizational members. If this is to take place, the content must be sensible to the other people. I think this stage has a lot to do with the first two columns of communication and power in the model of structuration. The final circuit, the circuit of *connectivity*, is where the new content is integrated into structure and practices. The circuit of connectivity represents the process of structuration at large, in which systems and social interaction interconnect. It is also reflected in Weick's interaction of the individual, group and social context (Figure 2).

3.5 Social positions in the strategy process

The overall goal of this chapter is to illustrate the link between the individual agent and an organizational strategy process. In the previous sections, three central dimensions have been introduced: *sensemaking*, *power* and *activity*. The next logical step is to identify the concept interconnecting all three. One promising candidate can be found in the concept of *role*, typically thought as the nexus between the individual and structure.

What is it to have a role? The anthropologist Ralph Linton is often (cf. Popitz, 1972; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Giddens, 1984) attributed for bringing the concept of role to social theory in his *Study of Man* (1936). The concept was adopted quite soon by both macrosociology, as it became a central concept for functionalism, as well as microsociology when Goffman embraced the concept in his dramaturgical approach.

The concept of role is generally offered as the link between the individual and her organization, i.e. the organizational structure. As noted (see Chapter 2.5), strategy process can be regarded as a social structure. This means that the concept of 'strategic role' can be regarded as the link between the individual agent and the strategy process. Roles are relevant in understanding how strategy is *enacted*, how individuals act as strategic actors. This question can be regarded as a fundamental question in strategy implementation or strategic practice in general.

There is a lot of talk about *management roles, team roles, the roles of different functional units*, etc. Some may feel that in organizations the concept of a role is interchangeable with such everyday concepts as job, task, and so on (e.g. Hellriegel et al., 1995). This kind of strong relation between role and organizational function, or *office* (Katz & Kahn, 1966), reflects a functionalist orientation to organizations. Classic functionalist authors quickly embraced the concept of role in their theories of society. Parsons used the concept to explain how social structure determines individual actions. He defined role as

> *"the system of normative expectations for the performance of a participating individual in his capacity as a member of a collectivity. The role is the primary point of articulation between the personality of the individual and the structure of the social system." (Parsons, 1967)*

Whereas Parsons emphasized *consensus* between individuals performing their roles as members of a collectivity, his student Merton (1957) emphasized the need to account for the multitude of roles the individual has in her role-set, as well as conflicts arising between individuals and the roles society has set for them.

A classical, functionalist exposition of roles in organizations was given by Katz & Kahn (1966). They used the concept of role in building an account of organizational behavior, claiming that organizations are role systems. Roles link the individual and organization by determining the behavior of individuals. Organizations are networks of *offices*, manned by individual organizational members. In Katz & Kahn's account, roles are *sent* to individuals in accordance with the offices they hold. The individuals modify their behavior to compensate for the expectations they confront. Role *expectations* constitute the *sent* roles, while *received* roles in turn result in role *behavior*.

While functionalist authors approach roles from structure to the individual, micrososiologists do the exact opposite, trying to account for how the individual enacts her role in various social situations. In the microsociological framework, the concept of a role is something that determines how people act and interact, and make sense of social situations. As Goffman (1959) puts it:

> *"An establishment may be viewed 'technically', in terms of its efficiency as an intentionally organized system of activity for the achievement of predefined objectives. An establishment may be viewed 'politically', in terms of the actions, which each participant (or class of participants) can demand of other participants… An establishment may be viewed 'structurally', in terms of the horizontal and vertical status divisions… Finally, an establishment may be viewed 'culturally', in terms of the moral values which influence activity in the establishment… It seems to me the that the dramaturgical approach may constitute a fifth perspective… The technical and dramaturgical perspectives intersect most clearly, perhaps, in regards to standards of work… Power of any kind has to be clothed in effective means of displaying it, and will have different effects depending on how it is dramatized. (Goffman, 1959: 233-234.)"*

So, one crucial dimension to social situations in organizational establishments is the dramatical dimension. Roles constitute the actors in a drama. What is a role, then? Goffman begins by defining a *performance* as the activity of an agent, which

influences the other participants. A *part* is the pre-established pattern of action that is unfolded in a performance. A *social role*, finally, is the enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status, consisting of one or more parts. (Goffman, 1959.)

A social role enacts rights and duties of an individual holding a status in a certain setting. The individuals carry out performances, supporting each other's roles by tacit and explicit means. This is how they make sense of the situation. It is important to remember that to treat individual roles in organizations interchangeably with such a concept as "office" would be to deny the existence of the tacit dimension in social dramas and abandon the dramatic dimension for the technical. There is ample evidence for the existence of the tacit role expectations an individual faces – take Garfinkel's (1967) experiment, for example, in which students, who were asked to act as polite guests in normal family situations, caused rage and all kinds of sensemaking when family members tried to deal with this breach of role structure ("he is working too hard", "he has had a fight with his fiancée", "he is making a joke.")

The interest of studying roles in the strategy process lies in the fact that the dramatical dimension combines the sensemaking dimension with the power dimension in individual social existence. Roles make social situations sensible; they consist of enacting statuses, thereby distributing power.

What is it that happens in the strategy process in terms of individual roles? As Goffman put it, there are five interconnected dimensions from which to describe social establishment: the technical, the political, the cultural, the structural and the dramatical. Classical literature has approached strategy from the technical and structural dimensions (e.g. Porter 1980), sensemaking authors (e.g. Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Weick 1987) might be characterized as having an outlook on strategy based on the cultural dimension, and the political dimension is also presented by major authors (e.g. Pettigrew, 1992; Eden & Ackermann, 1998). The dramatic dimension of strategy has not been properly explored.

Roles or social positions?

But what of the dimension of activity? The concept of role would not seem to address it very well. As Giddens (1984, 84) has put it, roles, both in their functionalist form and dramaturgical form

> *"each tend to emphasize the 'given' character of roles… The script is written, the stage set and the actors do the best they can with the parts prepared for them."*

There would indeed seem to be a certain fatalistic tendency to the role metaphor. As the master playwright himself (Macbeth Act V, Scene V) wrote:

> *"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more."*

Such fatalism does not fit well with Giddens's theory of structuration, based on active and knowledgeable agents. Nor does it suit this thesis, since the third dimension discovered for mediating the link between an individual and the strategy process is the dimension of activity. Giddens offers an alternative metaphor to replace roles. He chooses to speak of *social positions*, which he characterizes as follows:

> *"Social systems only exist in and through the continuity of social practices, fading away in time. But some of their structural properties are best characterized as 'position-practice' relations.* ***Social positions*** *are constituted structurally as specific intersections of signification, domination and legitimation which relates to the typification of agents. A social position involves the specification of a definite 'identity' within a network of social relations, that identity, however, being a 'category' to which a particular range of normative sanctions is relevant. (Giddens 1984: 83.)"*

It may well have been enough to speak of roles and explicate the emphasis on activity for the purposes of this thesis. The concept role has quite a strong connotation to function in management literature that I wish to avoid, however. I concur with sensemaking authors that organizations are much more than just networks of offices, as Katz and Kahn present them. Roles are not just job descriptions. The concept of *social position* offered by Giddens rids me of this worry, while simultaneously providing more space for the activity of agents. This is the reason I have chosen to address the question of social positions as my research question. I will still talk of roles as I describe the accounts of individuals as they *perform* strategically. Yet there will be many positions in which the individuals have failed to find a role to play. These positions have to be accounted for as well. *I will address roles as performance categories, whereas the concept social position will refer to the agent's whole relation to the strategy process as a totality of her cognition, affect and actions.*

I have finally come to the point where the background for my research question *In what ways can an individual agent be socially positioned in an organizational strategy process?* has been explicated.

3.6 Research on organizational roles and social positions

The relevant empirical literature concerning social positions in strategy processes is largely written under the label of roles. It is simultaneously very limited and quite extensive. There would seem to be a large amount of literature touching on the topic of roles in the strategy process, yet very little has been written that is directly relevant to the topic. The different streams of literature have been summarized and their relevance and limitations discussed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Streams of literature touching on social positions in the strategy process

Field	Authors	Relevance	Limitations
Strategy implementation roles	Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984), Nutt (1983) on project planning, Quinn (1980) on strategic incrementalism	Address the topic directly, discuss different views	Normative emphasis, functional emphasis on official roles
Middle management roles	Floyd & Wooldridge (1992; 1994; 2000) on strategy process	Touch on the topic of strategy process	Functionalist bias on "official" roles, limited literature
Normative strategic management roles	Mintzberg (1994) on planning critique, Hamel (2000) on revolutionaries, Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) on knowledge creation, Senge (1994) on learning	Show popular discussion on strategic agents, may have affected organizations	Have limited empirical support, simplified descriptions, no emphasis on power issues, etc.
Follower roles	Leadership literature on followership (e.g. Kelley, 1992; Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy, 1999), literature on organizational citizenship (e.g. Podsakoff et al. & extra-role behaviors (Dyne, Cummings & Parks, 1995)	Rare examples of non-managerial roles being discussed, roles explored	Do not address strategy
Psychological group member roles	Belbin on management group roles	Clearly defined role positions, roles in their atomic form	Level of a psychological group, not the strategy process; static, non-knowledgeable conception of agents
Dramaturgical management roles	Mintzberg (1971), Pitcher (1997)	Clear set of roles, dramaturgical flavor	Not directly connected to strategy, non-dynamic, behavioral emphasis
Organizational socialization	Van Maanen & Schein (1979), Van Maanen (1976), Schein (1988), Reichers (1987)	Insight into the process of acquiring roles	Emphasis on newcomers, normative emphasis on managerial action
Social network analysis	Lewin (1951) on gatekeepers, Scott (2000), Wassermann & Faust (1994)	Direct analyses of social positions	Behavioral emphasis

The reader can note that the wide scope of the different approaches does not enable me to discuss them all. I will attempt to summarize the roles different authors have discovered for agents in organizations and in positions somehow relevant to the strategy process. I will categorize the roles at top management, middle management and employee levels. I realize that this sort of categorization has a functionalist bias on pre-set *offices* as in Katz & Kahn (1966), which may be regarded as being in conflict with my phenomenological approach to the topic (see Chapter 4). This categorization reflects the approach in almost all the literature to be discussed, however. My approach to analyzing my data and discussing the results will discuss the relation of official functional roles and observed roles further.

Top management roles

Some models of strategy *implementation* have discussed individual roles. Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984) categorized strategy implementation practices into five models of implementation. The models are categorized largely according to the role that top management assumes in implementation.

The *commander* model draws its influences from military life, the CEO wielding absolute power. In this model, the CEO is the rational agent behind the strategy decisions and plays no role in implementation. According to the authors, the CEO-model works best with a powerful executive with few personal biases and vast and accurate sources of information. The *change* model is based on planned interventions in the organization's structure and systems, which will set off the desired behavioral outcomes. This model enables more complicated strategic plans than the commander model, but also results in inflexibility for unanticipated events. The authors note that both of the two models may suffer from motivation problems.

The *collaborative* model extends the power of strategic decision-making from the CEO to the organization's top management team. This model helps to motivate the managers and also provides the strategic decision-making process with more information and cognitive capital. The problem of this model results from the fact that more decision-making implies more politics and conflicts of interest, which may mean less rationality. Bourgeois and Brodwin note that the collaborative model works best in complex environments where it is impossible for the CEO to know everything.

The *cultural* model is based on molding the organization's culture to ensure the acceptance of a shared vision. This model is based on the participation of all organizational members in decision making directed towards perpetuating the vision. The main problem of this model is the vast amount of time it requires. It also presupposes an intelligent and responsible workforce.

Taking into account the problems and strengths associated with the former four models, the authors suggest a fifth model called the *crescive* model. In this model, the members of the organization create the strategic decisions in a bottom-up process. The role of the CEO is to act as judge and premise-setter and ensure an organizational context (structure, systems and culture) that will promote openness and innovation. The crescive model offers to make full use of the knowledge and effort of organizational members in the strategy process, encouraging participation. It bears a close resemblance to Hamel's (2000) notion that every organizational member should be a strategic revolutionary, promoting strategic leads to the top management.

The five models offered by Bourgeois & Brodwin can be categorized through the stance assumed by the CEO. She acts as the *sole rational actor* in the commander model, as an *architect* in the change model, as the *coordinator* of the top management team in the collaborative model, as a *coach* for the whole organization in the cultural model, and as a *premise setter* and *judge* in the crescive model.

Many authors note that the top management role is not monolithic and universal, but is contingent on *context* and *content* issues in the vein of Pettigrew (1987). Nutt (1983) argues that implementation style and top management role depend on internal and external context. He identifies three types of management roles in implementation: unilateral, manipulative and delegated. The management style depends on both the organization's internal and external context. Quinn (1978) has developed a generic model of implementation in his logical incrementalism approach. While the model suits multiple contexts, it is built upon a succession of several steps that call for different orientations from the top management in different stages, e.g. *need sensing, legitimizing, gathering support*, etc. Waldersee & Sheather (1996) on the other hand emphasize the effect on the *type of strategy* that is implemented in managerial actions. Their study demonstrates that innovative strategies involve more

participative leadership actions, whereas conservative strategies seem to indicate more of a top-down approach.

Some research has been conducted into top management roles in terms of group member roles in top management teams. Belbin (1981, 1993) presented a classification of such roles, following the use of psychometric tests. Belbin states that managers have roles in management team situations distinct from their functional roles. Belbin distinguishes the following nine[12] team roles:

- **Plants** are creative, yet ignore details.
- **Resource investigators** are explorative and enthusiastic, yet overoptimistic.
- **Coordinators** are clear and mature, good chairpersons, who may be regarded as manipulative.
- **Shapers** are pressure-driven and dynamic, yet may hurt other people's feelings.
- **Monitor evaluators** make accurate judgments and think strategically, but lack the drive to inspire others - and may be too critical.
- **Team workers** are co-operative and diplomatic, yet indecisive in tough situations.
- **Implementers** may be trusted to turn ideas into actions, but are somewhat inflexible.
- **Completers** are scrupulously conscientious and precise in their work, yet they are also prone to nitpicking.
- **Specialists** provide hard-to-find knowledge but tend to overlook the big picture.

Belbin noted that it was fairly typical for a manager to adopt one or two roles and perform them fairly consistently. The problem of an exposition such us Belbin's to this kind of an inquiry is that his model is rather static in nature. Being collected by psychometric tests, the data presents a static situation, the members of the group being unable to modify their roles to a greater degree. This thesis, on the other hand, relies on the central notion of the theory of structuration that an agent is knowledgeable of

[12] There were eight in his original study (1981) – the ninth was added in later (1993).

the social structures she is in and that she is capable of monitoring her role and changing it.

The notion of performing different roles in different contexts is nicely portrayed in a study done by Schultz (1991). She studied the radically different contextual work settings of a group of managers in a Danish ministry. Her main proposition is that members of an organization often have to switch between different, disconnected *symbolic domains* in their work settings. She cites the conflicting roles of managers as monks (doing their administrative tasks), fire fighters (in crisis situations) and disciples (for the politically chosen minister) as examples of having to fluctuate between symbolic domains.

Belbin discussed manager's roles in teams. Mintzberg (1973) conducted a groundbreaking study on the everyday activities of single managers, which challenged many classical, rationalist managerial role models. Mintzberg conducted his research by following the managers as they went about their daily businesses. He categorized the ten roles he discovered to three groups: *interpersonal*, *informational* and *decisional*.

- Interpersonal roles
    - Figurehead role: the handling of symbolic and ceremonial functions for an organization.
    - Leadership role: the social aspect to managerial work.
    - Liaison role: the development of information sources inside and outside the organization.
- Informational roles
    - Monitor role: seeking and receiving information
    - Disseminator role: dissemination of the received information
    - Spokesperson role: dissemination of the received information outside the organization
- Decision roles
    - Entrepreneurial role: initiate projects and identify the need for change.
    - Disturbance handler role: solve conflicts, etc.

- Resource allocator role
- Negotiator role: represent the organization in interacting with outsiders.

It is easy to believe Mintzberg has managed to shed light on the *descriptive* element of managerial activity. Mintzberg's research revealed a fragmented daily routine full of interruptions, heavy on meetings and verbal communication. While the method Mintzberg used is sensitive at the microsociological level of analysis, his categorization of role positions the manager fluctuates between during daily life is rather functionalistic: based on roles that are official organizationally accepted functions of an executive, forming a static hierarchy. Trujillo (1983) criticizes this static nature of managerial roles and notes that, instead of a categorization, it would be more suitable to assume a performative stance towards the roles, describing unique contexts in which the roles are performed. Mintzberg's categorization does not illuminate the manager's viewpoint on what they were doing, the intent, context and symbolic element behind their actions.

Pitcher (1997), a student of Mintzberg's, continued the discussion on leadership roles into the dramatic context, as she claims. She studied a group of 15 CEOs and gathered observations from the peers, board members and direct subordinates, simultaneously acting as an insider (member of the board of directors). She groups the leaders into three *archetypes*: artists, craftsmen and technocrats. Their qualities are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Leader archetypal roles by Pitcher (1997)

Artist	Craftsman	Technocrat
Unpredictable	Well-balanced	Cerebral
Funny	Helpful	Difficult
Imaginative	Honest	Uncompromising
Daring	Sensible	Stiff
Intuitive	Responsible	Intense
Exciting	Trustworthy	Detail-oriented
Emotional	Realistic	Determined
Visionary	Steady	Fastidious
Entrepreneurial	Reasonable	Hardheaded
Inspiring	Predictable	No-nonsense

Pitcher argues that the three archetypes are constantly struggling for power. If one examines the attributes offered for the technocrat, one may suspect that Pitcher does not share much sympathy with the last of the three archetypes. She argues that organizations must protect themselves from technocrat hegemony.

Pitcher presents an interesting case, yet like Mintzberg, she seems to treat the leaders as static objects, not dynamic subjects. While she does admit that real people never fully correspond to one archetype, she builds her case on individuals resembling one static archetype, and does not discuss how agents themselves reflect on their roles, or on how their roles may change. This is also reflected in her method: she bases her finding on the observations of others, not the reflections of the leaders themselves. All in all, I think Pitcher is aiming for a normative standpoint: "protect your organization from technocrat hegemony". I think Giddens would pose the same critique of fatalistic roles to Pitcher that he poses both to the functionalists and Goffman.

In order to form a pre-understanding of individual roles to suit my study of social positions in the strategy process, *descriptive* literature on roles is what is needed. That literature offers a few partial models, but not much. In classical management literature there is a multitude of *prescriptive* works describing ideal management roles – beginning with the *Functions of an Executive* by Barnard (1938). Indeed, the formulation of the right role for a manager was one of the first movements in organization studies (Hatch, 1997a). In classical strategic management literature, there was the emphasis on the vision of an entrepreneur (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1999). Hamel's (2000) notion of strategic *revolutionaries* is an example of a later prescriptive model of roles in the strategy process. Mintzberg's work on managerial roles stays, however, one of the few solely microsociological accounts of roles in organizations; of strategy there are none.

Middle management roles

Middle management is one area recognized as crucial for strategy in the last ten years. While many authors on strategic change (e.g. Quinn, 1992) view the middle management as a nuisance to be avoided and promote the flattest possible organizational structure, others view the middle management as an important

communicator between the management and the personnel, perhaps most notably Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) who speak of a middle-up-down management.

There is not much research done on middle managerial roles in strategy processes. Floyd & Wooldridge are the authors who have been the most prominent champions of the topic. They (1992) have discovered four middle management activities in the strategy process. They conducted a large study of the activity of middle managers in 25 organizations. The four activities they discovered were:

- **Championing**: justifying new programs, evaluating new proposals, searching for new opportunities, proposing projects to upper managers
- **Facilitating**: encouraging informal discussion, relaxing regulations to get new projects started, buying time for experiments, providing resources for trial projects
- **Synthesizing**: gathering information about the feasibility of new programs, communicating competitor activities, assessing changes in the environment, etc.
- **Implementing**: monitoring activities to support top management objectives, translating goals into action plans, translating goals into individual objectives, selling top management initiatives to subordinates.

Floyd & Wooldridge (1994) argue that middle managers have on the one hand *hierarchical influence* both upward and downward in the organization, while on the other they have divergent and integrative *cognitive influence*. By this they mean that middle managers both mediate the messages from their superiors to the personnel, and vice versa, and they also both support *information richness* and *meaning integration* in different contexts. It is interesting to note that Floyd & Wooldridge's hierarchical and cognitive influence are similar to the distinction I have drawn between power and sensemaking in organizational roles.

Employee roles

While there has been some discussion on middle management roles in strategy process, discussion on employee roles has been a virtual desert in terms of coverage of strategy research. Shrivastava (1986) argues that one of the implicit interests of

strategy literature has been the universalization of sectional interests and ideology, i.e. the interests of the top management. The failure of strategy authors to acknowledge their own ideological underpinnings is what Lyle (1990) refers to as the lack of *reflexivity* in the field.

The field in which employee roles have been most explicitly discussed is leadership, in the discussion on *followership*. The importance of followership can be understood as soon as one understands that leadership is not a phenomenon centered on a single person, but a group of people. A leader will not accomplish what she is doing unless she gains somebody who is willing to follow. Kelley (1992) has studied followership, seeking to rid it of its unnecessarily negative connotations. He argues that followership is as important to organizational success as leadership and should be valued as such.

Kelley argues that followers are not homogenous "sheep", but sentient beings, who can possess many kinds of roles. He distinguishes five role-types, which he groups according to their positions on two dimensions: *activity* and *independence*. After interviewing both managers and personnel members, Kelley argues that the best followers are those who assume ownership of matters and are capable of independent freethinking. He calls them *exemplary followers*. According to Kelley, exemplary followers do not blindly conform to the will of their superiors, but are ready to stand up to their superiors. They seek to act in their organization's best interest using their own ingenuity. Exemplary followers are not rebels, however. They are "deal makers, not deal breakers".

Alienated followers are freethinking followers, who, on the other hand are on the passive side. Alienated followers like to describe themselves as conscientious agents who have the integrity to honestly address negative issues concerning their organization. Their superiors describe them as troublemakers and cynics. Kelley suspects that alienated followers are often former exemplary followers who have been disappointed too often and lost interest in taking active action to correct the wrongs they perceive. *Conformist followers* are people who actively carry out orders but depend on other people to do their thinking. They are the "yes people" of organizations, who get stuck if they do not get the guidance they need. They do not want to raise trouble but wish to be model citizens. *Passive followers* lack the same

initiative the conformist followers lack, but do not have any drive in carrying out their assignments either.

Kelley's fifth group of followers is constituted by *pragmatist followers* who are the mediocre performers in both thinking and acting. They do not want to be noticed, so they carry out their tasks inconspicuously, and not with any particular enthusiasm. They are mediocre both in terms of activity and independence.

It is important to remember that followership, just as leadership, is a phenomenon present in collectivities, not individuals. Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1999) note that, for example, the passivity of passive followers is caused primarily by the social system they are in, not their personal characters. I think notions such as exemplary followership are largely cultural – it is contingent on organizational culture on what kinds of issues one can bring up, and in what manner. Some organizational cultures are readier to accept criticism, while others even regard criticism as a sign of disloyalty. I don't think there is any single way of demarcating 'acts of rebellion' and 'standing up for what is right'.

The discussion on followership activity and independent thinking is closely related to the discussion of *extra-role behaviors.* Dyne, Cummings & Parks (1995) define them as

> *"behavior which benefits the organization and/or is intended to benefit the organization, which is discretionary and which goes beyond role-expectations."*

The authors group *organizational citizenship behaviors, pro-social organizational behavior, whistle-blowing* and *principled organizational dissent* under the conceptual roof of extra-role behaviors. Their definition of extra-role behaviors implicates a functionalist conception of role, according to which role is identified with an official role such as job description. Kelley's exemplary followers would seem to be prone to extra-role behaviors of all of the four kinds.

One notion becomes clear in the short review of literature on roles in the strategy process: there is a limited number of empirical data on the subject and that data is very biased toward management and with some reference to middle management. Looking at the various texts on roles, there has been much discussion on managerial roles in general, some discussion on roles in the strategy process at the managerial

and middle management level. Discussion of personnel-level roles in strategy processes has been nonexistent. I have tried to find other sources to compensate for this. The roles discussed in this section will serve to reflect the social positions discovered in the data.

3.7 Individual positions in the strategy process: a summary of the two encounters with theory

Before I move into describing my research design, a quick summary of the *two encounters with theory* is in order. The first encounter left me with the theory of structuration as a link between the individual and the strategy process. The second encounter integrated the theory of structuration with sensemaking notions as well as the notion of discourse as a strategic resource. From this combination, the core dimensions of *sensemaking*, *power* and *activity* were extracted and used in concert with distinctions arising from the data to create a schema for analyzing individual social positions. Social positions were also explored through a review of literature on roles in the strategy process as well as organizational roles in general. The concept role was widened to the concept *social position* to enable individual reflection of her social position as required by the notion of *knowledgeability* in the theory of structuration.

My two encounters with theory are visualized in Figure 5 as two independent paths, the first moving from strategy toward the individual, and the second moving from individual towards strategy. Both of the paths can be seen converging in the theory of structuration, with the second path identifying a target within that theory, laying the foundation for my research question.

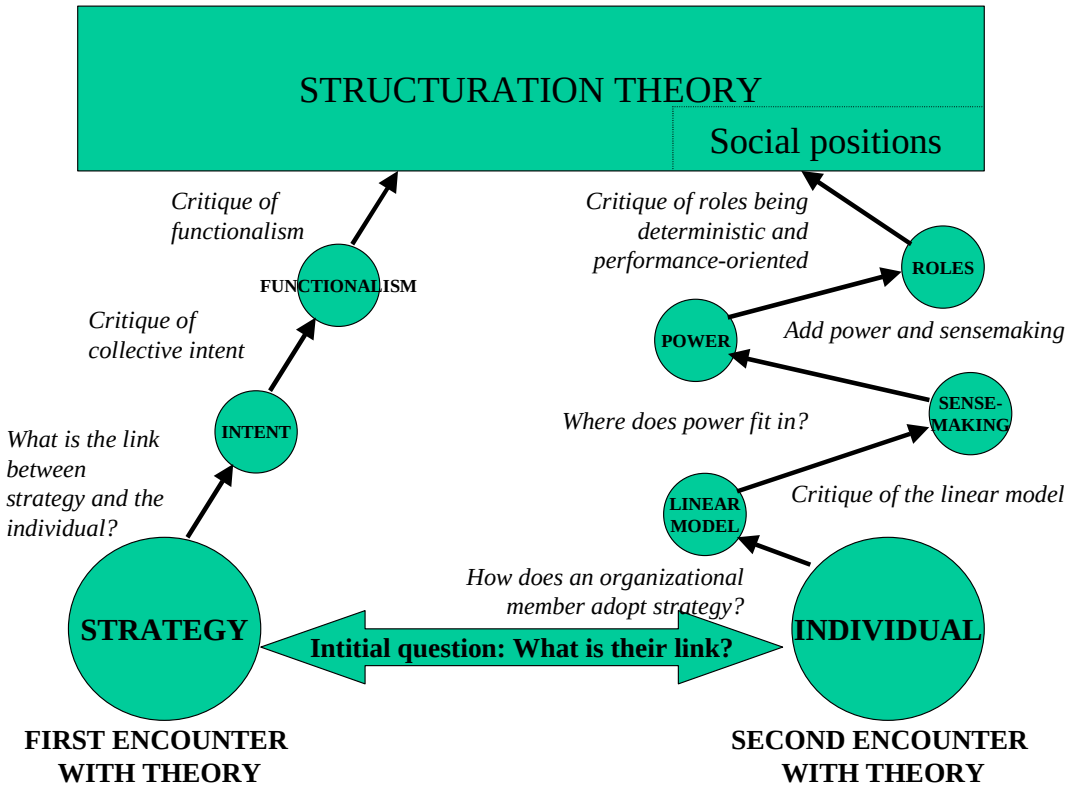


Figure 5. Two encounters with theory

The research question set for this thesis was defined as:

In what ways can an individual agent be socially positioned in an organizational strategy process?

I have explicated a theoretical foundation, based on structuration theory, linking an individual agent and the strategy process with the concept social position.

4. Intermission: Encountering the data

My data consist of the text from a set of 301 semi-structured interviews, varying from one to two hours in length. The interviews were conducted as a part of the STRADA project in the Laboratory of Work Psychology and Leadership of the Helsinki University of Technology. The objective of the STRADA project is to study and enhance strategy implementation in Finnish organizations in the knowledge and service sectors. The interviews were conducted by four researchers[13]. I conducted 76 interviews. The use of a semi-structured interview outline enabled the collection of a large, relatively coherent, mass of interview data, while nevertheless enabling the interviewee to actively address selected topics within the theme of the strategy process. Since strategy implementation is an important, yet an often neglected and poorly understood phenomenon (Alexander, 1985; 1991; Beer & Eisenstat, 1996; 2000; Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984; Noble, 1999), an exploratory mindset was preferred. As we started to look through the data for an initial analysis, we soon realized the material was rich enough to support all our PhD dissertations – especially because our interests were varied.

I had realized early on that I was mainly interested in the individual level of analysis. I started to read the data, both to find out what questions I wanted to explore, as well as what questions the data answered best. The first question to arise concerned collective intention: did strategy exist in the individuals as a collective intention of some sort? As I read theory concerning collective intention, I started to realize that to regard strategy as a collective intention in organizations simplified the phenomenon. Returning to the data, I realized that what the individuals were discussing in relation to strategy were their roles in the strategy process – or the lack of them. Returning to theory, I discovered the literature on structuration and found that satisfying. My research question, *In what ways can an individual agent be socially positioned in an organizational strategy process?* came to take form.

The paradox that in order to come up with good questions you actually have to have knowledge about answers was classically formulated by Plato in *Meno* (1983). While

[13] Petri Aaltonen, Heini Ikävalko, Saku Mantere and Mari Ventä

the theoretical roots of my research question have been elaborated in the first two chapters, the actual process in which the research question came to be realized was a dialectical process, in which I searched for the correct question while I was simultaneously searching for the answer. I became interested in social positions as I heard, figuratively speaking, what the data and theory were discussing about. While the traditional style of scientific writing often poses the research question as if it were determined as an *a priori* issue, I have found that good questions can usually be discovered only after you have immersed yourself in the data and theory.

4.1 Phenomenology as paradigm

The meta-theoretical frame in which the theory section of the thesis is built is the theory of structuration. According to Giddens (1984), the theory of structuration accounts for four different types of sociological inquiry, representing different levels of analysis: (1) hermeneutic elucidation of frames of meaning, (2) investigation of context and form of practical consciousness (the unconscious), (3) identification of bounds of knowledgeability, and (4) specification of institutional orders. This thesis corresponds to the first category, being intent on understanding individual frames from which the link between the individual and the strategy process can be understood.

The hermeneutical elucidation of frames of meaning is a phenomenological type of inquiry in social science (Schutz, 1967). The overall emphasis of such an approach is the notion that the individual Lifeworld is placed at the center of attention. As Husserl (1999: 353) described this emphasis in the larger frame of the philosophy of science:

> *"But now we must note something of the highest importance that appeared even as early as Galileo: the surreptitious substitution of the mathematically constructed world of idealities for the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable – our everyday life-world."*

The Lifeworld consists of those phenomena nearest to the knowledgeable subject: her personal schemas, values and affect, as they exist prior to any idealization into formal models and theories. I am sympathetic towards the *symbolic interactionist* tradition in social science, according to which individuals construct society (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) and themselves in linguistic interaction (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). As naïve as it may sound, strategy processes become what people make them to become.

The focus of study in this thesis is the individual, and the data set consists of individual interview texts. This may raise a question as to whether this research design corresponds to symbolic *interactionism*, according to which meaning is essentially *socially* constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). I do not dispute this in any way, but do argue that the *knowledgeable* subject is capable of reflecting her social position as one central expert to this phenomenon. It is by no means the whole picture of the phenomenon – another picture could be obtained through group discussions or observation of social behavior – but the picture the elucidation of frames of meaning approach prescribes. The emphasis on the individual in part no doubt reveals my suspicion towards social cognition as a holist phenomenon, even if there have been some promising accounts lately (e.g. Hutchinson, 1995; Weick & Roberts, 1993). While I do admit that the social world regulates and affects cognition, and that cognition is at least partly linguistic (Fodor, 1975), language being essentially social (Wittgenstein, 1951), I still forcefully argue that *thinking* is something done by an individual, not a group.

Therefore, I think along the lines of Harré & Secord (1972), who regard individual agents as the best source of information in the quest to elucidate the subjective frames of reference organizational members attach to the strategy process. The knowledgeable individuals can elucidate the *interpretation horizons* (Gadamer, 1993) they perceive from within the strategy process. This thesis also relies on the notion of *narrative knowing*, according to which there are two forms of having knowledge: the scientific-nomological and narrative. The latter form corresponds to the individual Lifeworld and is therefore of essential importance to phenomenological social science. Narrative knowing is a form of knowledge that consists of memories of issues/events, structured in narrative form (Polkinghorne, 1988; Bruner, 1996; Taylor, 1992).

The phenomenological approach described above also has implications for my relationship with *background variables*. I regard them as significant only when the interviewee reports them as such in the text. This applies to issues such as formal positions, educational background, age and gender. Formal positions would no doubt in many cases be a basis of analysis. This thesis is not about formal positions, however. I don’t think it will be a great revelation to say that managers more often

than personnel members feel that they are able to influence strategies. I will mention *official positions* when the interviewees mention them. I will not structure my approach according to official positions, however. My interest is the phenomenon of social position in the strategy process, not the function of an individual in the strategy process.

In practice, while reading the interview texts, I tried my best to avoid making judgments about the accounts individuals provided of their social positions. I did not, for example, try to reason whether an individual had *grounds* for complaining about lacking possibilities of voicing her opinions, whether she *really* understood the strategy if she claimed to know it (i.e. I judged by criteria external to her account of understanding it perfectly well), or whether she was *justified* in being a cynic. The approach I took lays no blame and does not seek a reality outside the accounts. This is due to my conviction that knowledgeable agents are the primary source of information when trying to comprehend their social positions in a phenomenological framework.

The pragmatist/managerialist notion that there is an official organizational reality against which individual claims can be measured is a siren song often tempting and no doubt useful in many other types of inquiry. Indeed, organizational *functioning* in many senses would be impossible without a belief in such an ontological notion. Furthermore, the interviewees in my data set no doubt discussed issues from their particular frames of reference. No doubt they used *power* in their accounts – power to make reality seem they way they liked it. The Foucauldian notion that power cannot be escaped is central here, however: for the researcher to resort to a seemingly value-neutral frame will only result in the *normalization* of managerialism or some other ideology. The risk of doing just this is emphasized by many authors (Hardy, Palmer & Phillips 2000; Knights & Morgan 1991; Lilley, 2001; Shrivastava, 1986; Whipp, 1996). While an approach such as this does not free itself of power, it represents a larger variety of voices than many other approaches.

4.2 Data

The characteristics of the data from 301 interviewees are portrayed in Table 5 below. The level of operative personnel forms the largest group, corresponding to the lack of research done on this topic. Middle managers are also well represented due to similar reasons. The organizations studied were mainly professional service organizations, including eight companies from finance, insurance, retail and telecommunications sectors plus four government or municipal organizations. The educational background of the interviewees reflects this emphasis. This was intended since we wanted to concentrate on organizations in which the employees had a component of independent decision making in their daily work. The size of the organizations or the organizational units[14] under study was 100 to 500 employees.

Table 5. Description of the interview sample.

Personnel group	N
Operative personnel	179
Middle management	83
Top management	39

Organization type	N
Public organization	100
Public firm	74
Private organization/firm	127

Tenure with the organization	N
less than 2 yrs	39
2-10 years	94
over 10 years	168

Education	N
No professional education	33
Vocational education	121
University	145
Not known	2

The interviewees were chosen at random, ensuring, however, that different tasks, work groups, and departments were represented equitably. The interviews were conducted in privacy, in most cases in a meeting room of the particular organization. The duration of the interviews ranged from one to two hours. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher told the interviewee about the purpose and the

[14] If the organization to be studied was larger than 500 people, an organizational unit consisting of 100-500 members was chosen as the area of study.

confidentiality of the interview. The interviews were tape recorded with the interviewees' approval, and fully transcribed.

The same basic interview outline was used in all case organizations. One major source of variation was the introduction of a *strategic theme* in the interview outline. The strategic theme was a strategic concept or an objective selected from the strategy of each individual organization. The criteria for the strategic theme in each organization were: (1) it had to be central to the organization's strategy, (2) it had to have an (actual or intended) effect on as many organizational members as possible, and (3) it had to have been officially communicated recently. The strategic theme was chosen in association with representatives of the organization, keeping in mind the goal of reaching organizational members whose daily activities are not ordinarily regarded as 'strategic', as the actual terminology of strategy is often foreign to the personnel members.

Some further variations were made to the interview outlines for top managers, middle managers and personnel members. The top management and middle management were questioned more thoroughly on strategic concepts, asking for definitions, etc. These variations in interview outlines result from different interests within the four researchers, yet the additional questions to top and middle managers do concern the social positions of the interviewees, the topic of this thesis. The interview outlines for personnel, middle management and management can be found in Appendix 1. An extract of the interview outline is presented in Figure 6 below.

EXTRACT OF INTERVIEW OUTLINE / OPERATIVE EMPLOYEES

(The underlined terms are tailored according to the theme in each organization)

1. Have there been any changes in your work lately? What kind of changes?
2. How well do you know the strategy process of the organization?
3. How do you participate in the strategy process (Reference to the strategy process diagrams)
4. Do you consider your abilities sufficient for participating in the strategy process?
5. What is the strategic theme in your organization in your view?
6. Why is the strategic theme important for the organization?

…

15. How is the promotion of the strategic theme present in your work? Please provide an example.

…

17. Do you feel that you have been given a sufficient opportunity to influence goals associated with the strategic theme? (If not: how would you have wanted to influence them?)

Figure 6. An extract of an interview outline

In addition to the interview texts, contextual data was gathered in the form of documents related to the organization's strategy process: graphs, strategy documents, annual reports, goal definitions, memos, etc. These were used in forming a pre-understanding of the strategic theme discussed with the interviewees.

4.3 Grounded theory as an analysis approach

As the topic of social positions in the strategy process is an unknown field, the exploratory stance and iterative methodology of the grounded theory approach seemed ideal as my research question started to form. The overall goal of this thesis is therefore to *create* theory in the sense of Glaser & Strauss (1967), i.e. "middle-range theory" (ibid.: 32) - not grand theory, nor theory of mundane details. My goal is to formulate *substantive* theory, the substance being individual social positions in the strategy process. While Glaser & Strauss claim that the grounded theory approach can be utilized in the creation of *formal* theory as well, I will not make any such attempt here. The strategy process, approached from the viewpoint of the knowledgeable individual, is a substantial area in need of exploration. My intention is to do just that.

As the research question for this thesis started to form, the data had already been collected. Our interview outline remained relatively stable through the 301 interviews, i.e. little iteration was done during data collection (a few questions were added along the way; none were removed). At first glance this may seem like an unusual position from which to do grounded theory. The standard view of grounded theory research design in organization studies (e.g. Eisenhardt, 1989) is conceived as an interplay between reality and the researcher, the researcher analyzing the data while collecting it, iterating her approach to data collection (e.g. her interview questions) as she progresses. My explorations began with a mass of text, already collected. I do not, however, see this as a problem, because the text itself is a rich source of information. The interview outline (see Appendix 1) is quite general, discussing the individual's social position from various viewpoints. The mass of interview texts provides in itself much more information dealing with social positions than "necessary".

The interview outline was constructed in order to explore how agents at all organizational levels conceived organizational strategy. As I explored the interview text, I realized that what most interviewees were really discussing were their own

social positions. While my grounded theory approach started with a pre-set mass of data, the interpretive path could be chosen in a multitude of ways. In my case, choosing the path involved the actual explication of a research question. While Glaser & Strauss (1967) describe the data collection process, *theoretical sampling* as they call it, as a joint process of data collection, coding and analysis, they *also* note that the grounded theory can be done, for example, on library materials:

> *"…[a cache of documents] can be regarded much like a set of interviews, done with either a sample of people or a representatives of different groups." (ibid.: 167.)*

I regard my set of interviews as a cache of interview data, sampled from a variety of organizations, representing a wide variety of formal positions.

Structure of the analysis process

The interview data set consists of approximately 3000 pages of transcribed talk. How does one approach such a large mass of text? I read and re-read the data with the intent of letting the data speak for itself. As I had done in my exploration of theory in the first two chapters, I structured the analysis of interviews to three steps, or *encounters*, with the data. The units of analysis had to be rather large-grained in order for meaningful sensemaking to take place during analysis. More importantly, the actual phenomenon analyzed, i.e. the social position of the agent, is also a rather general issue that can be regarded as being embedded in a larger set of interview questions.

In the first encounter with the data, I started out by reading the data with only some of my theoretical framework in place. The result of the first encounter was the creation of a three-dimensional schema for analyzing social positions. In the second encounter, this schema was put into use and descriptions written from the social positions discovered using the schema, while in the third, the social positions were compared, and similarities between them explored, with the aim of giving an overview of social positions in the strategy process.

I held a different mindset in each encounter. In the first encounter, my mindset was *conceptual*, as I tried to discover a categorization to help make sense of the data. In the second, my mindset was *emphatic* (Patton, 1990), as I tried to understand what the individuals responding to different categories were trying to communicate about their

positions. In the third, my mindset was *unifying*, or *delimiting* as I tried to find commonalities in the various positions discovered in the second encounter. The three encounters are illustrated in Figure 7 below.

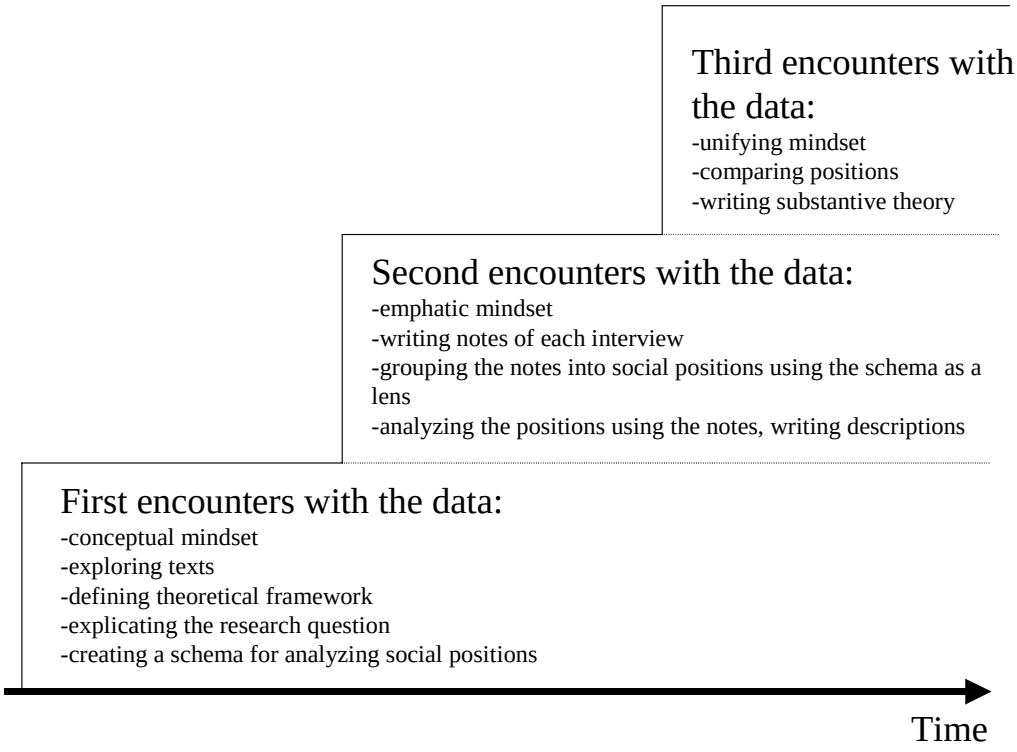


Figure 7. The structure of the analysis process as three encounters with data

Coding

I followed the coding procedure that Glaser & Strauss (1967) refer to as the *constant comparative method* for generating theory. The authors describe their method as consisting of four steps: (1) comparing incidents applying to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, (4) writing the theory. I formulated a three dimensional framework out of a large set of rough codes in the first encounter (steps 1 through 3). I tested the framework in order to understand the data in the second encounter, writing out the results (step 4). I explored the results and categories that had arisen, building a more general model of social positions in the third encounter, writing that one as an end result (steps 1 through 4). In a sense, I carried out the whole coding process twice, arriving at the model explicated in the third encounter.

I treated the texts as having been created by knowledgeable agents, as dictated by the theory of structuration. I attempted to unlock knowledge the agents possessed of their own social positions. The interview texts were read as *accounts* (Harré & Secord, 1972) describing the agent's conception of her social position in the strategy process. The analysis was *narrative* analysis in the sense that statements describing the agent's social position were sought in association for the *reasons* the agents provided. This linking of description of events and their causes is the most basic definition of a narrative, given by Polkinghorne (1988). My narrative analysis approach consisted of finding *reasons* that agents gave for the themes they regard as essential to their social position. I concentrated on identifying recurrent themes (discourses) in each interview text, and structuring the texts as meaningful micro-narratives. In almost every interview, there were themes the interviewee mentioned again and again. The narrative approach did not involve a *structuralist* approach to analysis (e.g. Greimas, 1983), i.e. I did not seek to find any sort of universal plotlines to the interviews aside from this rough microstructure of events and their causes.

The narrative analysis was chosen *instead of discourse analysis*, because I wanted to identify individual accounts of social positions. I was not interested in the ways the agents constructed reality through the use of language, the goal usually set for discourse analysis (Hardy, 2001). Instead, I wanted to treat what the interviewees said as small stories regarding their positions, and compare these stories. Furthermore, the micro-narrative approach I adopted can be contrasted to *content analysis*, at least to the practice of content analysis common today, in which words and expressions are counted and coded (Schwandt, 1997). In an effort of understanding a large-grained concept such as a social position, traditional content analysis would not have helped me to "see the forest from the trees".

To summarize the chain of methodological choices that I made: first of all, a commitment to qualitative research was made by our research team as we chose semi-structured interviews as the data-production method. This was due to the explorative nature of the research – there was not enough prior research to build hypotheses. I made a second commitment as I chose grounded theory as a basis of structuring the analysis process. The reason for this was again the exploratory nature of the topic, as well as the fact that a large mass of interview material could best be utilized using an

iterative approach. A third commitment was made as I chose narrative analysis as the lens through which I read the actual interviews. The primary motivation for this was that, as I read the interviews in the beginning of the iteration, narratives seemed to be the way the data could best be approached.

The coding procedure in the second encounter thus ended in the categorization of the 301 micro-narratives I had written in my notes into 20 social positions, using the schema I developed in the first encounter. In the third encounter I sought out commonalities and differences between the 20 social position descriptions, forming three main categories.

5. A schema for analyzing social positions. First encounters with the data

One of my initial interests with this data was identifying and understanding individuals who were in opposition to the strategy process somehow, individuals I thought were strategic *cynics* (Mantere & Martinsuo, 2000). I started looking for them by looking for negative answers to isolated questions such as "why is this strategic issue important for your organization". When I started reading the complete interview texts, however, I noticed that there were all sorts of reasons for being in opposition regarding strategic issues, many of them *idealistic* rather than cynical. Besides deepening my conception of what cynicism meant, this realization also widened my interest to the whole range of social positions in the strategy process, not just the issue on cynicism. Instead of being a cynic, what did it mean to be a *champion* on the one hand, or a good *citizen* on the other?

I read interview texts as complete, individual accounts. While analyzing the interviews I made individual notes about each interview. I recorded issues the interviewee reported as significant to her social position, as well as the reasons and explanations she provided for these issues. I was initially surprised to notice that most interviewees had a few recurring themes that ran through the whole interview, often related to her social position in some way. I realized I could draw on these themes to build an interpretation of each interview as a micronarrative.

I tried to let the data speak for themselves with few theoretical assumptions, but of course there were certain implicit theoretical interests and positionings that influenced me. *Sensemaking* was the theoretical lens in my masters thesis (Mantere, 2000) and through that work I became aware that an understanding of the strategy process demanded that sensemaking be supplemented with *power* issues. My initial interest in cynicism directed me to issues related to *activity*. I made sense of the three dimensions of influence, sensemaking and activity simultaneously by exploring theory – widening the field outwards from sensemaking and cynicism – and reading the interview texts.

As I read the interviews, I started to write notes. From the onset, I formed rough codes to account for the descriptions of social positions, paying close attention to those recurrent themes that were repeated in each interview. These themes often acted as reasons or 'narrative twists'. I repeatedly went back to the codes, trying to identify commonalities between them, offering possibilities of *delimiting* the number of codes.

Having read about a third of all the 301 interviews, I started to notice that a categorization scheme was starting to appear to order the interviews. I first noticed that my own reflections could be positioned in one of the three theoretical axes in Figure 8 below. These are the three central dimensions to social positions at which I arrived at the end of my theoretical reflections in Chapter 3.

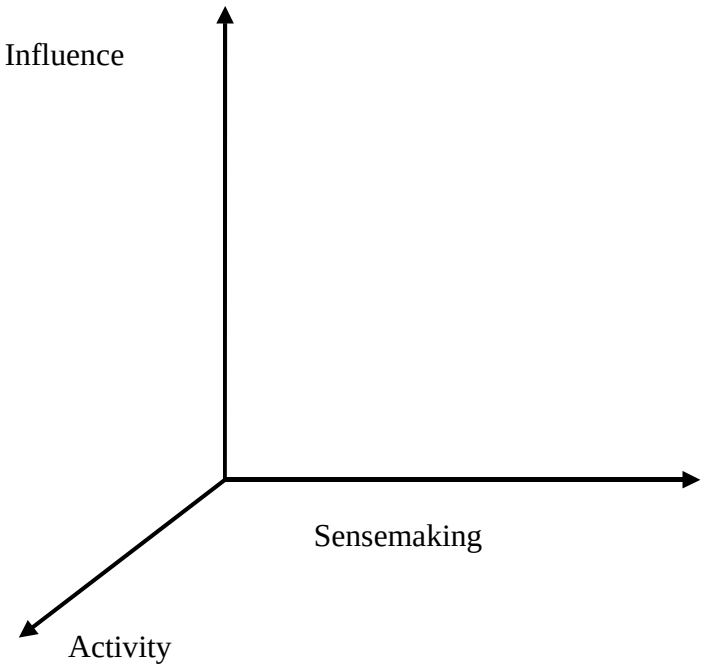


Figure 8. Dimensions for analyzing social positions in strategy processes

Then I noticed that the axes could be divided into three sections each. This happened when I thought about what the individuals were saying about their social positions in the strategy process in terms of the three axes. It then occurred to me that they were essentially either claiming that things were "all right" in the axis, or that there was an *excess* or *scarcity*. I started to think of the axes as personal "spheres" around the individual, which fit well, were too tight or cramped, or were too large.

5.1 The three spheres

The sphere of sensemaking represents the individual's description of her sensemaking as an agent in the strategy process. There are three sections on the axis, "too small", "enough room" and "too large". "Too small" means an account according to which sensemaking of strategy is hindered because there are not enough 'cues' to be extracted, from managerial communication, for example. In essence, this means that the agent reports that she is *not allowed to make sense*. A prototypical account would be one in which a personnel member feels she does not know the direction her organization is taking because it has not been revealed to her level.

> ***(Q1)*** *"Sure, I have heard of [the strategy process]. But I guess… I guess we [the members of my unit] are not valued as much as others in this organization. We are not getting enough information."* [15]

"Too large" means that there are simply too many cues or too little support for interpretation for successful sensemaking. In other words, the individual *has failed to make sense* of strategy or the strategy process.

> ***(Q2)*** *"I am still in a developmental stage [within strategic planning], the field is so wide that all you really see is your own project […]"*

"Enough room" represents a situation in which the agent feels she has managed to form an understanding of strategy, where the sensemaking sphere 'fits her'.

> ***(Q3)*** *"Question: Are you familiar with this [strategy process diagram]?*
>
> *A: Yeah, very well.*
>
> *Question: How so?*
>
> *A: We have gone through it.*
>
> *Question: On the YT-board [cooperation board]?*
>
> *A: Yeah, and also in my own group."*

[15] The quotations were translated to English. I tried my best to maintain the original character of the language. My translations were checked as a part of the language checking of this thesis. The quotations can be found in their original form in Finnish in Appendix 3. While some may feel that this is unnecessary, I want to make my translations transparent to the readers fluent in Finnish and English. I feel this increases the validity of my claims.

The sphere of influence represents the individual's conception of her possibilities of influencing issues she conceives as strategic. This axis stems from the dimension of power that was extracted from theory, as influence can be regarded as a specific form of power, being defined as "the ability to affect another's attitudes, beliefs or behaviors (Huczynski 1996, 6)". "Too small" a sphere of power represents an account in which the agent feels that the organization does not enable her to fulfill her role in the strategy process through carrying out meaningful actions.

> ***(Q4)*** *"Question: Would you like to influence these [strategic objectives]?*
>
> *A: Sure, I would love to. I guess everybody has an opinion of how it [the strategic theme] should manifest itself at our unit, but of course I understand that there is a limit…. Of course you can't have every member of the organization making strategy. But the objectives still come to me pretty much 'given' as they are."*

"Too large" means that the agent feels that she has too much strategic responsibility to bear by herself. In many cases, the agents felt alone with too many decisions to make.

> ***(Q5)*** *"[…] if a problem situation arises, I bet none of us will know where to look for answers […] I hope some guidelines will be written in the next few years at least […]"*

"Enough room" means that she is satisfied with her possibilities of influence.

> ***(Q6)*** *"[…] we have quite a clear framework for action, at least I haven't had any need to argue that it should be otherwise."*

At this point, one theoretical concern has to be addressed. It must be remembered that sensemaking and influence are not separate issues, as was noted in the discussion of the link between power and knowledge (Section 3.3). The reason why they are presented as separate here is because this is a phenomenological account, in which the main emphasis is on the issues addressed by the interviewees. They often speak of these issues as separate. Along the journey, this concern was kept in mind while conducting analyses. For example, if an agent describes a situation in which enough cues are not provided for sensemaking about the organization to succeed, she may not be able to explicate the ways in which she would like to influence the strategy process. This is a situation in which care has to be taken when interpreting the interview text as to whether the agent would have wanted a larger sphere of influence or not.

The sphere of activity consists of three sections, “cynic”, “citizen” and “champion”. A *cynic* is a person who communicates a conviction that it is not worthwhile to influence even one’s own work in order to act as a part of the strategy process (e.g. execute strategy, influence strategy creation).

> ***(Q7)*** *“Sure you can give feedback, tell them that this and this doesn’t work but what then? It won’t do any good. I can tell you right now that there won’t be any real goals for this year, no way.”*

The word ‘cynic’ has its roots in the ancient Greek cynics. The two cynics most often mentioned are Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope. The cynics held individual wisdom to be the highest virtue, and were often known to question and criticize the values of the majority, as well as laws and customs (Copleston, 1962). Cynicism nowadays is not quite what it used to be 2500 years ago. While the ancient cynics were known as relentless critics, the concept of cynicism nowadays has the mark of inherent pessimism and distrust. Dean et al. (1998) have defined organizational cynicism in the modern way, as “… a negative attitude toward one’s employing organization, comprising three dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) a negative affect toward the organization; and (3) tendencies to disparaging and critical behaviors toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect.” Cynicism may be observed in negative feelings, such as frustration and hopelessness, towards strategic changes (Dean et al., 1998, Reichers et al., 1997; Wanous et al., 2000). While cynicism is often attributed a negative bias, many authors concur that cynics may also represent the "voice of conscience" for the organization and, thereby, question the suitability of poor strategic choices in the organizational context (Dean et al., 1998; Cutler, 2000).

A *citizen* communicates a general conviction of acting as a part of the strategy process, but does not offer any reports on influencing the organization in strategic issues transcending her own immediate working sphere.

> ***(Q8)*** *“Question: What motivates you in implementing [a strategic theme]?*
>
> *A: Well, the [shareholders] have set given us… this principle, and if you cannot act according to their wishes, well that’s that […]”*

As noted in the beginning of the section, I wanted to widen the notion of activity from the negative framework of cynics to cover neutral and positive frameworks as well. I

started looking from the interview texts and soon added the notions of *citizen* and *champion* to illustrate other positions towards the organization. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is a topic of a large set of discussions, which are summarized by Podsakoff et al. (2000) to include the following themes: (1) helping behavior, (2) sportsmanship, (3) organizational loyalty, (4) organizational compliance, (5) individual initiative, (6) civic virtue, and (7) self development. In this sense, organizational citizens would seem to represent anything that cynics are not. While the list is a faithful categorization of what has in fact been written about OCB, I wish to narrow it down somewhat for my schema to be able to distinguish role types. I will adopt Bolino's (1999) conception of organizational citizens as "good actors", not "good soldiers". Bolino argues that OCB is present for reasons of impression management affecting behaviors as much as altruistic motives. This reflects well on Goffman (1959) who notes that impression management is one of the main forces mediating social action.

Champions, on the other hand, are people who report on actively trying to influence the larger sphere, e.g. other people's opinions, larger organizational systems, etc. in order to act as strategic agents.

> ***(Q9)*** *"I tend to "wake people up" to notice that there are problems [inhibiting the realization of the strategic theme]. Well, if you put it nicely, that is."*

The notion of strategic *champions* is something that is often present in normative literature on strategic management and leadership. Kotter (1996) emphasizes the need of visionary leaders to engage a group of champions spread out in different parts of the organizations. Hamel (2000) addresses the champions themselves, arguing that no matter at what organizational level or function, anybody can, and should be a strategic *revolutionary*. Strategic champions are people who are actively showing initiative in bringing about changes in the organizations. This corresponds to point (5) in the list of OCB above, yet I wish to draw a line between actively developing one's own work and competencies and seeking to influence the organization on a larger scale, affecting other organizational members as well.

Champions can, in a sense, be regarded as a special subset of organizational citizens. I wish to make this distinction, however, because it was a distinction that arose from the data itself. There was a clear distinction that I started to notice when I was reading

through the interviews. As Bolino would predict, many people portrayed an image of themselves as good citizens performing their duty, but there was a clear distinction between individuals who communicated a passion to change the organizations in issues they regarded as strategic.

I found it illuminating to notice, both in the interview texts and in the literature, that being active and *disagreeing* are orthogonal issues. A champion may disagree with what she regards as official strategy and seek to actively influence the strategy process to make other people see the correct direction – indeed this is what Hamel (2000) is proposing that being a revolutionary is all about. A cynic, on the other hand, may agree with official strategy, but regard it as irrelevant and unworthy of attention. In literature, this distinction has been acknowledged by the distinction of the phenomena of cynicism and *dissent* (Dooley & Fryxell, 1999).

5.2 The schema

The schema for analyzing data is depicted in Figure 9 below. It represents the three spheres of activity, sensemaking and influence, each divided into three subsections as described above. The sphere of activity differs somewhat in its logic from the other two spheres in the sense that the concept activity is something that moves *from* the agent *to* its environment, whereas the influence and sensemaking axes represent a relation to the opposite direction, i.e. how the environment affects the agent. On the activity axis, the middle section does not represent an ideal situation as in the two other axes, but more like a *compliant* situation.

The schema was born at the intersection of two ‘paths’, a path of theoretical reflection with the goal of linking the individual and the organization, and the path of studying the interview texts, trying to understand how the people regard themselves as agents in the strategy process. The theoretical path has been described in the text of the first two chapters.

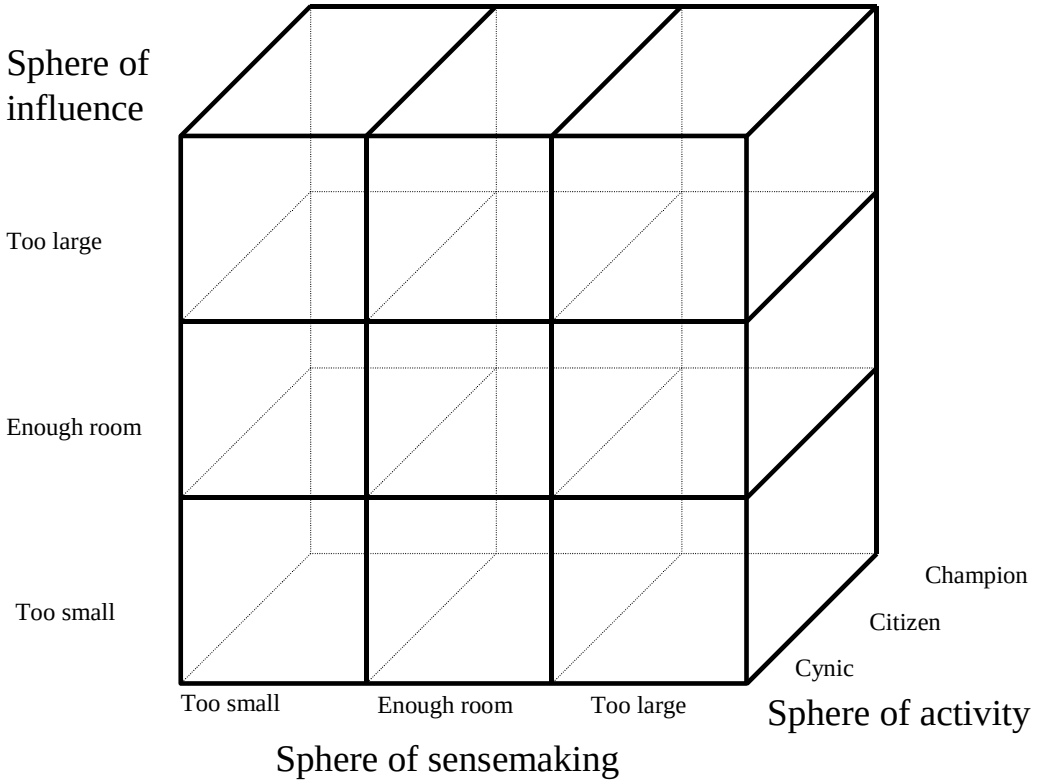


Figure 9. Schema for analyzing social positions in the strategy process

The schema will form the structure for the exposition of different social positions in the next encounter with the data. I have categorized the accounts using the schema and will discuss to length what the different social positions look like.

Secondary coding

Two steps were taken to assure the reliability of my coding. First of all, in a relatively early stage of the process as the schema was still forming, there was a session in the STRADA team in which I asked each of my three researcher colleagues to read three interview texts I had chosen in their totality. We then discussed our impressions of them. I presented the micronarratives I had written and asked my colleagues to comment on them. This brought some unexpected questions, helping me to tighten some of my coding principles. I had to e.g. explicate the “too large” category of sensemaking more fully, because my colleagues had trouble understanding what I meant by it in the context of one of the interviews we discussed.

Since the analysis was done in a grounded theory setting, a typical interrator reliability testing was not possible - I could not expect a second interpreter to follow

me through the whole analysis process. Furthermore, the goodness of grounded theory cannot be measured using standard criteria for validity or realiability, but by using such criteria as coherence, consistency, plausibility, usefulness, and potential for further elaboration (Dougherty, 2002). It should also be noted, that the coding was based on micronarratives, i.e. was not done using any mechanical set of content analysis criteria. With narratives, the interpretive, subjective element is always there, which I think is also one of sources for richness for this approach (Boje, 2001).

The coding of the interviews using the schema in Figure 9 was the only part of the research process in which relatively standardized coding guidelines could be written to facilitate secondary coding. This approach is not problem-free, however. I am somewhat skeptical about the possibility of creating a set of guidelines to fully account all the logic I followed and created during my own coding process. Furthermore, even if I could do that, each secondary coder is bound to interpret the guidelines against her own background. There is a certain element of insight that you develop with a pool of data, specific to that data, as you get deep into the data. Secondary coders with little experience with the data cannot be expected to be able to follow the same line of reasoning.

However, especially because this research is a dissertation, I did see the need to convince the reader about the reliability of my coding, using some sort of secondary coding. Therefore, in a later stage of the research process, when the third encounter was almost written, I conducted a test involving three colleagues as secondary coders.[16] I wrote a set of coding guidelines and asked them to read a number of interviews I had chosen at random[17] for them. The coding guidelines can be found in appendix 2. Since all three of the coders had read my research drafts, I made sure I had not quoted any of the chosen interviews in my drafts.

The coding of each interview involved three orthogonal judgments, i.e. coding the sensemaking, influence and activity spheres. This means that both the secondary coders and I had made thirty (3 judgments / interview, times 10 interviews) judgments

[16] Researchers Petri Aaltonen and Virpi Hämäläinen from the STRADA project both read three interviews. Researcher Jouni Virtaharju from the Laboratory of Work Psychology and Leadership read four interviews.

[17] I utilized the MS Excel random function.

that were compared. The overlap between judgments between the secondary coders and me was 63 % (19 out of 30 judgments).

I reviewed the notes made by each secondary coder and discussed their findings with them. I paid special attention to the discrepancies, asking them why they had made those codings the way they did. The reasons for discrepancies could be related to the following four categories:

1) Bias created by small sample size. The secondary coders reported to comparing the interviews, trying to find variances to help them with coding. Indeed, this was what I did when I was creating the schema and doing the coding. The difference was that I had 301 interviews to compare, while the secondary coders had three or four. The activity category seemed to be especially vulnerable here - it was difficult for the secondary coders to make judgments discerning championship from citizenship, for instance.

2) The coding guidelines did not answer all the questions related to their application. The problem here was that the guidelines were written after I had done the coding. It may not have been able to account for the categories in their richness, causing the guidelines to be a source for misunderstanding.

3) The fuzziness of some interviews in relation to some categories. In some cases I agreed with the secondary coder that the categorization was not clear-cut. These categories were typically such that the interviewee had made very few comments of them, leaving room for speculation.

4) In one judgment (of the 30) I would have been willing to alter my initial judgment after hearing the analysis of the secondary coder. In this case I noted that I had been too eager to interpret what the interviewee had to say, which I felt was not warranted in the end.

The results of the secondary coding showed that that there is some vagueness in some coding instances. The reader is invited to challenge my reasoning as I proceed to give descriptions of the twenty positions in the next chapter. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the secondary coding procedure, however. In a grounded theory setting the interpreter develops a relationship with her data, which cannot be fully mechanized

and operationalized. She develops tacit knowledge, the explication of which is not fully possible in the form of procedural guidelines. I have reviewed all my codings after reading all the 301 interviews, while the secondary coders had to rely on a few interviews and a coding schema, which they had to interpret to a certain degree.

The secondary coding process, especially the discussions with the secondary coders, gave some assurance that the coders generally read the interviews in the same manner. This was due to the finding that the coders noted that there was usually one dimension that arose as most significant in the interview text. This corresponded with my analysis that there was generally one main issue the interviewee wanted to address concerning her social position. It was notable that the level of agreement between the second coders and I was much higher in these ”dominant” categories.

6. Champions, citizens, cynics. Second encounters with the data

After the schema had been built, I had to re-read those interviews I had already read in order to enable me to use the schema to categorize them. I also supplemented my interview notes concerning those interviews. I then went on to read the rest of the approximately 200 interviews, writing notes for each, and then categorizing the notes. I used the notes in association with the interview texts in determining to which of the 27 possible categories in the schema (Figure 9) she belonged. The whole process took me approximately 6 months of part-time work, a rough estimate being 60 days of uninterrupted work. This was the most time-consuming part of the analysis process.

My initial approach for understanding the individual accounts was *emphatic*, as I tried to follow the reasoning of the interviewees. I wrote a *micronarrative* of each interviewee, summarizing the story she had told. My notes were my primary source of data when I started writing accounts of the categories that were supported by data. I used quotations from the original interview texts to make my reasoning more transparent and to enliven the text. To assist both myself and the reader in sensemaking about the data, I also used quite a few tables as *data displays* (Miles & Hubermann, 1984). Some readers may find the number of tables a nuisance, and would argue that only the primary issues should be tabulated. My answer to this is that structuring issues through tabulation will help to keep my own thought process transparent to the reader, which is the one of the cornerstones of credibility in qualitative research (Patton, 1990). Twenty social position types in all were found in the data. The following chapter consists of accounts of all of them. The seven positions that did not find support in the data will be discussed later in the summary sections of champions, citizens and cynics.

As I started to write the position descriptions, it soon became evident that there could not be a unified form in describing the positions, because the interviewees in different positions clearly *addressed different kinds of issues* when describing their social positions. Some interviewees clearly spoke of the kinds of responsibilities they thought they had in the strategy process, the kinds of aspirations they had and the kinds of actions they were involved in, corresponding to a variety of *role descriptions*.

Other interviewees, however, did not discuss actions, responsibilities and aspirations, but instead gave a variety of accounts of why they were prevented from acting in the roles they would have wanted.

As I sought to give a thick enough description of each social position, I had to characterize, within each position, the commonalities and variations between individual accounts. As agents in different positions had different types of factors distinguishing and unifying between them, no 'template' could be formed to act as a background for position descriptions. Some positions could be accounted for by giving a listing of role descriptions, while others had to be described by categorizing obstacles the agents felt they were facing as willing agents in the strategy process.

I realize that the following section may be demanding to read at times because the position descriptions are structured differently. I will try to address the problem by keeping my reasoning as transparent as possible. To contribute to the transparency of the text I will start each position description with a summary of one micronarrative I have written of a member of that position. I will also display the data and my categorization principles in summary tables wherever possible. This is the stage in the thesis where the data will be let to speak in as many situations as possible, opening a variety of paths. I will seek to link the different paths in the third encounter.

Each position description will also be supported by an illustration. I wish to stress at this point that the role of the illustrations is to help to *begin* the sensemaking of the reader, not to end it. While the illustrations are based on interviewee accounts, the reader must be careful not to let the picture narrow down how she reads the text, i.e. not to let the symbolism contained in the picture to overwhelm interpretation.

6.1 Strategic champions

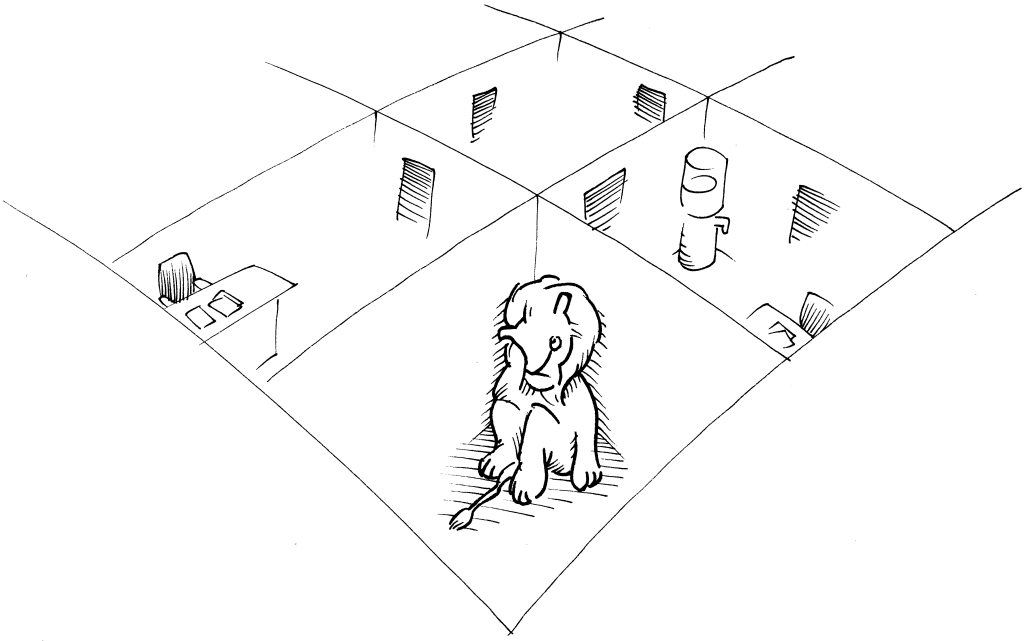
A champion can be defined as 'an ardent defender or supporter of a cause or another person'[18]. The group of strategic champions consists of those individuals who report activity on their part in terms of trying to influence strategic issues larger than their

[18] *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

own immediate sphere of work[19]. A champion is an individual who feels strongly about an issue or a set of issues she regards strategically important and reports taking action in trying to influence the organization to affect those issues. What makes an issue 'strategically important'? In essence, those issues the individual regards as important for the organization at large: for its success, survival or completion of its mission. This definition excludes the promotion of such individualist issues such as individual pay and rewarding. Reports of taking action to develop one's own immediate work do not suffice being a champion either.

My analysis of strategic champions will consist of descriptions of each of the categories identified using the schema formulated in the first encounter (Figure 9).

[19] The concept of the sphere of work is somewhat complicated when reflected against different formal levels in organizational hierarchy. It can be argued that the operative personnel more often have spheres of work that do not include affecting other people and the organizational systems, whereas those of the top management often do include those issues. It is true that top managers are often supposed to be strategic champions. There is, however, no contradiction. The scheme I am offering *does not seek to rule out issues determined by official position*, but to treat them as a part of the whole that the individual social position is composed of.



Excluded champion

Interviewee₁ **is a male technical expert in a sales unit of a firm. He has a work history of over ten years in the organization, with a few years of full time tenure behind him. Confronted with the strategic theme chosen for his organization, he immediately recognizes it. He regards it as a very important because of the potential benefits for the customers, with whom he is in direct contact. He reports trying to come up with ways of implementing the theme in the sales unit, but feels he has not had the formal authority to really influence issues. He is also unsure of the functional relations within the unit, which increases his feeling of powerlessness in implementing the strategic theme. When asked to name issues that he would want to change if he could, he feels at a loss, trying very hard to identify something practical. He ends up dissatisfied with his inability to identify a real change area. The undeniable willingness to champion the strategic theme, coupled with the feeling of a lack of formal influence and knowledge, constitute the essential characteristics of an excluded champion.**

An excluded champion is an individual who feels strongly about an issue she regards strategic, yet feels excluded from the strategy process. She reports having too little information to make sense of strategic issues and is also unhappy about her

possibilities of influencing the strategic issues she would like to influence. This doubled unhappiness has not, however, quenched her reported desire to affect the issues she wants to.

How does she, then, go about in trying to accomplish the things she regards as important? One possible way is by using *unofficial social networks.* This option is open to those champions who have been in the organization for a longer period of time, long enough to form a sufficient number of personal relationships and make use of them by raising issues they regard as important. The unofficial connections these excluded champions described were typically horizontal in organizational hierarchy, but often spanning multiple functional units. People in customer relations could get their message through to people in production, etc.

These individuals often pictured themselves as free agents, having enough experience to know how the organization really works, even if they had been excluded from the *official* strategy process. These individuals often conveyed an image of the "good old times" nearing an end, and also reported feeling their own influence diminishing as newer structures took over the old.

One central demarcation line drawn by these individuals lies between some traditionally valued issue – e.g. caring for the customer or being thorough in one's work – and newer structures and ways of working. The thing that makes these people champions is that they reported a genuine conviction that these traditional issues were central for the organization's survival. As one senior organizational member described her concerns:

> ***(Q10) "****It [the strategy process] does not seem natural to me. I only have some partial image of what is coming next from reading internal information bulletins and such things. Everything is fast nowadays, I think […] Our whole set of values has totally changed […] It is only money making the decisions at every turn".*

Excluded champions who had had time to develop a personal social network for influencing issues had, in effect, created an "unofficial sphere" to replace the too small a sphere they perceived the official strategy process as offering.

Those excluded champions who gave blame for the *opacity* of their organization usually did not have the possibility of building an unofficial sphere. They reported being something like lost ghosts in a complex machine, with few possibilities of

influencing anything and little understanding of the roles they were expected to play in the strategy process. Such was the case of our interviewee$_1$. Some of the interviewees reported that strategic issues are business secrets that are not revealed to people "without clearance". Some felt that nobody took the responsibility of communicating where the organization was going.

A typical reason that such excluded champions had for being champions was a perceived body of *information* they felt they possessed that would, if knowledge of it reached the right person, be beneficial to the organization on a larger level. Some organizational members close to the customer, such as our interviewee$_1$, felt that they had an understanding of what the customer wanted that the decision-makers did not possess. Some even felt that they were more competent in defining objectives for their own work, that they had a more intimate understanding of the possibilities and challenges, than the managers making the decisions. One general message these excluded champions wanted to convey was to "get real", usually directed at decision-makers.

All in all, these excluded information possessors often expressed a conviction that they *should* have more knowledge about the strategy process, both because they felt they needed the knowledge for completing their work successfully, and also because they felt they had something to contribute to the process.

> ***(Q11)*** *"I think I should… or at least I want to know more [about the strategy process] and yes, I think I should have access to more information."*

How did these excluded possessors of information go about trying to get their message heard? Solutions varied from trying to get a foothold on relevant projects, to representing one's viewpoint in as many relevant project group meetings as possible and acting as an expert voice in different contexts. Another possibility was simply "going and telling the manager", often underlined by emotional outbursts, such as described by one junior organizational member:

> ***(Q12)*** *"[…] these balanced scorecards they send us… well, this is the first one I have seen that you can actually take back and tell them that* ***this and this*** *really sucks. Until now we have had scorecards sent to us that were so altogether weird that you could not find one item in them that was connected to the real world…"*

The one connecting factor between these ways of trying to influence the organization in key issues was that no pre-set pathway to a solution existed. The excluded champion in an opaque organization reported having to find her own way, to improvise, or to "use force", e.g. to use powerful rhetoric to twist the arm of one's superior, etc. This is in strict contrast to the senior organizational members who had a stable channel through their informal social networks, discussed earlier in this section. In some cases, the interviewees reported having found no channel yet, yet they expressed a strong conviction to keep trying.

Two general types of excluded champions would seem to have emerged. One is the social class of senior organizational members using their social capital in the form of unofficial networks; the other, the class of members in opaque organizations "ghosts in machines", who feel they have the right and the potential to contribute to the strategy process. The two classes are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of excluded champions

Class	Characteristics	Channel of influencing / championing	Typical message
Senior	Too small official sphere, compensated by a an unofficial sphere	Unofficial social network	E.g. "We are losing our values"
Ghost	Lost in a opaque organization, unconnected to the strategy process	No pre-set channel, seeking a foothold in projects, trying to twist the arm of a superior, emotional outbursts	E.g. "I have valuable information", "get real!"

Characteristics shared by the accounts of all excluded champions include firstly, the emphasis on the marginality of the agent's personal position in the strategy process. Excluded champions often made comments about the stark demarcation between their personal position and the strategy makers, i.e. the top management. Secondly, all excluded champions communicated a conviction that they had something to contribute and thus regarded their marginal position in the strategy process as unjustified.

Abandoned champion

Interviewee$_2$ **is a professional in a large public organization. Her work is heavily customer-oriented, and she feels she has a large amount of freedom in her work. She feels passionate about the strategic theme of her organization, regarding it as a central component of her work. While she is quite well versed with the intricacies of implementing the strategic theme, the overall strategy process seems very far away. On the other hand, she feels that she is not provided with reasonable support from her organization in the form of guidelines on how to implement the strategic theme. She feels as if she were abandoned to cope with her own devices, a solitary decision-maker with too-large issues on her hands. The interviewee is simultaneously passionate about the strategic theme, isolated from the strategy process, and feels she has to make too-tough choices in her work, i.e. has too much power in her hands. This complex condition constitutes the social position I shall call the abandoned champion.**

Interviewee$_2$ was the *only* interviewee to fall under the category of abandoned champion. The abandoned champion is therefore quite a rare condition – even though

multiple individuals with very similar working conditions were interviewed, only one abandoned champion was discovered. The abandoned champion is a position in which a great responsibility is linked to an exclusion from the sphere of official strategy. This indicates a high level of independence in one's work, linked to a high level of professional expertise.

The abandoned champion was an individual who simultaneously felt she has had too little information about strategy and yet bore too great a responsibility over carrying out issues in her work that she deemed responded to strategy. Despite all of this she was trying to bring about fruitful changes in her organization.

The abandoned champion felt that she was unaware of her organization's strategy process, yet strongly echoed its main content in the description of her own goals. She felt that she had not had enough support to carry out the objectives set for her work, and even felt somewhat isolated and undervalued.

She claimed to have no knowledge of the official strategy process of her organization and attributed this lack of knowledge to the notion that nobody had asked her to comment on it. She also reported a lack of time due to the challenging nature of her own work. Yet she felt she had enabled other people to work more efficiently by communicating the need she had encountered among customers, thus bringing about small changes in her organization. The changes she had brought about emphasized the same things emphasized in her organization's strategy.

The abandoned champion felt helpless in many aspects of achieving the objectives set for her work. She felt that the challenges were too great and that she could not have control of all the aspects of her work. Yet she reported having carried out many active attempts to meet the objectives. She felt that her organization's strategy did try to emphasize objectives by giving numeric guidelines, yet failed to do anything else.

> ***(Q13)*** *"I guess I should read through the whole strategy document again. As much as I have read through it, I think it dictates that we should reach [a certain numeric objective]. I don't know how we could do that. How do we find the resources needed?"*

In essence, her complaint went beyond just complaining of a lack of resources and noted a deeper distrust in the whole goal-setting procedure. She felt that there was no real connection between the execution of strategy and the numeric objectives. She

reported that this lack of connection reflected both the management's lack of understanding of the real methods used for executing the strategy and a lack of organizational connection between the goal-setting and the resource allocation processes.

As a result she had no great interest in official strategy statements but worked in bringing about changes she felt fruitful for better execution of strategy by inducing small organizational changes through political maneuvers, and finding new ways of reaching customers.

From the structuration viewpoint (see Figure 3 in Section 3.3), the abandoned champion is an interesting position in which the individual has a *legitimate* position to act as a strategic agent, yet she is excluded from *communication* regarding organizational strategy on the macro level, and little or no organizational interest is centered on providing her with the *facility* to exercise power within the organization.

Discontent champion

Interviewee$_3$ **is a department head and member of a top management team in a public organization. Having served in his organization for a long time, he feels he has a very good hold on the organization's strategy. He feels highly responsible for directing the organization into the right direction. At one point, he even comments that he "should be hanged" if he is not able to bring about the direction he sees as right. Interviewee$_3$ is at odds with the official strategy process of his organization. He feels that the new management trends that have been implemented in the organization are clouding the real strategic issues, as every member of the organization is let to have her say in strategic matters. The top management team should sit down for a few days to decide on organizational strategy and that's that. The problem is that there is dissent in the top management team on whether this is the right way to handle the strategy process. Interviewee$_3$ has particular problems with one of his colleagues in the top management team who promotes a more participatory approach to strategy. The feeling of a good understanding of strategy, a feeling of responsibility for promoting the right strategy for one's organization, combined with the feeling of lacking control in strategic matters, is what characterizes a discontent champion.**

The discontent champion has a clear issue she regards as strategic she would wish to change, yet is unable to do so since her sphere of influence is too small. The

discontent champions in the interview text represented a variety of job descriptions, and so did the issues they wished to influence.

A remarkable issue concerning the discontent champion is her willingness to give *reasons* for her *successfully having made sense* of the strategy. This is a specific feature of this social position, indicating that the discontent champion regarded her understanding of strategy as noteworthy. The reasons given involved referring to an elite position of some sort: being chosen to a planning group, being granted access to volatile strategic information after a recent promotion, having a strategically significant position, being the workers' union representative on a management board. Some discontent champions reported actively searching for information in order to make sense of organizational strategy.

> ***(Q14)*** *"The policy of sharing information in this organization is rather hysterical… I read [the strategy] last week, I was granted access to read it on the Intranet because I am [names an official title] now…"*

Every discontent champion had a clear issue she regarded as strategic and wished to influence. Every discontent champion also reported having to face a major obstacle in her attempts of influencing the organization, resulting in her regarding her sphere of influence as too small. The accounts given by discontent champions centered on the discussion of these obstacles. I will therefore use the different obstacles to categorize the discontent champions.

The first type of obstacles described was related to difficulties in influencing *other functional units* in the organization. Many discontent champions facing this obstacle were employed in various support functions and had a major objective of disseminating a strategic theme throughout the organization. The problems they described were related to a formal role with large amounts of responsibility and little formal authority. As one planning officer characterized the lack of conviction among the members of an operative organizational unit:

> ***(Q15)*** *"I think that they are so busy that they just notice some of the zillion messages that they receive. I guess they don't think about them as being important because they disregard them so many times, which is unfortunate. Or in some cases they may note the message and even try to implement it, but […] they don't know how. And they don't have that much time to really think about the issue, or maybe they just don't care…they think that one can get by without trying."*

The problem of borderlines between organizational units did not only affect discontent champions in support positions, however. Some discontent champions had strategic objectives that depended on collaboration between functional units. The tools the discontent champions reported using in overcoming this gap were often related to unofficial communication and political maneuvers.

The second type of obstacles the discontent champions were faced with was related to *organizational culture*. One middle manager regarded the organization as old fashioned and stagnant, unable to face the new economy, a notion that he regarded as a central issue for his organization's survival. One top manager regarded the organization under his direct authority to be composed of units with too much independence for centrally guided strategic action. One planning officer in an organizational unit felt that while he had enough influence over strategic planning in his own unit, other functional units, the collaboration of which he needed to reach his objectives, were culturally corrupt. A sales manager in one organization saw the strategic value of a change in organizational structure, yet criticized the organizational bureaucracy for slowing the change process down. The functional obstacle could also transcend the organization. In an organization trying to execute an *imposed strategy* (Mintzberg, 1995), one secretary noted that nobody within the organization could influence strategy, but that it was dictated from outside the organization.

On the other hand, stagnation and bureaucracy were not the only cultural obstacles that were criticized. Interviewee$_3$ regarded the newer management trends taking over the organization from more traditional management principles as a harmful phenomenon. He reported fighting a futile war over the issue for many years. He perceived, for example, the extension of the discussion about strategy to cover employees as unnecessary and even harmful.

> ***(Q16)*** *"[…] everybody is being promised everything, an atmosphere is created saying "you have had representation, so you have had possibilities to influence [strategy]." If we really want to have effective planning, which is connected to strategy… well that isn't a job for the layman. We will be needing the best boys and girls who are regarded as future promises and resources, from within the organization."*

The third type of obstacle that discontent champions were faced with related to decision-making *hierarchy*. The obstacle of hierarchy was typically faced by champions who wanted to influence the strategy process in a more continuous

fashion, bringing feedback from customers, questioning practices, giving development ideas about products, etc. They did not feel that their attempts were taken seriously - typically by their superiors. One interesting case was that of the representative of a workers' union who felt that neither the employees she represented were willing to implement a strategic issue she regarded as important, nor did the management show enough leadership to address the issue convincingly. The common notion of the discontent champions facing a hierarchy gap was that they reported different amounts of fatigue caused by continuously trying. Some seemed to be on the verge of becoming cynics because they felt this had all amounted to nothing, while others seemed to hold on, no matter what.

> ***(Q17)*** *"[…] they say: "thanks for the feedback", but you can read "no more feedback" between the lines. But that is a situation in which you have to give more feedback, of course. There has to be something wrong when one asks for feedback but cannot handle criticism. But what is it that is wrong? That's a good question. I would have to say 'uncertainty'."*

The fourth type of obstacle facing discontent champions involved the large organizational size and the difficulties of influencing strategy on a large organizational level. This obstacle usually involved the solution of "thinking big, acting small". The discontent champions envisioned their organizational units as "small businesses with entrepreneurial spirit" who sought to coexist peacefully with the mother organization. They also reported an interest in influencing the mother organization's strategy process to account for "real problems", through seeking a foothold in committees, projects, etc.

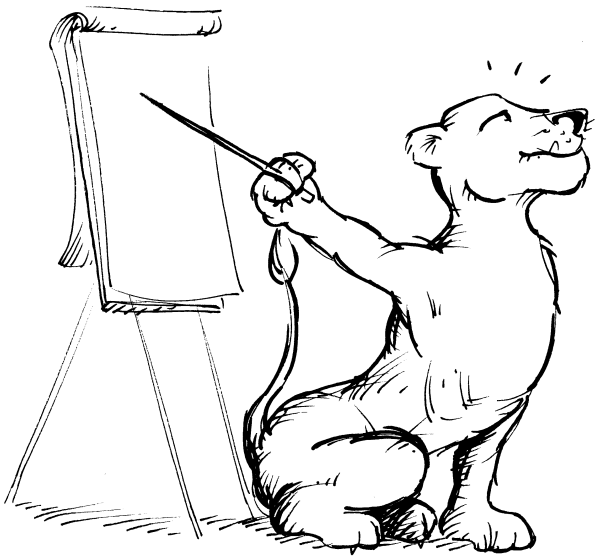
> ***(Q18)*** *"I think an organization this big is just stupid. I actually once said to [the manager of her unit] that I would like to have a training course on entrepreneurship for our unit, what internal entrepreneurship really means. So that we would take this work as we would if we were working in our own firm. How differently people would do their jobs if they were working like that."*

The discontent champion is an agent who feels that she has made sense of her organization's strategy, but faces an obstacle in trying to influence it. The obstacles are summarized in the table below (Table 7).

Table 7. Summary of obstacles faced by discontent champions

Obstacle	Issues	Solutions
Unit borders	Difficulties in influencing other organizational units, difficulties in collaboration between units	Political maneuvers, unofficial communication
Culture	Difficulties in achieving change in stagnated culture, difficulties with too great a value on management trends in culture	Various
Hierarchy	Difficulties in getting ideas across	Trying again with the risk of fatigue
Size	Difficulties in influencing a large organization's strategy process	Resorting to entrepreneurial actions on the micro level, getting a foothold in committees, etc.

All in all, the discontent champion is an agent on a mission: she has made sense of the strategy and is *therefore* concerned about the issues she is advocating. This narrative quality of sensemaking preceding a willingness to influence an issue is clearly present in the interview text. This seeming linearity is a typical quality of *narrative knowing* (Polkinghorne 1988). The order in which sensemaking precedes championing is in some cases described as temporal/causal ("I have access to strategic information, now I know what I wish to influence"), justificatory in some ("I have spent ten years making strategies, I can judge for myself what is important"), and deontological in some ("my being the union representative in the executive board is a show of trust from my voters, I need to make sense of the strategy in order to be able to influence the issues they regard as important").



Empowered champion

Interviewee$_4$ **is a logistics specialist in a large firm. She feels she is quite well versed in organizational strategy in general and the strategic theme in particular. This is due to what she refers to as her "curious nature". She has explored the company intranet for strategy documents and discussed her findings with a variety of colleagues and superiors. She understands that in a large organization it is hard to reach everybody through official communication and thus the individual has quite a responsibility to find out about issues herself. She regards her role as an implementer of the strategic theme, but goes beyond her immediate working sphere by "nosing around", asking questions and making suggestions. She is fairly enthusiastic about implementing the strategic theme and feels both her understanding of strategy and ability to exert influence are good enough. Interviewee$_4$ represents one variety of empowered champions.**

The intuitive definition of a person regarded as a strategic champion is somebody who brings about strategic changes in the organization. Empowered champions are people who *can* bring about those changes without major intrusions. The interviewees falling into the category of empowered champions constituted a large and varied class. I

suspect few readers will be surprised to know that most of the top managers interviewed regarded themselves as belonging to this category.

Since there is no fundamental "pebble under the mattress" of the empowered champion, they can most fruitfully be characterized not by the issues they wish to champion (these are quite varied), but by the *roles* they wish to see themselves playing in the strategy process.

The *prophet* is an empowered champion who feels her main function is to convey a clear strategic content to her fellow organizational members. This is reflected in the rhetoric she uses in the interview situation. Prophets tend to distance their own roles from their talk altogether, speaking on behalf of the organization, using normative rather than descriptive language. Prophets are so intent on changing people's attitudes that they seem to want to convince even the interviewer that they are right. The language in their interview texts is thick with phraseology directed to capture the affect of the listener.

> ***(Q19)*** *"We have been working hard on defining [the strategy], doing the physical work and now we need sparring. But the implementation, it has to do with training, ensuring commitment, making sure that the issue has been properly understood. We need to ensure an understanding to reach a better tomorrow."*

The *strategist* is a role bearing the similarity with the prophet in the sense that she emphasizes issues, making her personal position almost disappear. Whereas the emphasis of the prophet is on emotional convincing, the strategist is an analyst, giving fact-like statements about the organization and its environment. Whereas the prophet's rhetoric is mainly collectivist ("we must") and idealist ("build a better tomorrow"), the strategist employs naturalist and realist rhetoric (Lindstead, 2001).

The *teacher* has some similarities with the prophet, but she is somewhat more pragmatic in her goals. In the interview text acquired from a teacher, the main narrative is not about the issues themselves but more about the responsibility of making people realize that strategic issues are important. While most teachers had a group of subordinates as "pupils", there were some personnel members who had found a strategic content, which they actively promoted to their *peers* in a manner basically indistinguishable from their managerial counterparts.

As the strategies of real life teachers are varied, so were those of the strategic teachers, some of whom placed an emphasis on two-way discussions, some reported employing a stricter set of speech acts (e.g. commands, reprimands), while some reported almost a behaviorist stance.

> ***(Q20)*** *"I have asked my [subordinates] to quote [a group of official strategic slogans] and tell me what they're about. The one who has managed to do this first has received a voucher of 100 marks [approximately 17 €]."*

Some empowered champions showed an attitude towards their subordinates comparable to that of a *parent* to a child. This attitude was emphasized in some accounts by a genuine concern for the fates of the subordinates under the empowered champion's authority. In others, a more belittling stance was emphasized. The communication of strategy and its adoption by subordinates was regarded as a task that reflected the best interests of the subordinates, whether they realized this or not.

> ***(Q21)*** *"Well, the first thing I have tried [to communicate] in this […] change situation is that the best life insurance for any of us is that we must do our job as well as we can, and this is directly connected to [a strategic content][…] the [strategic content] is just the thing […] and of course the motivation to do one's job as well as one can."*

Other empowered champions who were managers regarded themselves more as *facilitators* than teachers or prophets. They saw themselves as acting in a kind of a service function toward their subordinates, answering questions about the organization's direction, helping their work by creating structures and removing obstacles, helping the willing subordinates to regard themselves as active parts of the organization. The methods they emphasized dealt expressly with two-way interaction with the subordinates, discussions, being accessible.

The facilitator role was not only adopted by managers, but also by those empowered champions acting as *strategic support*. They were typically agents employed in support functions (communication, quality control, etc.) or assistants to top managers in strategic issues. They regarded their main function to be the provision of new input to strategic decision makers, or to provide services and ways of working to facilitate the adoption of strategy in different parts of the organization. The interviews of such support champions were often somewhat critical towards the state of the strategy process at the moment of the interview, yet the personal responsibility of the agent of the criticized issues was also emphasized. It was as if they regarded the strategy

process to be their concern and therefore the posed critique was directed to themselves as much as anybody else.

The *knight in shining armor* is an empowered champion who is championing for a certain issue, much like the prophet. Unlike the prophet though, the knight emphasizes her own role in fighting the battle, i.e. the discussion is on the knight's deeds and plans as much as on the championed issue. The battle is not simply about influencing the attitudes of certain people, but righting injustices in the culture, structure and systems.

> ***(Q22)*** *"The person who preceded me as the head of this department thought he was the expert on every field. I try to divide the responsibility to different people in such a way that it will be easy to find a replacement to every expert. When I get this done in my department, the next step will be to implement the system in the [whole organization]."*

The position of the empowered champion often included the position of an *insider* of some sort. Being an insider proved to be quite a varied position in itself. Some insiders associated their position with being in a *privileged* position of some sort: having the ear of one's superior, being a member in a special group, being given access to restricted information about strategy, being given special training by the organization, etc. On the other hand, being an insider seemed to indicate being a *special person* in some other accounts: being specially trained, being superior to others in terms of ingenuity, strategic vision or daring, etc.

> ***(Q23)*** *"You cannot make strategy in away that forty people believe in it in the beginning. Those strategies are simply talk, and not worth executing. A situation like that does not exist. It suffices that me and a couple of others believe in the strategy. That is a situation I am after. Then you get one success and the others will start believing in it."*

It was notable that this attitude of superiority was most often backed by accounts of having earned the top management's trust, implying that the attitude was typically portrayed by middle managers. Some insiders went quite a long way in portraying a cynical position towards others in organizations. This was followed either by expressions of despair or accounts of manipulating others to reach desirable goals. The manipulation could take form in Machiavellian politics or simple rewarding and punishing. As an exact counterpart to the superior position, there was a group of humble top managers who felt that they themselves were the ones to blame if the

strategy process was not successful, and even expressed doubt about their ability to communicate strategy as well as it should be communicated.

A position often interlinked with insiders is the position of *venerability*. A venerable champion regarded herself as a strategic resource because of her experience. Venerable champions typically reported that their expertise was often required in strategic issues and some even reported a willingness to rid themselves of some of the duties associated. Many venerable champions emphasized that strategic change is a very gradual process and that instead of quick solutions the emphasis should be placed on gradual development work.

Many of the empowered champion roles described thus far reflect the strong assumption that the strategic issues championed originated from the champions themselves. This was not the case in all empowered champion roles, especially those to found on lower organizational levels. In many cases, the strategic issues the champions worked hard to implement by influencing the organization nearby were officially sanctioned, pre-set issues the champions had adopted as important.

A good sport is a role in which the agent gives an account of herself as an active follower of organizational policy. A good sport uses her own initiative to influence others to follow suit and finds issues in her local organization that can be made to better serve the official strategy process. The attitude of a good sport is typically supportive of one's superiors, as well as rather uncritical towards official policy. As one middle manager stated:

> ***(Q24)*** *"They [my subordinates] are committed well enough to the execution of what is decided together, and also to the commands that we are given from above… in our unit things generally get done the way we are told to do them."*

Some empowered champions were so enamored with their organization that they could be labeled as *devout believers* in the organization and its strategy process. They were not simply in agreement with strategy because that was what was expected of them, but they were "in love" with their organization, i.e. regarded the organizational identity as something very attractive. The devout believer is somewhat similar to Schultz's (1991) definition of political ministry officials' acting as *disciples* to a political minister, yet the believers here do not have a clear teacher/master they would have referred to.

The *free agent* is the final empowered champion role I discovered. This is the role performed by our interviewee$_4$. The role is characterized by the agent's formal position not being connected to organizational strategy in any pre-set way, but the agent herself gives an account of building all kinds of channels through which she has managed to make sense of the strategy as well as influence issues accordingly. One shared characteristic common to all free agents is that they were members of large organizations, in which the organizational strategy process seemed rather far away to many. As interviewee$_4$ explained:

> ***(Q25)*** *"I actually got acquainted with these [strategy process diagrams] by adventuring on the intranet. But I haven't really seen these in any ready-made information sessions I have been to, but have just dug for information myself… This organization is quite big and it's therefore good to have all kinds of contacts and networks and so on… and it's good to have a curious character like mine, because by chatting and asking around one can find out about a lot of things."*

The empowered strategic champion is a social position in which the agent can think (Mintzberg, 1994) and act (Eccles & Nohria, 1992) strategically without encountering major obstacles. Empowered champions act in a variety of different roles and while most managerial interviewees were located in this position, middle managers and personnel members were also identified among their ranks. All in all, being located in this position would seem to implicate a formal leadership position of some sort. The roles and their common associations with formal positions are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of roles for empowered champions

Role	Characteristics	Commonly associated formal position
Prophet	Emphasis on the importance of key issues, convincing people	Top management
Strategist	Emphasis on stating facts	Top & middle management
Teacher	Emphasis on assuring adoption of strategically important issues	Middle & top management
Parent	Responsibility for subordinates	Middle & top management
Facilitator	Helping others with strategy	Management, support positions
Knight in shining armor	Changing a key issue	All
Insider	Having a privileged position / being a significant resource	Middle management
Venerable	Sharing one's experiences, offering insight	All
Good sport	Putting one's energy into advancing official policies	Middle management, personnel
Devout believer	Being in love with one's organization	Middle management, personnel
Free agent	Finding one's own channels in a large organization	Personnel, middle management

Many of these roles, no doubt, seem attractive ways of positioning oneself in the strategy process. I wish to strongly contest a view that regards the empowered champions as the only relevant type of strategic resources, however. Indeed, one of the few points I want to make in this thesis with explicitly normative connotations is that there are people in the organizations who are ignored as the strategic resources they are.

Champion under stress

Interviewee$_5$ **is a middle manager in a large public organization. He is responsible for strategy implementation in his unit. The unit's working force consists of highly expert professionals, who have very little time for discussing strategic issues. Interviewee$_5$ regards the strategic theme as a crucial issue, and is motivated in promoting it in his organization. Having a long work history in his organization he feels he has a good grasp of the organization's strategy process. The problem is that he understands on the one hand that his subordinates do not take interest in strategic issues, resources being as limited as they are, while, on the other hand, his attempts to get more resources for implementing the strategic theme have not been supported by the strategy process, which he regards as rigid and uncompromising. Interviewee$_5$ feels he is being asked too much with too little support from both below and above. This notion of too great a responsibility, coupled with a genuine willingness to promote strategic issues if given the chance, is what characterizes a champion under stress.**

The champion under stress is an individual who feels she has made sense of the strategy, and feels that the burden of responsibility she has to bear is too great. There is a similarity between the champion under stress and the *discontent champion*, but the two classes are not identical. Whereas the discontent champion feels that there is an obstacle preventing her from influencing issues she deems strategically important,

the champion under stress feels that *there are simply too many expectations* of her influencing issues. Yet, as the discontent champion tries to overcome the obstacle, the champion under stress seeks to fulfill the strategic expectations.

While there are no clear-cut obstacles to be found for champions under stress, narrative analysis does help to identify issues the champions under stress report as *sources* for their spheres of influence being too large, describing their *conditions*.

Some champions under stress reported suffering from *lack of support* of various kinds. Some reported organizational *decision making* not showing enough conviction to support the agent in her task of influencing strategic issues. Agents giving such accounts often reported that there was "too much talking and too little walking".

> ***(Q26)*** *They [strategy statements] are just rhetoric designed for building an enthusiastic atmosphere. You have to think for yourself about what you actually do and it is really rare to get some real input on* ***how*** *to do things better […] We have to think of the better ways of doing things ourselves. Sure, our objectives are dictated from above […] But real, implementable actions, no way…*

Another form of reported lack of support was directed towards the *organization structure*. Some champions under stress criticized the design of the organizational structure as blocking them from accomplishing those strategic actions they were supposed to carry out. One such object of criticism was a matrix organization, which simultaneously placed a great responsibility on a top manager, yet did not provide the legitimate means to carry out the strategic tasks.

> ***(Q27)*** *"The top management on a whole is committed well enough [to strategy implementation], the problem is the middle management. They are like little kings in their small lagoons. They seem to be thinking, "let the guys in the headquarters hassle all they want, I will go on doing the things I've been doing all along." This phenomenon is one significant problem. The commitment of the personnel level is a smaller problem, they are more willing to change."*

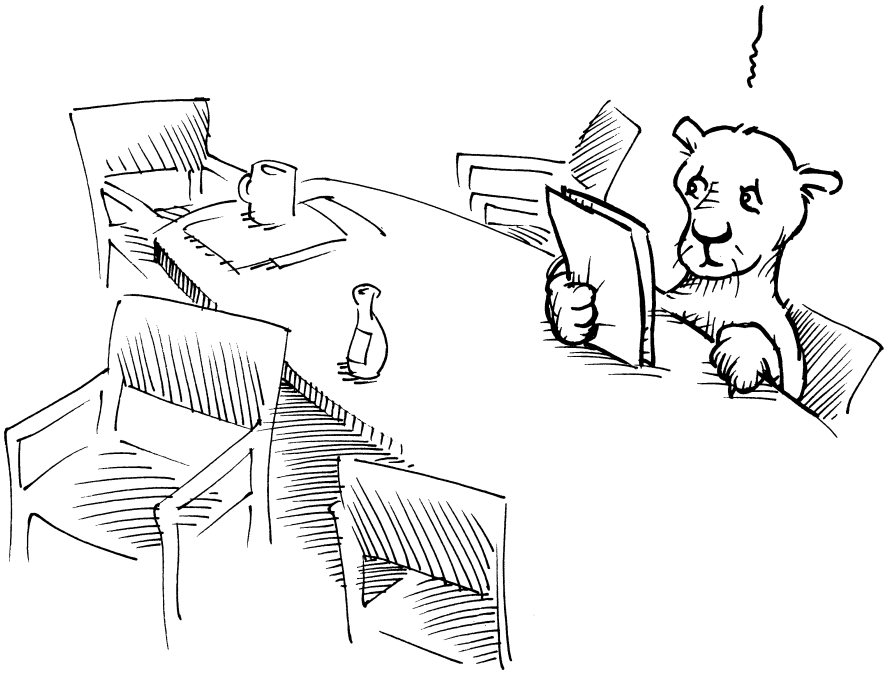
Some middle managers, on the other hand, felt that they had been "caught between a rock and the hard place", as was the case of our interviewee$_5$. They felt they did not receive the support they needed from either their *superiors* or *subordinates.* Interviewee$_5$ reported feeling frustrated because he felt employee level participation was the best way to adopt strategic ideas, yet his subordinates felt participation as "extra work" in their already too tight schedules.

Not all champions under stress reported feeling an external lack of support, however. Some were unsure of their own *capabilities* of carrying out those strategic actions they were expected to. Some managers, for example, felt they did not have the necessary leadership competencies to facilitate the adoption of strategy among their subordinates.

To summarize, champions under stress felt discontent with the size of their sphere of influence in the sense of "having too big shoes to fill". Most reasons reported to account for this situation were external, yet some champions were simply critical of the current status of their relevant competencies. The reasons are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of conditions for champions under stress

Condition	Characteristics	Origin
Lack of support	From decision-makers, from organizational structure	External
Between a rock the hard place	E.g. lack of support from both subordinates and superiors (middle management)	External
Critical of own capabilities	E.g. whether has the leadership qualities to facilitate adoption	Internal



Disregarded champion

Interviewee$_6$ **is an operative employee in a product development team in a large firm. She regards the strategic theme as a central issue, being motivated to implement it as well as she can because of the benefits the theme brings to the customers. She feels that she does not have a grip on the organizational strategy process, because she does not have "the brass on the collar", i.e. the official position warranting access to information. On the other hand, she feels that her team is being bombarded with strategic information, but the information is so diluted, that no strategic direction can be inferred from it. While she is enthusiastic about developing organizational systems to better facilitate the strategic theme, she feels disregarded as a strategic agent. Nobody seems to expect much from her in terms of strategic action.**

The disregarded champion is in a sense an opposite of the abandoned champion. Whereas the abandoned champion is left to her own devices with few cues to make sense of the strategy, the disregarded champion is given a load of information about strategy, with little expectation of any strategic action on her part. Disregarded

champions are active in influencing issues they regard as strategic, however, and would like to make sense of the strategy on a larger organizational scale than just the sphere of their own work.

The disregarded champions regarded strategy as they had encountered it, as a phenomenon with too many bits of information for successful sensemaking. Moreover, the failure of sensemaking was reported as the main inhibitor of the ability of these champions to influencing strategic issues. This notion reflects well the theory, as authors on power as distinct as Lukes and Foucault have identified the linkage between power and knowledge. If an individual does not have the knowledge of an institution, she will have little chance of influencing that institution the way she would like - furthermore, she may not even have had the possibility of forming a conception as to what she would like to influence.

As the source of the problem lies in sensemaking, the major perspective to analyzing the differences between disregarded champions should be found in the problems the champions associated with strategic sensemaking. The *content* of strategy was one identified problem. Some disregarded champions reported that the strategy was so far from everyday life on a conceptual level that it was impossible to make sense of how the strategy should be transformed into everyday actions. This meant that the strategy was either regarded as too abstract or even unpractical.

> ***(Q28)*** *"It [a strategic theme] is a terribly difficult issue – wide-ranging and difficult."*

Some disregarded champions noted that there were obvious inconsistencies in how certain strategies should be interpreted. This issue often seemed to be linked with a strategy that was *imposed*, i.e. dictated from outside the organization.

Many of the disregarded champions, such as our interviewee$_6$, who criticized the content of strategy for not making sense also reported suffering from a *lack of facilitation* of strategic sensemaking. This critique was typically attributed to the superiors of the interviewee, either the top or the middle management, depending on the interviewee's position. The interviewees noted that their superiors did not spend enough time explaining what the strategy meant for individuals, and what they should do differently in their work activities. Some interviewees even criticized their superiors for not believing in the strategy they were supposed to communicate.

> ***(Q29)*** *"Our team manager has informed us of our organization's strategies. He has gone to these [strategy sessions] and then explained it to us in his own words, backed up by 50 pages of Power Point slides – here is our strategy… I think the problem was that our manager really did not take it very seriously himself. If you present strategies backed up by that attitude, you end up saying that "they made this strategy and you can make the most of it if you want to". On the receiving end, you really cannot end up taking strategy very seriously… you end up thinking that making strategies is just a way of killing time for those who make them…"*

Some disregarded champions reported that they simply were too busy in their everyday work activities to make sense of all the information about strategy. They reported that they would have liked to influence more issues and be more "on top of" where the organization was heading, but claimed that there simply was too little time to spend on strategy. This did not mean, however, that they were contented to carry out only their own work activities, but took part in a variety of activities they regarded as strategic, but under a "layer of fog" they would have wanted to avoid.

The notion of being too busy might on first glance seem a question of setting priorities, yet the disregarded champions reported that the content of their work did not allow for immersion into strategic issues. Given some thought, this notion of being too busy is a typical factor linking power and knowledge. The blockages to successful sensemaking that the disregarded champions reported are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Summary of disregarded champions

Blockage	Characteristics
Strategy content	Abstract/separated from practice, inconsistent
Facilitation of sensemaking	Superiors not spending enough time to explain what strategy means, lack of faith in strategy from the part of superiors
Lacking time resource	Too busy to immerse oneself in strategy as deeply as one would want

Puzzled champion

Interviewee$_7$ **is a top manager and head of a large unit in a large firm. He emphasizes his role as a leader and promoter of organizational strategy and the strategic theme among his unit's employees. He relates the strategic theme to a general transitional stage of the organization and regards himself as one of its architects. He regards communication as one of his main tools in strategy implementation. When asked about his perception of the realization of the strategic theme at the current moment, however, he falls silent. He notes that he simply does not have the knowledge of how the theme has actually been realized on the grassroots level. On the other hand, he notes, maybe he is not supposed to know this. He has subordinates who he trusts with the details of implementation. In a complex organization there are areas that are likely to stay from his gaze in the shadow areas. He has to lead the change in a state of partial uncertainty.**

The puzzled champion is an agent who feels that her sensemaking task is too complex, due to there being too many cues from which no sensible conception can be constructed. The puzzled champion is distinguished from the *disregarded champion* by the simple notion that the puzzled champion does not regard her puzzlement to be a source of disempowerment. She does not feel that her chances of influencing strategic issues are insufficient. The reasons distinguishing the two types can be understood by looking at the reasons the puzzled champions identified from the interviews reported the failure of their sensemaking.

The overall most typical reason given was *complexity*. Many puzzled champions reported that some aspect of the strategy process was simply too complex to comprehend fully. There were a variety of aspects of the strategy process that the complexity was attributed to. The *environment* was one typical source of complexity especially emphasized by those puzzled champions who were intimately connected with the creation of strategy, i.e. the top managers. These puzzled champions reported to having no clear-cut answers to strategic questions, because there was, for example, "no way of predicting what the future will hold for our business", where the legislation would go, etc. A major environmental complexity issue reported was posed by the customers.

> ***(Q30)*** *"If we had at our disposal information of a different kind, concerning the person, what she is like and what kinds of things she does, we might be able to make use of that information to think about, what kinds of things would really benefit that client. Our information systems could work a bit better to facilitate that kind of activity."*

While the environment is an external source attributed to strategy formation, many puzzled champions also reported *internal* sources of complexity affecting the strategy process, especially strategy implementation. A common way of looking at internal complexity was the difficulty of linking the micro level plans and activities with the organizational-level strategy. Some interviewees noted that the organization itself was simply too complex for a single agent to form a coherent understanding of how strategic issues get implemented. While many did regard this as a problem of sorts, they did not accuse this phenomenon of "robbing" them of their possibility of acting as strategic agents, but, rather, regarded this as quite a natural phenomenon.

> ***(Q31)*** *"One problem we are faced with is that it is hard to form an understanding of how the strategies of the different parts of the process form a coherent whole. This is probably linked to the fact that our whole strategy process is a very parallel process and this can lead to a lot of inconsistencies taking place between different strategies. I guess this could be one area that should be developed…. how we could link those parts together more easily, how it would be easier to get the information required and how to get knowledge about strategy more easily accessible."*

Another way of looking at internal complexity was reported by top managers responsible for the implementation of organizational strategies in their own units, such as our interviewee$_7$. These puzzled champions reported not having exact knowledge as to how the strategy was implemented. Some of them regarded this as natural – they trusted the subordinates responsible for implementing their respective

areas and therefore did not even need to know all the details. As our interviewee$_7$ put it:

> ***(Q32)*** *"Sure I can influence them [the strategic objectives], because I am the one who sets them. That's not the interesting question. The interesting question should be posed to X [a direct subordinate, name withdrawn], whether she has gotten enough support. One might say maybe not, that she has been forced to do a whole lot of construction work, but she is a strong person, she does it nonetheless. I just try to open doors for her."*

Aside from internal and external complexity, there were other reasons the puzzled champions reported as sources for their puzzlement. The *conceptual apparatus* of strategy, i.e. the *language of strategy* was one major source of puzzlement. Many champions did not feel comfortable discussing organizational issues in a strategy framework, feeling that the terms used were uncomfortable, unnecessarily grandiose, etc. This resulted in hesitation with interview questions concerning the strategy process.

> ***(Q33)*** *"Question: How do you communicate strategies?*
>
> *Answer: Strategies…*
>
> *Question: Or how do you communicate strategy in general, you could say…*
>
> *Answer: How do I communicate [the organization's] strategy… I don't know whether I communicate much else apart from saying that [the organization] made a strategy and… Well, if you think about it, it's quite far away, the [organization]-level, you know. You talk more of the strategy of your own unit…"*

Some puzzled champions went further and noted that the *definitions* given for strategic concepts were somewhat limited. They expressed a need for more thoroughness in definitions to facilitate sensemaking.

> ***(Q34)*** *"I try to translate what I have been told from above, because that stuff is more or less management jargon. Of course I know well enough that those words have been thought over time and time again […] I have circulated [the strategy documents] in my teams, so that anybody who is interested can read them, but I haven't demanded that anybody reads them. I pick issues that concern us from the text. I have asked my team managers to read the documents and pick issues in a similar manner […] Most of all I think of my role as a translator.*
>
> *Question: Is it easy being a translator?*
>
> *Answer: Of course it's not easy. When we were making our marketing strategy, I had to read it through quite a few times and we went through it a number of times, before we started realizing what was beneath it all. You had seen some of those things six years ago. Now I know what they mean. But if they changed them, they would typically just give the paper to us middle managers and explain it once. After that, you are supposed*

> *to distribute information and tell people what [the strategy] means. That takes a whole lot of thinking. It just doesn't happen… The way I see it, if we the middle management don't understand them, we can be quite a block in the flow of information. None of our subordinates will understand it if we don't."*

Some puzzled champions responsible for implementation were puzzled by how they could *motivate* other agents in the organization, especially their subordinates. They reported having difficulties with convincing people, and were somewhat at odds with how to do this. The puzzled champions did not report this as an issue of a lack of influence, but more like an issue of *figuring out the right way* to motivate people. That is, puzzled champions regarded the motivational issue as an intellectual challenge.

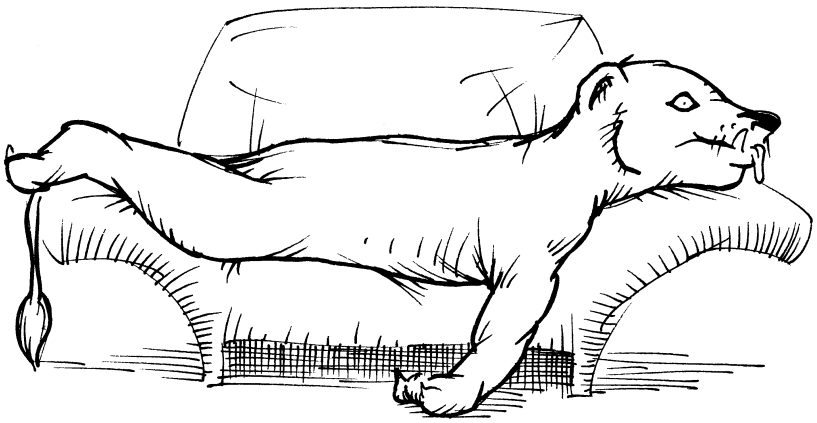
A final reason for puzzlement reported were the agent's personal competencies with strategic issues. Some puzzled champions felt that they did not have the required experience to form a strategic conception of organizational issues while some expressed reservation about their skills in implementation.

> ***(Q35)*** *"I guess this is mostly a problem with my personal working practices. A person is never fully ready for anything and if he is, that's great, but at least I feel that I need to learn new things every day. When I was preparing for this interview this morning I started thinking about my [strategy implementation] practices. Communication and the sharing of information, that's one area where I can learn more and so can others in our department."*

The distinguishing factor between the disregarded champion and the puzzled champion is clearly that the puzzled champion is above all critical about strategic sensemaking in the sense that she places quite tough criteria for such notions as 'understanding strategy' or 'having knowledge about strategy'. The objects of this critique are summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Summary of puzzled champions

Puzzlement	Source	Sensemaking gap
External complexity	Organizational environment	E.g. inability to predict future events, uncertainty about customers
Internal complexity	Internal factors	E.g. inability to report implementation specifics, inability to link micro-level plans and strategy (organizational direction)
Strategy concepts	Language used	E.g. strategy concepts being regarded as abstract or grandiose, lack of definitions, lack of support in sensemaking
Strategic abilities	The agent	E.g. self-criticism about own practices or competencies
Motivating others	Others	E.g. intellectual puzzlement as to how to motivate other agents



Overwhelmed champion

Interviewee$_8$ **is a top management team member and head of a functional unit in a firm. She has been just promoted to this position after a 17-year tenure in the organization, her last position being head of a department. In her account she refers to her background as a middle manager, responsible for strategy implementation on the department level. While enthusiastic about the strategic theme, which she regards as a possibility of renewal for her organization, she is quite critical towards the actions of both the top management strategists as well as the grassroots implementers. She feels the top management has made implementation very tough at the grassroots level because of the strategy jargon they have employed, which is almost impossible to interpret at the operative level. On the other hand, she regards the operative employees as often too conservative towards the new ideas strategy could provide. She is overwhelmed in the face of the multiple challenges she has to meet in her new position, yet she's ready and willing to meet them. She identifies very positively with her long-term employer.**

The overwhelmed champion is an active agent, working at her level of the organization to bring about change she regards as strategic. Somewhat similar to the *abandoned champion*, she is left to her own devices with too much sensemaking to do. The overwhelmed champion, unlike the abandoned champion, is left with too many options to influence issues and too little support to make the appropriate choices.

The overwhelmed champions did not pinpoint a single source for their state. They expressed a *situational description* that was composed of a complex set of issues. This description concerned the social position of the agent, emphasizing the problems involved. Several overwhelmed champions expressed a feeling of *disconnection* from the organizational strategy process. They reported feeling responsible for a host of issues, yet they felt they could access neither the necessary interpretations to facilitate sensemaking of the mass of information they were subjected to in their work, nor the guidelines they needed to make decisions.

> ***(Q36)*** *"We don't even have on paper how to act according to [a strategic issue]. It is one of those issues we have thought very hard about, suggested forming committees and we've done a lot of things, but we end up with nobody taking responsibility for the issue… The people who initiate the discussion end up banging their heads against the wall. That's when you know we are adrift here at the grassroots level."*

Some overwhelmed champions, on the other hand, felt that they had all the 'official' possibilities of influencing issues that they needed. The trouble was that the task set by strategy itself was so *complex* that overwhelmed champions occasionally felt helpless in trying to influence it, as was the case of our interviewee$_8$. In these cases, this was not an instance of mere puzzlement, but involved deeper issues, resulting in a feeling of having 'too big shoes to fill'. The sources identified as having this feeling of complexity were similar to the ones in the accounts of puzzled champions: the unpredictability of the environment and the peculiarities of having to rely on other human beings to accomplish one's goals.

> ***(Q37)*** *"Well… I know some of my direct subordinates go through [strategic issues] in their own unit meetings, but I also know that not all of them do that."*

Some overwhelmed champions reported that the overwhelming position was only *temporary*. This was the case in which a strategic *change* effort was *unfinished* and therefore lots of questions were left unanswered. Another was the case of a strategically enthusiastic new employee who had tried out a lot of things but felt she had not yet fully made sense of all the relevant possibilities.

The notion of being *left to one's own devices* was present in more than one account. The agents felt that their activities in the strategy process were not sanctioned in any way. They felt that all information had to be dug up and all influence had to be exerted through the methods that one could think of oneself. One unique position was

that of a *strategic lonely wolf*, an experienced agent who felt that an issue he regarded important had to be influenced, yet did not trust many of his colleagues, nor the management. He reported having his own networks through which he could influence issues, but he was not sure whether he was making the right decisions, because he did not feel confident with strategic concepts. Some agents attributed these problems to organizational *culture*, feeling frustrated because the organization was unwilling to facilitate relevant change.

> ***(Q38)*** *"I have tried to tell people the reasons why [the processes] should be developed, but where's the use, where does work like that show? It is important to them [the customers]. In my experience, however, in a rich and safe atmosphere such as ours, the personnel doesn't think much of how to get better results. Results are not a great source of concern for us, because we don't have a knife on our throat."*

One can notice that there were similarities between the puzzled champion and the overwhelmed champion. The difference lies in the notion that the overwhelmed champions feel inhibited in influencing issues in addition to mere puzzlement. Also, the sources causing the overwhelmed champions' situation were more complex. Another linkage can be made to the *disregarded champion* who also suffered from a gap both in sensemaking and influence. The factor distinguishing the two is that while the disregarded champions regarded the basic problem in their situation to be based on a sensemaking gap, the overwhelmed champions could not determine any clear precedence between sensemaking and influence. The situation descriptions given by overwhelmed champions are summarized in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Summary of overwhelmed champions

Described position	Characteristics
Disconnection	Responsibility of strategic issues, need for sensemaking facilitation and guidelines
Complexity	Strategic issues being tough in themselves
Temporary lack of direction	E.g. strategic change unfinished, new employee
Left on their own devices	No sanction for strategic activities

Strategic champions: a summary

The strategic champion is a person in the strategy process, actively trying to influence issues she regards strategic. Eight varieties for strategic champions were discovered in the analysis of the interview texts. As I have discussed each position in detail, certain characterizations can be made of the positions as a totality. In a sense, the *empowered champion* position can be regarded as a gravitational center, with all the other seven positions being pulled toward it. By this I mean that the seven other positions are all characterized by *lacks* or *problems* whereas the empowered champion consists of a variety of role positions for different agents. The lacks and problems are issues that prevent the other positions from acting as empowered champions. The other champions are in some way *not empowered* to act the way they would like to in the strategy process.

There is a possibility that the *puzzled champion* is an exception of sorts. It would seem that not all puzzled champions regard their puzzlement to be a problem, but something inherent to either their thinking or strategy itself. They do not think the complexity of strategy is something that can or should be explained away. In this sense, at least some puzzled champions are content where they are, and are not affected by the gravitational pull of the empowered champion described above.

The varieties of strategic champions are depicted in Figure 10 below, along with their frequencies in the total mass of interviews.

CHAMPIONS N = 158; 52,5% of all

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE			
Too large	Abandoned champion N = 1; 0,3 % of all	Champion under stress N = 7; 2,3 % of all	Overwhelmed champion N = 12; 4,0 % of all
Enough room		Empowered champion N = 72; 24,0 % of all	Puzzled champion N = 29; 9,6 % of all
Too small	Excluded champion N = 10; 3,3 % of all	Discontent champion N = 20; 6,6 % of all	Disregarded champion N = 7; 2,3 % of all
	Too small	**Enough room**	**Too large**

SPHERE OF SENSEMAKING

Figure 10. Varieties of strategic champions

The strategic champions constitute the largest of the three activity groups, amounting to more than half of the interviewees. There were more interviewees who thought of themselves as champions than there were citizens and cynics together. The empowered champions were the largest group of champions, with puzzled champions being the second largest. As noted above, puzzled champions can in a way be regarded as empowered champions who are unwilling to claim that they have formed a full understanding of strategy, on account of the world and their organizations being too complex to be completely understood. What can be learned from the frequencies of the other positions is at least that there was a relatively large group of champions, amounting to almost a fifth of the interviewees, who were unable to champion strategic themes even though they would have been motivated to do so.

What of the one category of champions hinted at by the scheme, yet not supported by data? No champions were discovered who would have been content with their possibilities of influencing strategic issues but felt they were prevented from making sense of what the strategy was. Indeed this would seem to be an unlikely way of seeing one's position. As noted many times before, the Foucauldian notion that knowledge and power go hand in hand would seem to make an account like the one above inconsistent from the beginning. Yet the abandoned champion, another unlikely position, made perfect sense in the account of the one individual who fell under that category. So, it's difficult to imagine what an account corresponding to the empty category would look like, but I would not label it as impossible.

Each position was categorized according to the issues the interviewees falling into each category raised. As noted in the beginning of the chapter, this prevented me from creating a unified structure representing the positions. A conceptual summary of the different positions may clarify things a bit before I move to analyzing strategic citizens. In Table 13, the different champions are summarized along with the distinguishing factors used in determining the microstructure of each class, i.e. how the different members of each group were classified.

Table 13. Summary of strategic champions

Champion	Sensemaking sphere / influence sphere	Characterization	Distinguishing factor	Typical cases
Excluded	Too small / too small	Kept in the dark	Channel of influence	Seniors, ghosts
Abandoned	Too small / too large	Kept in the dark with too much responsibility	N.A. (1 case)	Professional agent cut of from strategy process
Discontent	Enough room / too small	Kept from influencing key issues	Obstacles	Unit borders, culture, hierarchy, size
Empowered	Enough room / enough room	Able to act and make sense	Roles	Prophet, teacher, parent, good sport
Under stress	Enough room / too large	Too many things on one's hands	Reasons for stress	Lack of support, own capacities
Disregarded	Too large / too small	Kept in the dark, obstructing decision capability	Blockages to sensemaking	Lack of sensemaking facilitation
Puzzled	Too large / enough room	Unable to make full sense of strategic issue(s)	Source of puzzlement	Internal and external complexity
Overwhelmed	Too large / too large	Too much to do, too much to comprehend	Description of situation (complex)	Disconnection from strategy process

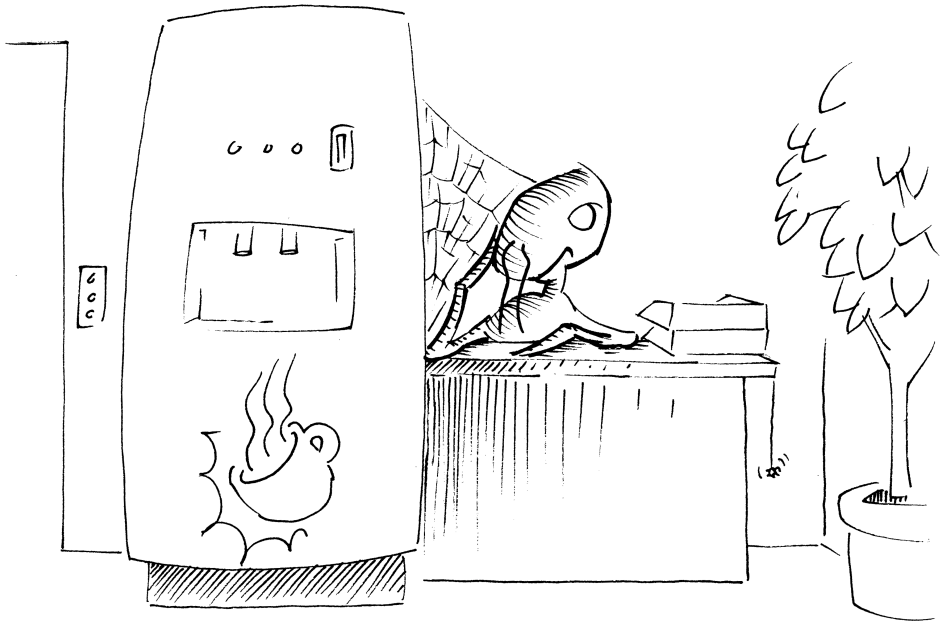
As I look at the table, the first thing that comes to mind is the variety of criteria that were used when categorizing the different champions. This is, however, how the data guided me. Each criterion of categorization makes sense with the micronarratives in each distinct category. Excluded champions were generally angry about being left out, but, being champions, they had found channels to influence things. Discontent champions felt that they understood their respective organization's strategy, but felt they were unable to execute their role in it, due to some obstacle blocking them, etc. The lack of a general schema for analyzing the microstructure of each subclass just says that the stories the different champions told were different.

6.2 Citizens of the strategy process

A citizen in common parlance is 'a person owing loyalty to, and entitled by birth or naturalization to the protection of, a state or nation.'[20] As noted in Section 5.1, the discussion of organizational citizenship behavior has transferred the notion of citizenship to organization studies. The notions of 'feeling loyalty' and 'being entitled' are transferred to organizations as well. Organizational citizens are entitled to a certain level of authority and are expected to show a certain loyalty to their organization in their actions. Feeling loyal does not imply being active above a certain level, however. Organizational citizens are not expected to be organizational champions any more than state citizens are expected to be politicians or activists. In the strategy process, an organizational citizen is somebody who does her best to do what strategy guides her to do. She may be active in developing herself and her own work practices to better execute strategy. She does not, however, report actively trying to influence the organization and its other members.

Seven categories of citizens in the strategy process were discovered using the schema in Figure 9 in Section 5.2. As with strategic champions, each category will be discussed in turn.

[20] *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin.



Recluse citizen

***Interviewee*$_9$ is a technical specialist with tenure of over thirty years in the firm. He used to know the strategy process a lot better in "the old days" when the firm was much smaller and "everybody pretty much knew each other". He feels that the strategic theme, centering on internal process development, is a relevant issue to everyday work and customer satisfaction. Yet the organization does not support any action to implement the theme because the top management keeps the employees in the dark. Worse than that, there is constant rivalry and mistrust between different functional units. While he thinks the strategic theme is a worthwhile pursuit, he does not feel that the people in his unit can do much about it.**

The recluse citizen feels a gap both in sensemaking and her possibilities of influencing strategic issues. Whereas the *excluded champion* found unofficial ways of influencing the strategy process, the excluded citizen reports doing no such thing. Her response is withdrawal into her personal sphere of work. She does not, however, regard strategy as meaningless or express disinterest towards strategy in general, as a cynic would do.

The general feature in the accounts of the recluse citizens is how they describe their isolated social position, e.g. what they identify as its source, what caused it, what it resulted in, etc. The title 'recluse' is appropriate, since the reasons given generally have something to do with a feeling of not being respected or given proper attention, and not being included in the strategy process. The identified types of disrespect are varied.

The first typical description of a recluse citizen's social position has to do with *membership* in a *disrespected* group, as was the case with our interviewee$_9$. The interviewees reported that the group they belonged to, be it a profession or a function, did not enjoy the same respect as other groups in the organization. This *social injustice* resulted in the agents having information withheld from them, and their chances of influence limited. While they regarded the strategic issue under discussion as important and felt a need to influence them, they felt that they were not given the chance, due to a lack of respect.

> ***(Q39)*** *"You know, there is a division among our personnel, into those who implement things and those who [make decisions]. I can't explain it, but there is this split. I don't know if it's just our feeling of inferiority or what, but there is a barrier of sorts in place […]"*

Many of the agents reporting social injustice in the form of disrespect also reported that the culture of their organization had stagnated, and authority locked in ancient positions. They felt unable to change issues, even if they felt that the changes would have had strategic value to their organizations. Some agents reported that their superiors were doing the best they could but they were also affected by the same issues.

> ***(Q40)*** *"I think a lot is being expected of us at the employee level, to tolerate almost everything. They don't think of us at all. We're like pawns in a game."*

It was notable that the recluse citizens who reported disrespect reported it as being directed towards a group of individuals. It was common for these citizens to *blame groups other than their own* as partial sources of their respective group's excluded positions. Another complaint from the recluse citizens reporting social injustice was that that *strategy had no face*. As it was untypical to place blame to their direct superiors, this concern was generally directed towards the top management in general,

or some top manager in particular. The interviewees reported that they did not know the person making the decisions, what she was thinking, etc.

> ***(Q41)*** *"He [the top manager] only comes in once a year to give his Christmas speech. I don't know anything about those strategies. Our own [department] manager […] he does all the management we need here, there's no complaining here. But when we move upwards in the organization, then…*
>
> *Question: What are the issues you would like to hear about?*
>
> *Answer: Well, I don't know anything about his [the top manager's] opinions on issues.*
>
> *Question: And he makes decisions affecting your work?*
>
> *Answer: Yeah, I'm sure he does. What I'm saying is that there is no interaction, we only say hello."*

A different source for exclusion reported was the case of those citizens whose *direct supervisor* did not regard strategy as important. This resulted in the agents not receiving knowledge and sensemaking support from their own supervisor, whom the interviewees thought should have been the most important source. The interviewees reported that the supervisor regarded strategy as a secondary issue to everyday work. What was noteworthy was that the citizens did not think strategy as unimportant themselves, and would have wanted to make better sense of it in order to let themselves feel full members of the organization.

> ***(Q42)*** *" […] we would be interested in these [strategic] issues, like this Balanced Scorecard –model […] but actually we are not doing much of anything to implement it, I mean our team, because our supervisor is not interested in such issues. As employees, it's a bit difficult for us to go and say that we are interested in this, because I think that should come from the management, I mean, the direction that we are supposed to be taking."*

Another type of description of a strategic recluse position was presented by those agents who felt the *narrowness* of their *job description* prevented them from active participation in the strategy process. This description was typically given by agents in support functions, such as secretaries. These agents did not, however, report this as an outright social injustice, but reported feeling regret that their positions did not entitle them to a greater degree of participation. It seems that all parties regard the agent's job description at least as a moderately legitimate issue. The agents with this complaint of narrow job descriptions expressed regret rather than anger towards their situation. The case of the disrespected groups does not have similar explicit structures of legitimacy to lock people into their positions.

The final type of description given involved a simple *lack of knowledge* about strategy. The interviewees gave no further analysis of the reasons for this lack. The interviewees who regarded the lack of knowledge to be the source of their exclusion from the strategy process reported this lack as "unsatisfied customers" by noting that more training on strategic issues should have been made available, and more information given out on organizational strategy.

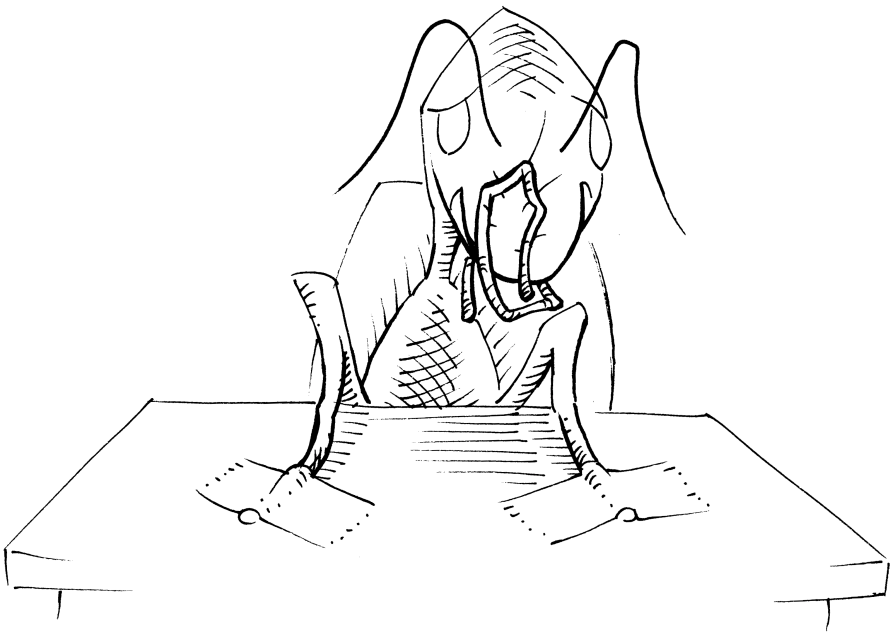
> ***(Q43)*** *"There was no training given [about a strategic theme] – we just talked the issue through [with my colleagues] […]"*

The recluse citizens did not report ways of responding or rectifying their situations, even though they agreed that the strategic issues they were excluded from were important to the organization, and often of interest to themselves. The reactions to the interview questions concerning their positions in the strategy process ranged from an air of sharp criticism to quiet resignation. The reasons the recluse citizens gave for their exclusion are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Summary of recluse citizens

Reason for reclusion	Characteristics	Typical reaction
Member of a disrespected group	Feeling of social injustice, blaming other groups, feeling uncertainty due to the strategy having no face	Criticism, bitterness
Direct supervisor neglect / disinterest	Feeling of being left out	Helplessness, frustration
Narrowness of job description	Not being entitled to participate	Regret
Lack of information	Not enough training, not enough communication of strategy in general	Dissatisfaction

The recluse citizens seem to be found on the grassroots levels of organizations. While some of those identified in the interview texts were placed in expert positions, none of them had direct subordinates.



Neutralized citizen

Interviewee$_{10}$ **is a service employee in a large firm. She has tenure of 33 years in the firm. She feels that her team's objectives are clear enough to be implemented and are determined as a part of the firm's strategy process. When confronted with the strategic theme it seems at first that she is avoiding the question, but as the discussion progresses it becomes clear that she is in direct opposition to the strategic theme. She regards it as threatening to the things that make her work worthwhile, as well as being in opposition to what she regards as a central part of the firm's mission. While she understands the central content of strategy, she feels unable to turn such a large ship around.**

The neutralized citizen feels that she understands the content of strategy, but cannot fulfill her role in the strategy process due to some "stonewall" blocking her from doing this. In this sense, she is similar to the *discontent champion*, the difference being that the discontent champion reports actively trying to influence strategic issues despite the obstacles, whereas the neutralized citizen does not. Furthermore, the neutralized citizen does not have a single strategic issue she would wish to influence.

Her critique of the possibilities of influencing strategy is much more general. The actual obstacles keeping the neutralized citizens from participating in the strategy process were also dissimilar from those reported by discontent champions.

The lack of *legitimacy* in their position was an obstacle commonly reported by neutralized citizens. The agents did not feel that their positions entitled them to take strategic action, or influence organizational strategy. The reasons for this were varied: one agent reported to being "an old-timer", who shouldn't get in the way of fresh ideas. This is clearly a case in which legitimacy is dealing with symbol systems – new symbol systems taking precedence over old ones. Another agent reported that the organization was too slow in warranting her taking over newly discovered areas that should be influenced. Another agent reported a lacking time resource.

> ***(Q44)*** *"Well, we haven't had much say in my view [at our department]… at least I haven't influenced the [strategic objectives].*
>
> *Question: Would you have wanted to?*
>
> *Answer: In my line of work you don't have much time. The ones who can plan those are totally different people."*

The *strategy content* was reported as another obstacle by some agents, such us our interviewee$_{10}$, who stated that the whole strategy was wrong in the first place. She could not, for instance, accept the notion of inequality between customers the strategy seemed to promote. Another citizen felt the strategy was *biased*, thus neglecting the support function he represented. This agent felt that his unit's task of upholding infrastructure was a key task for the organization's survival, yet it was denied resources due to a bias in organizational strategy in favor of more "fashionable" topics.

Other agents felt that their *right to use voice* was limited in some way. A typical account for this was that strategic objectives were dictated from above with little input from the level represented by these agents. The overall atmosphere in these accounts was a feeling of loss of control over one's work.

> ***(Q45)*** *"… I don't see eye to eye with all of our [strategic objectives], and I couldn't have influenced any of those that I don't agree with."*

Other agents reported that *cultural issues* limited their use of voice. One agent noted that, while she was in agreement with what she regarded to be the main content of

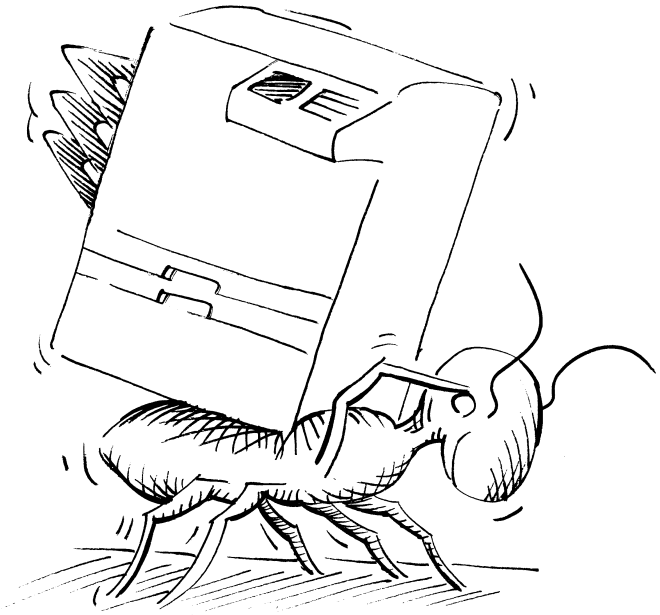
strategy, she was uncomfortable with the whole *manner* of how her organization's official strategy process was carried out. She felt unable to influence strategic issues because she did not know how to approach the official process in general. She reported, for example, a deep mistrust toward goal-setting discussions, a relatively new practice in her organization. Another agent complained that organizational culture inhibited discussion in general in her organization.

> ***(Q46)*** *"We need a more open atmosphere, facilitating open discussion.*
>
> *Question: Discussion - about what?*
>
> *Answer: About anything. We need more openness. So that people would have the guts [to pose their opinions]… So that you could communicate ideas about developing things and they might even ask for those ideas sometimes. I think that would be really important… that it wouldn't be the same people all the time… making all the definitions."*

The different obstacles reported by neutralized citizens are summarized in Table 15. Compared to obstacles reported by the discontent champions, the ones in the accounts of neutralized citizens were much more vague and less defined. Even if their accounts were somewhat grim, the neutralized citizens generally felt that strategy was a worthwhile project and they would have wanted to have a more active role in it. They did not, however, report to actively trying to change their social positions.

Table 15. Summary of neutralized citizens

Obstacle	Source	Characteristics
Lack of legitimacy	Agent position	E.g. "old-timer" in the way of new ideas, no time resource for planning in current job
Wrong direction	Strategy content	E.g. wrong strategy, biased strategy
Limited right to use voice	Organizational culture	E.g. culture inhibiting discussion



Satisfied citizen

Interviewee$_{11}$ **is a department manager trainee in a large firm. He functions as the right hand of the department manager. His current position is a salesman. When asked about the strategy process he reports the main objectives set for his department in a confident manner, also reflecting on the general emphases he has observed in organizational strategy of late. He regards the strategic theme as central to the organization as well as to the client. He has assisted the department manager in the setting of objectives for the department, while the actual decisions about objectives are made higher up in the organization. Interviewee$_{11}$ characterizes his own role as an implementer of strategy, and notes that nobody on his level has ever influenced the actual strategy process in ways other than implementing the objectives set for them. And that's how it should be.**

The satisfied citizen is characterized by the connection she attributes between strategy and her work activities. Her motivation is directed to carrying out her work. She feels she understands organizational strategy and the part she plays in it, and feels she can

influence issues accordingly. Her strategic activities are limited to her personal sphere of work and she does not seek to influence the organization or its other members.

The satisfied citizens assumed a variety of roles, as did the *empowered champions*. While there are some similarities, the roles assumed by agents of the two positions differ substantially from each other.

Many satisfied citizens, such as our interviewee$_{11}$, thought of themselves as *implementers* of strategy. They regarded strategy to be a natural guiding factor in their work, and their work as an activity directed toward the execution of organizational strategy. The implementers were in general agreement with strategy and did not problematize or criticize strategic content. The general lens through which they regarded strategy was their own working sphere, the size of which they felt content with. While all of the implementers accepted the importance of strategy and saw the motivation to its implementation to their organizations, some did not feel very comfortable about it at the personal level.

> ***(Q47)*** *"It is a sign of the times. If it were just up to me, I would not force myself to work this hard [on implementing strategy], having been as long in working life as I have – over 30 years that is […] Of course I have nothing against hard work but for a person my age, it would be enough just to come to work every day…"*

A *rule-follower* is a satisfied citizen who works very hard to execute strategy as complying with an order. The rule-followers emphasized the notion that the best results are made by everybody following official procedures and guidelines. These citizens were mainly concerned with identifying relevant official procedures and following them.

> ***(Q48)*** *"In our bi-monthly team meetings the official house policy is communicated to our level in the organization […] They try to communicate it as clearly as they can so that we can adopt that policy and be a part of it, so that we would be committed to follow it […]"*

The *student* is a satisfied citizen who is committed to finding out as much as she can about strategy. Her interest is learning organizational strategy through training and gathering information. As implementers and rule-followers, she is willing to adopt official strategy as it is; yet she feels she is in the process of discovering strategy through her learning process.

> ***(Q49)*** *"I have tried to figure out what the Balanced scorecard means in my personal time, because I got involved in it after the process had already begun. I have managed because I have studied these issues in my own time so that I could get involved and also to understand what this [strategy] is about[…]"*

The *participant* is a satisfied citizen who does not perceive her role from the frame of strategic issues or orders, as the previous examples, but through her participation in the strategy process. This communion can be reached through various means, e.g. membership in a planning committee, setting objectives in a team, giving one's opinion in strategic matters to a superior. Instead of discussing strategic content, interviewees belonging to this category emphasized a feeling of contentment due to having a role in the strategy process.

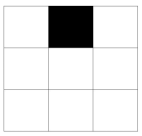
Whereas participants were not very concerned with specific strategic issues in their accounts, *philosophers* placed their emphasis on the reflection of strategic issues. The philosophers did not give much insight into their personal roles but concentrated on reflecting on the direction the organization should take. Unlike the *strategists* mentioned as a type of the empowered champion, the philosophers did not report taking any action to implement the issues they discussed. It was, in a way, as if they had been waiting for somebody to ask about their opinion, and interpreted the interviewer as that somebody, reflecting on issues both external and internal to the organization. They felt content with their role in strategy and chances of influencing the organization.

> ***(Q50)*** *"Sometimes they introduce old issues using new terms and claim to have invented something completely new in organization theory. In the 60's and 70's they had 'management by objectives', which is nothing more extraordinary than later models for setting objectives. They are all variations of the same theme: having the employees do the things the management wants them to do."*

The roles that satisfied citizens assumed are summarized in Table 16 below. I have distinguished the roles through the frames of reference (Goffman, 1974) the interviewees adhered to in their accounts. The implementer would seem to look at strategy from within his sphere of work, whereas the philosopher has just the opposite, conceptual sphere, from which strategy is regarded as an 'objective' perceiver might perceive it. Rule-followers looked at strategy as a source of policy, whereas students regarded it as a source of learning. Participants regarded strategy from the perspective of communion, through membership in the strategy process.

Table 16. Summary of satisfied citizen roles in the strategy process

Role	Frame	Characteristics
Implementer	Work	Work is executing strategy
Rule-follower	Orders, policy	Strategy is a source of official guidelines and policies for work
Philosopher	Conceptual	Strategy can be used to reflect on the organization's direction
Student	Learning, strategy	Strategy is something to be learned in active interaction
Participant	Communion	The strategy process is defined through one's own membership



Citizen in need

Interviewee$_{12}$ **is waiting for something. She is a service agent in a firm, in the service of organizational customers. She has tenure of over 20 years in the organization and she used to be a manager. She feels she has quite a good understanding of the "workings of the strategy process" due to her long tenure. Her department is in a transitional phase as the old department head has retired and a new one has not yet been found. While Interviewee$_{12}$ sees the relevance of the strategic theme, she feels that it will not be implemented in her unit until a new decision-maker with recognized authority is chosen. She also regards this as a wider problem in the organization, as more decision-making and influencing would be needed in order for the strategic theme to be fully realized.**

A citizen in need is an agent who feels she has made sense of strategy, but feels that her sphere of influence is too large. She is in need of support in some form, in order to fulfill her role in the strategy process. The role she envisions herself to be in varies, that is, in some cases, support of the reported kind may result in the agent becoming a

champion, in others, in acting as a satisfied citizen. Three forms of support were reported as needed by the interviewees.

Further instructions were the first type of support that was reported as being needed. The interviewees reported that they could not cope well enough in everyday application situations without further instructions as to how the strategy should be interpreted as guidelines for action. This need would seem to indicate a need to act in a *rule-follower* role, described in association with satisfied citizens.

> ***(Q51)*** *"Well, I guess I have sort of a wide conception of the issue [a strategic theme], but I guess it should be more detailed, at least when there are so many of us working here, it would seem that we would need more specific guidelines in quite a few issues."*

Other agents, such as our interviewee$_{12}$, reported that more *managerial decisions* were needed regarding strategy implementation. Strategy implementation seemed to slow down at times due to managerial decision-making being sluggish or non-existent. Interviewee$_{12}$ reported that since a former department manager retired there had been no one to make the important decisions, resulting in delayed strategy implementation in the department:

> ***(Q52)*** *"The implementation [of a strategic theme] stumbles somewhat. It hasn't really started out very fast. It's not very easy to implement it. The process has slowed down.*
>
> *Question: What have been the biggest difficulties involved?*
>
> *Answer: The department manager retiring and no successor being found. We haven't had anybody making the decisions."*

Leadership and communication skills were the third need, reported by one top manager. He felt competent in his department's field of specialty, but was highly critical toward his own capabilities of communicating organizational strategy to his subordinates. It was as if the agent was prevented from being the strategic champion he was expected to be, resulting in his being drawn to his private sphere of work.

> ***(Q53)*** *"About communicating strategy: I at least feel a pang of guilt about communication. I think strategy has not been communicated well enough; there have not been enough strategy discussions. I don't think strategy can be communicated by writing it down and saying that's it. I think communication breakdown is a big problem.*
>
> *Question: Where, exactly does the breakdown occur?*

> *Answer: I think somewhere between my department's employees and myself. I think that my personal communication, as well as that of all the others who were supposed to be communicating strategy, has been quite poor."*

The three needs experienced by citizens in need are summarized in Table 17. In addition to the needs, the ideal roles for the agents, i.e. those roles that the fulfillment of the reported need would help to facilitate are also reported.

Table 17. Ideal agent roles for citizens in need

Need	Characteristics	Ideal agent role
Further instructions	Need for guidelines of implementing strategy in everyday life	Rule-follower (satisfied citizen)
Management decision-making	Need for management decisions to legitimize strategic action	Implementer (satisfied citizen)
Leadership/communication skill	Need to learn how to communicate strategies better to subordinates	Empowered strategic champion (e.g. teacher/parent role)

Troubled citizen

Interviewee$_{13}$ **works as a secretary in a public organization. The manager of her department has just retired and a new one chosen to take over. The former manager did not pay attention to communicating strategic issues to his subordinates, but the new one has given much more attention to this. Still, interviewee$_{13}$ feels she has not really managed to understand the content of organizational strategy. Furthermore, she feels devalued, as she is still not allowed to use voice in the discussion of strategy. She simultaneously reports a willingness to understand more and a feeling of inferiority due to the limited nature of her work content.**

The troubled citizen is an agent who feels she cannot make good sense out of the organizational strategy she is faced with. She also feels her possibilities of influencing strategy have been lacking in some way. This troubles her, because she regards

strategy as a phenomenon relevant to her organization. Unlike the *neglected champion*, the troubled citizen does not in all cases trace the source of her predicament to failed sensemaking. In some cases the predicament is what is causing her failure in sensemaking.

The first type of predicament reported was a personal *guilt trip* felt by the agent. The agent reported that she felt her attempts to make sense of the strategy had been insufficient, and so had been unable to find ways of influencing the strategy process more actively. The agent thus traced the source of the problem back to herself. The general mechanism of the problem seems to be that the agent had not been active enough in her attempts at making sense of the strategy, and thus the question of how she would have wanted to influence it seemed irrelevant to the agent. Reasons given for this inactivity included being too busy, not having had the courage and/or just generally being too passive.

> ***(Q54)*** *"These [strategy documents] are accessible for everyone to read on the [Intranet][…] all the strategies and such, they are detected first when you open the Intranet. They are accessible to everybody, but of course it is up to the individual whether she reads them or not […]"*

While the guilt trip predicament was traced back to the individual herself, other agents reported two kinds of *external suppression*. Some agents reported that the organizational *culture* blocked them from participating in the discussion of strategy, giving feedback, etc. In the case of interviewee$_{13}$, the new manager had not yet broken the culture of suppressing discussion of strategy among the employees that had been cultured by the former department manager. These agents also gave an account of not having made sense of the strategy due to this inability to participate in the process. A typical response seemed to be to rely on a trusted, direct superior, who was regarded as "a representative" in the process.

> ***(Q55)*** *" […] in some ways I think we have a hierarchy of the kind we see in hospitals, and while I think [her organization] is a very nice place to work in, it is kind of old fashioned in some issues […] they have tried to lower the steps in the organization, to some degree, yes. And of course the CEO has to have the guts and the ability to lead. That's his job. But when I think what's going on here, lower in the organizational staircase, I don't see any reason why [strategic] things couldn't be done or managed more openly. I wouldn't see any harm in that, personally."*

Another form of external suppression reported was traced to *organizational systems* of various kinds, which were regarded as being too bureaucratic and thus prevented

the agent taking strategic action interpreted as actions belonging to the official strategy process. Agents reporting this predicament generally tended to stick to their personal working spheres, avoiding the officially sanctioned strategy process, even though they regarded strategy as an important phenomenon.

> ***(Q56)*** *"A year has gone by with me not knowing what to… you know, I have done things the way I have always done them, but I haven't really known what you can do and what you are allowed to do and with all these new organizational structures […]"*

Some agents were in need of nothing less than *another strategy*, or at least a careful explanation for the current strategic direction they perceived. The agents perceived themselves as unable to prevent the strategic direction it seemed to be taking, e.g. consciously neglecting certain customers, moving into a market area in conflict with the organization's mission, etc. This problem of influencing the organization's direction resulted in deficiencies in making sense of the strategic value of one's everyday actions. The result of this predicament seemed to be to do one's work as well as one could (in the practical sense) and avoid giving the strategy too much thought.

> ***(Q57)*** *" […] you know what the [organization's] strategy is right now […] I really can't have much influence on that, but I simply cannot sell the customer a product that doesn't fit her needs."*

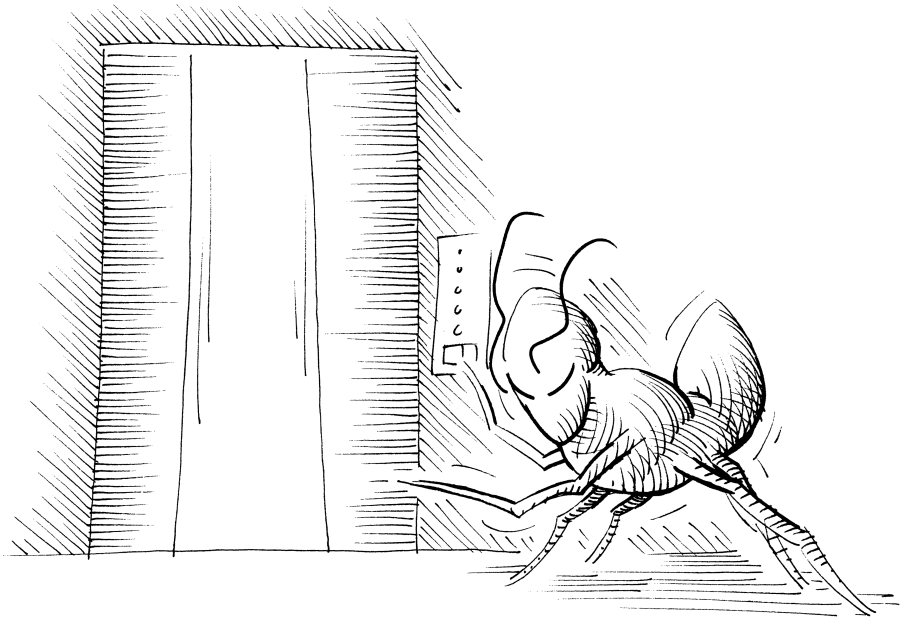
A related concern was faced by agents who felt that the strategy was *vague* and in need of elaboration. These agents would have needed more clear-cut interpretations and definitions to be able to act strategically, implementing strategy in their work. The lack of definitions made them feel like their hands were tied in terms of influencing strategy as well.

> ***(Q58)*** *"The whole process [of strategy-making] has been kind of cute. The organization has in a way defined, I don't know on what grounds, this major goal, and associated figures, how they should be in 2005. That in a way is the goal that we are striving towards, but no thought whatsoever has been given on how that will be accomplished on the [operative level]."*

All in all, the citizens in need reported being in situations in which they could not make sense of organizational strategy, and were also unable to influence strategically important issues in their work activities. The types of predicament the citizens in need reported being in were somewhat complex situations. They are summarized in Table 18 below.

Table 18. Summary of troubled citizens

Predicament	Characteristics	Need	Mechanism	Outcome
Guilt trip	The agent feels that she is the main cause of the gap in her understanding, i.e. her being too busy, her being too passive, her not having had the courage	To take a more active role in the future	Sensemaking => influence	Determination to take a more active role (become a champion?)
Cultural suppression	The agent feels organizational culture does not encourage her to make sense of things	More encouragement to participate in discussion	Influence => sensemaking	Being unable to influence strategy, entrusting superiors with this
System suppression	The agent feels the organizational systems, e.g. bureaucracy, inhibit her from making sense of the strategy	To free oneself from bureaucratic control	Influence => sensemaking	Trying to avoid official systems to implement strategy in personal work
Wrong strategy	The feeling of the organization going into the wrong direction inhibits the agent from determining the right actions	The strategy to change or at least good grounds given for current strategy	Influence => sensemaking	Trying to work and not think about it
Vagueness in strategic content	Vague strategy inhibiting agent from determining strategic actions	More thorough definitions	Sensemaking => influence	Being unsure of the warrant for actions



Unenlightened citizen

Interviewee$_{14}$ **works as a sales agent in a large firm. She notes that her work has been quite stable and unchanging for the last few years and that is the way she likes it. When confronted with the strategic theme she gives a few cautious comments, revealing that she is not fully certain of its significance. She notes that strategy is not an "everyday topic of discussion around here". She thinks she could influence the organization if she noticed that something was wrong, but to date this has not happened. All in all, she identifies very positively with her employer, considering the firm a good place to work in. Strategy is not a part of her job description and that is the way it should be.**

The unenlightened citizen feels that she is where she wants to be in terms of influence in the strategy process. Confronted with questions about organizational strategy, however, she reports that the sensemaking challenge the interviewer is posing with her questions of strategy is too great. The interviewee, put face to face with strategy in the interview situation, thus responds to the challenge by replying that the discussion about organizational strategy is too much for her to handle. What is remarkable about the unenlightened citizen, however, is that in many cases she does not regard her

unenlightenment as a negative issue. In many cases, the unenlightened citizen is where she wants to be. It is not that she does not care about the organization's direction, indeed, she wants her work to be directed toward the realization of organizational strategy. It is just that she has not made sense of the organizational strategy as a whole.

The obvious criterion for classifying unenlightened citizens is the type of reason that they give for not having made sense of the strategy. Many of the citizens interviewed simply felt that they were *out of their league* with strategic issues. It was not a part of their work to make sense of strategic issues and that is how it should be. This was the case with our Interviewee$_{14}$. Some of these citizens were simply too preoccupied with their own field of specialty and did not want strategic issues to conflict with the completion of their specialized tasks. They felt that it was the job of the strategic planners to think of the strategic issues and their job to do the daily work, an arrangement that suited them just fine. One interviewee felt that she was not a "researcher-type", but wanted to work on practical issues. Somebody else noted that he would participate in strategic issues if "ordered to do so". All in all, these interviewees felt that strategy fell out of their job descriptions, which were what they signed in for.

> ***(Q59)*** *"I have chosen this field because I like working in it. In my work there is a clear emphasis on problem solving.*
>
> *Question: Do you feel that you have had the chance to influence objectives related to [a strategic theme]?*
>
> *Answer: You bet I have had that chance. Here we can talk directly to the vice president. If you can base your arguments well enough, you can influence all the things that you want."*

Furthermore, some agents reported *not having the time* to enlighten themselves about strategy. This was not regarded a major obstacle, however, but more like a natural state of things. Some interviewees, when confronted, simply could not *remember* the strategic issues they were confronted with. Because the interviewees were provided with but a few key strategic documents during the interview, some felt that they simply could not bring the strategic issues to mind well enough. It was not that they felt that they were not provided with enough materials or sensemaking facilitation to back them up, but simply that the issues could not be found recalled from memory.

They did not seem to blame anybody about this lapse of memory, although seemed to report a small amount of guilt.

> ***(Q60)*** *"Well, I don't think… on one hand they write all sorts of things… I suppose I don't read all the stuff that is published and distributed […] I guess it would have been good to read our human resources development strategy, I suppose I might have found some of the answers [to a question about strategy], I think in that document I might have found the answer in a condensed form […] maybe I don't have a holistic picture of what that means."*

A related answer was given by those interviewees who felt that they knew what organizational strategy was all about but *could not put it down in words*. One reason given for this was that the interviewee felt somewhat uncomfortable using strategic concepts, yet had understood what they meant nonetheless. While this may have been an excuse in some cases, I think in most cases this was simply an issue about *tacit knowledge* that was internalized (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995); yet the interviewee did not feel she had the conceptual tools to explicate the internalized content.

> ***(Q61)*** *"A general image of sorts has probably remained in my memory, but of course the smaller details are always tricky […] For instance, in the final stages of production planning, actually some rules just fit right into our activities, which has never happened before. Instead of general orders, we had something that we could implement right away. The next thing you are going to ask is what this thing was, which I don't remember. But anyway, I remember that because it was the first time something fit right away."*

Some unenlightened citizens felt that the strategy documents were too *abstract* to be made sense of. What was curious, however, was that the citizens did not report doing anything about making them more understandable. These agents felt that the documents were not that important in themselves and that they could do without them. This did not mean, however, that they would have shown neglect for strategy in general.

> ***(Q62)*** *"[…] of course it's a bit utopist when the top management creates [a strategy document] such as this and expects the content to be real clear to the practical worker, at least it doesn't happen immediately. But anyhow, one thing that is clear is that the customers constitute our main objective, and into that we will put our every effort. One thing that is nice about this organization is that the organization makes sure that the people implementing the strategy have the strength to do it."*

A final type of enlightened citizen was revealed in the form of an agent who felt that she simply *could not form a coherent* conception of strategy, considering the amount and quality of information available. It was not, however, that these citizens felt that

they were denied the right information or the explanations were lacking on behalf of the top management, it was more like the agents were pessimistic about their own abilities or simply regarded the issue of strategy itself to be too complex for comprehension. The types of unenlightenment discussed above are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19. Summary of unenlightened citizens

Variety of unenlightenment	Source	Characteristics
Out of their league	Job description	E.g. not a part of their job, not the right type, not ordered to participate, preoccupied with own specialty
Too busy	Perceived time resource	Too busy with other, more important, things to acquaint themselves with strategy
Unable to repeat strategy	Strategic concepts	Do not know how to explicate strategy, even though they feel that they have made sense of it
Do not remember	Personal memory	Cannot bring strategy to memory, would like to look at the strategy documents
Strategy is too abstract	Strategic documents	Do not comprehend the content of strategic documents, but feels that is not the most important issue
Cannot form a coherent conception	Amount / quality of information	Information available does not warrant sensemaking

The unenlightened citizen is a person who is content with her influencing the organization, including the possibility of gaining knowledge about organizational strategy, but who does not feel she has made sense of strategy. The issue distinguishing unenlightened citizens and *puzzled champions* is the citizens' general state of contentment about their unenlightened status, whereas the champions generally reported doing something about resolving issues to gain a better understanding. The unenlightened citizen is no cynic, however. She wants her work to service strategy; it is just that it is somebody else's job to do the thinking about strategy.

Lost citizen

Interviewee$_{15}$ **is a freshly appointed team leader in a public organization. He notes that he is still in the learning stages of being a leader, though he regards it as a worthwhile challenge. He is generally positive about the strategic theme, yet does not give an account of why it is important to the organization. He has participated in his unit's strategic planning, but has largely been contented to just listen. He admits that he really has not had so much time to form an understanding of strategy, but is more concerned about the everyday leadership skills he is learning. If he wanted to, he would surely be allowed to contribute to the strategy process, but he feels uncertain as to whether he would be able to offer something worthwhile.**

The final type of citizen discovered simply feels lost. Confronted with strategy by the interview situation, she raises her hands and surrenders, to use a metaphor. She feels that the sensemaking and action challenge set by strategy is simply too great. She is not overwhelmed by strategy, because she feels that this feeling of being lost is more like a sign that the choices and interpretations have to be made by other people than a challenge to be overcome, as would be the typical champion response.

The situational descriptions by lost citizens of their social positions were complex in a manner similar to the descriptions given by *overwhelmed champions*. The first type of description was that there was simply too *much responsibility* to be borne by the agent, both in terms of understanding strategy and making strategic decisions. One agent felt that the organizational strategy planning process was "a huge bulk that falls on top of you each year", thus reporting being unable to comprehend the heavy machinery of the process and making the correct decisions. Another agent felt that she was left alone with too much responsibility over subordinates who were too inexperienced. One agent reported that strategy was simply moving too fast to keep track.

> ***(Q63)*** *"My [ideal] way of working would be to first take a look at my slice of the pie and turn it around, wondering what I should do with it […] What happens in reality is that I end up jumping onto trains that are already moving […]"*

Another type of complaint was that the strategy process allowed *too much freedom* to the agent. The interviewees reported that they would have needed guidelines and rules to help them determine which actions were to be prioritized over others. The agents felt that they needed to be told if the things they were doing were the right things in terms of organizational strategy. In some cases, the interviewees themselves even questioned the practice of always asking for input in strategic issues and wanted input and decisions from the management instead.

> ***(Q64)*** *"At times you think whether all this is really worthwhile."*

Or as commented by our Interviewee$_{15}$:

> ***(Q65)*** *" […] this is a good place to work because you get to be involved if you want to, that's no problem. A bigger problem has been my feeling that I have not had so much to contribute myself."*

One agent clearly emphasized the need to find clear measuring instruments to link performance to strategy. She felt this was the only way for the management to give the relevant kind of feedback mentioned above.

> ***(Q66)*** *" […] [the strategic objectives] cannot be linked to our measurement instruments. You can make assumptions and say that hey, you did a great job and reached all your objectives, but how that is related to the realization of our strategy-vision, that's the problem, I mean, those linkages."*

Some agents simply were *struggling* with the strategy process. This meant that the position that they had been given was simply too large for their comfort. They reported problems dealing with strategic language. Some participated in strategic planning, did not understand what was discussed and were embarrassed about this. One agent participated in planning sessions in her team and simply did not understand why.

Some agents reported that they had *willingly withdrawn* to the confines of their own units. They felt that strategic issues were expected of them but felt that the workload they (and their subordinates) had was already too great.

> ***(Q67)*** *"Question: Is the strategy reflected to your team's goals?*
>
> *Answer: No. I would not have agreed to that, that's obvious to all my superiors, that we simply don't have the time. That sounds outrageous and cold, but when there is no time, then there is no time."*

The lost citizens in their situations are summarized in Table 20. One can clearly see that the situation descriptions they give are somewhat static. They do not report ways out of their situations nor actions directed to take them out. It seems that they will be lost at least a while longer.

Table 20. Summary of lost citizens

Situational description	Characteristics	Cases
Too much responsibility	Need help in decisions (influence) and interpretations (sensemaking)	E.g. alone in the planning process, too many inexperienced subordinates
Too much freedom	Need guidelines	E.g. unable to prioritize, would like to know when they have succeeded and when not
Struggling	Unable to understand strategy process and act in it	E.g. unable to deal with strategic concepts, unable to participate in discussion
Locked themselves into their chambers (with strategy banging on the door)	Determined to stay out of the strategy process and limit their action to a closed sphere	E.g. refusing to reflect strategic issues in objectives until they have the resources to implement them

Citizens in the strategy process: A summary

The strategy process citizens discovered in the interviews were people who reported wanting to be loyal to their organizations and caring for its future. They were generally motivated in the good completion of their work for the good of their organization. They did not show any active interest in influencing the strategy process in any manner transcending the personal spheres of their work activities. They were not active in changing people's attitudes or the organization.

Those citizens who were *satisfied* assumed roles that made them act as co-operative members of the strategy process, if not expressly influential ones. They were implementers, rule-followers, students and the like. Six categories were discovered in which a satisfied citizen role in the strategy process was not possible. The *recluse* citizens found asylum in their personal spheres of work because they did not regard themselves as invited members of the strategy process. The *neutralized* citizens understood what their organization's strategy was all about, yet were prevented from doing anything about it. The citizens *in need* felt that they needed more support in carrying out their responsibilities in the strategy process in order to succeed. The *troubled* citizens were in various sorts of predicaments, not understanding what strategy meant, unable to break free from the chains that kept them from coming to an understanding and finding their roles. The *unenlightened* citizens did not feel that they understood organizational strategy yet did not feel they needed more chances of influencing strategy. The *lost* citizens wandered aimlessly in the process, not understanding it all, and not knowing whether they were doing the right things (see Figure 11 below).

CITIZENS N = 118; 39,2% of all

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE			
Too large		Citizen in need N = 3; 1,0 % of all	Lost citizen N = 11; 3,7 % of all
Enough room		Content citizen N = 24; 8,0 % of all	Unenlightened citizen N = 42; 14,0 % of all
Too small	Recluse citizen N = 15; 5,0 % of all	Neutralized citizen N = 9; 3,0 % of all	Troubled citizen N = 14; 4,7 % of all
	Too small	**Enough room**	**Too large**

SPHERE OF SENSEMAKING

Figure 11. Citizens of the strategy process

The group of citizens was somewhat smaller than that of champions, still amounting to almost 40 percent of all interviewees. The citizens were more evenly distributed to different positions than champions, most of whom were either empowered or puzzled.

In the case of strategic champions, the center tile in the schema seemed to act as a gravitational center. With strategic champions, some puzzled champions did not regard strategy as something to be completely sure about and thus regarded their puzzlement as something natural. This phenomenon was much starker with citizens. Indeed, the group of unenlightened citizens was the largest of all, amounting to about one seventh of all interviewees. Most unenlightened citizens were content with their unenlightened state, being completely willing to let others worry about making sense of strategy. The group of satisfied citizens was smaller, but still the next largest group.

The fact that more citizens regarded themselves as unenlightened than satisfied in terms of a position in the strategy process would seem to indicate that there were more citizens who wanted to exclude themselves totally from the strategy process,

regarding it as somebody else's business, than those who wanted to play a more compliant role in the process as members of the process.

Two tiles in Figure 11 are empty, not supported by data. It is not surprising that the inhibited sensemaking / enough influence tile left empty of strategic champions is empty here as well. The discussion that applied to the tile in association with champions applies here as well – while an account corresponding to the tile seems very prone to inconsistencies, its existence cannot be altogether denied. Another tile left empty in Figure 11 is the tile corresponding to abandoned champions. This should not be a surprise either, since only one abandoned champion was discovered.

Whereas the center tile of empowered champions acted as a gravitational center of sorts for strategic champions, it is by no means certain where the citizens in other positions from satisfied citizens would *want to be*. While they were inactive at the moment, it is uncertain whether some citizens were prevented from being, not satisfied citizens, but *empowered champions*, for instance. In some cases, hints can be collected, as I have done in association with citizens in need (Table 17). In most cases, it remains a mystery as to whether the citizens were potential champions in some cases, or worn out champions, in others. The varieties of citizens in strategy processes are conceptualized and summarized in Table 21 below.

Table 21. Summary of citizens of the strategy process

Citizen	Sensemaking / influence	Characterization	Distinguishing factor	Typical cases
Recluse	Too small / too small	Retreated back to doing their work	Reason for reclusion	Member of a disrespected group, direct supervisor neglect
Neutralized	Enough room / too small	Kept from taking strategic action	Type of blockage	Lack of legitimacy, limited right to use voice
Satisfied	Enough room / enough room	Content their position in the strategy process	Role played	Implementer, rule-follower, student
Citizen in need	Enough room / too large	In need of support in activities	Kind of need	Further instruction, management decision making
Troubled	Too large / too small	In trouble, unable to get out	Type of predicament	Guilt trip, cultural suppression, wrong strategy
Unenlightened	Too large / enough room	Unable to make sense of strategy	Variety of un-enlightenment	Out of their league, too busy, does not remember
Lost	Too large / too large	Lost in / to the strategy process	Situational description	Too much responsibility, too much freedom

6.3 Cynics of the strategy process

The cynic is a person who has given up on the very notion of the strategy process. She regards it with occasional scorn, occasional disinterest. While citizens felt that the strategy process was important, and in some cases not their responsibility, the cynic feels that it is unworthy of her attention altogether. The cynic may not regard her organization with a similar scorn, however. Indeed, in most cases the cynics reported positive identification with their organizations, but did not feel anything useful could come out of organizational strategy. Five categories of cynics were discovered using the schema on Figure 9 in Section 5.2. Each will be discussed in turn.

Hopeless cynic

Interviewee$_{16}$ **is a secretary in a public organization, with tenure of more than twenty years. She comments that she has had no reason to acquaint herself with the organizational strategy. During the years she has lost all faith in the top management who use lots of fine language but produce few results. On top of that, the top managers have been arguing among themselves for years now. Interviewee$_{16}$, on the other hand, is left alone with too much work. The strategic theme could provide a change to that but she doesn't believe this will happen. The strategic theme has, again, been just talk with no action taken.**

The hopeless cynic feels she has no access to information required for making sense of the organizational strategy. She also feels dissatisfied with her possibilities of influencing strategic issues. Yet she does not feel there is anything that she can do about it, and has lost all hope of trying to change even her own situation, not to mention issues transcending that.

It was notable that the group of hopeless cynics represented quite a homogenous population – all being operative personnel with a long service record in the organization. All the hopeless cynics gave complaints concerning strategic issues in their organizations. Many agents noted that lots of different development projects had been initiated but no real change ever took place. This kind of complaint was directed to the organizational level of analysis, implying an expectation that change should happen in the organization at large, i.e. change was regarded as a macro-, not a micro-, level phenomenon. Some said that true strategy was hidden from them. Some noted that nobody ever asked their opinion on strategic issues. Many agents also complained that human beings were not treated as such but as parts of a machine, to be measured in money.

> ***(Q68)*** *"The people upstairs should realize that people have other things in their lives than just work. That you should treat people as… more like human beings […] to regard people as human being the same way that customers are being treated. And not always just as workers who do the work. I think a spirit of humanity is lacking in this organization."*

Four typical roles emerged from the accounts of the interviewees, reflecting the hopeless cynic social position. Some interviewees were *disillusioned realists*. They felt that the true nature of their organization was such that nothing good ever came out of strategic efforts, no matter how many promises were made. This they had come to know from real-life experience.

> ***(Q69)*** *"… it feels like nobody really listens to our opinions and suggestions. You always hit a wall at some point. Nothing ever changes."*

The *critics* were people who managed to find a large number of issues that should be corrected, wrongs to be righted, but reported doing nothing about these issues. They did not feel any responsibility to correct the issues themselves, but usually directed the critique in a general, upward direction toward strategy makers. It would seem that

the critique posed was mainly triggered by the interview situation and not freely offered in many cases.

> ***(Q70)*** *"We talked about it [a strategic theme] in the [official strategy process], but I am not convinced about it in any way. On the surface the theme is just a change of terms, the risk being that they may change the names of existing units."*

The *hero* is an individual who emphasizes her own worth, or the worth of her team, to her organization, but nobody seems to notice. Her agenda is her own and not connected to strategy, nor does she have any intention of changing strategy through her action.

> ***(Q71)*** *"I myself think that we, as a unit are highly essential to [the organization], and competent, and ambitious, and proud. These are the principles behind my work. As a team I think we should enhance our profile. To be more credible. To be seen. But this is just my view. At this point I think we are all working on different fronts. If I would exaggerate it a bit, I could think that I work as a freelancer."*

Some interviewees, such as our interviewee$_{16,}$ were *tired ghosts*, disregarded, abandoned, alone. This is where hopelessness reached its highest plateau. Unlike their champion counterparts who found unofficial channels to influence strategic issues, the tired ghosts did no such thing but instead placed blame on other people for their predicament.

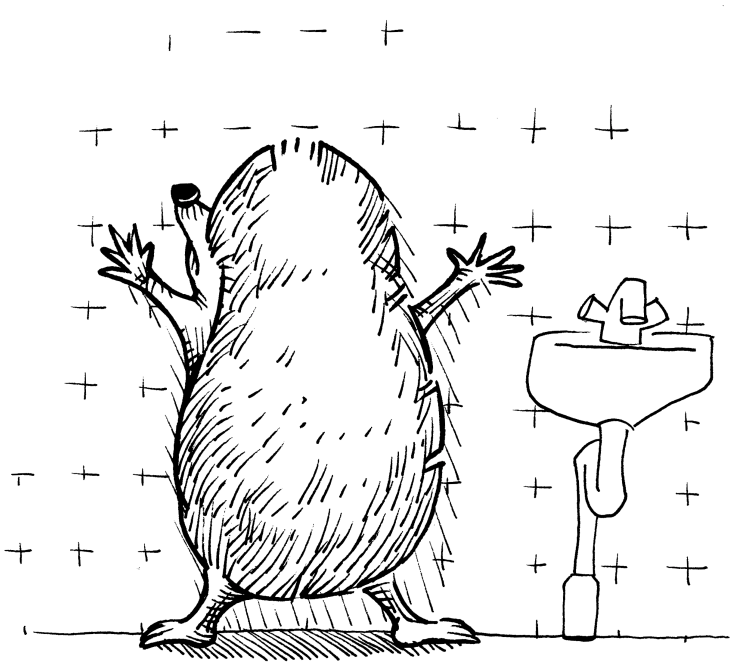
> ***(Q72)*** *"Two people from my team have already left […] the managers tell me that nobody will be hired in their place, "just try to find somebody to cover for you during vacations"[…] they don't take the responsibility, that tells a story about their attitudes. All that matters is that things get done, but when some small thing goes wrong, then they remember your existence. Doesn't this say something about management, and about the managers?"*

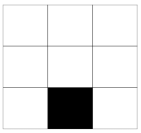
Whereas the *excluded champions* in general tried to find unofficial channels to *channel* their energies, influencing the strategy process, it would seem that the hopeless cynics used *coping methods* to bear their situation. Disillusioned realists formed a rationale based on pessimism, critics criticized everything but did nothing, heroes formed a belief of themselves as irreplaceable, and tired ghosts blamed other people. The roles and these methods are summarized in Table 22 below.

Table 22. Summary hopeless cynics

Role	Characteristics	Coping method
Disillusioned realist	Has encountered too many disappointments to believe in strategy	Abandoning hope about finding a strategic role
Toothless critic	Criticizes strategic issues, but does nothing to change issues	Voicing critique when asked, no action
Hero	Regards herself to be irreplaceable, works her own agenda, not connected to strategy	Emphasizing her value to her organization, even if not recognized by others
Tired ghost	Feels lonely and secluded in her cell	Placing blame on other people

It was interesting to notice that hopeless cynics can be distinguished according to the roles they attribute to themselves. In the case of champions and citizens, roles were described by agents who felt relatively content with their positions. This makes perfect sense. The hopeless cynic is a person who has no expectations of ever changing even her own social position. Therefore that position becomes perfectly clear in the interview text. The citizen and champion have not lost all hope. If something is wrong, they seek to change it.





Surrendered cynic

Interviewee$_{17}$ **is a sales manager in a large firm, with tenure over 10 years. He has a university background, which is not typical for people in relative positions. He feels he has a better understanding on organizational strategy "than many others". He is highly skeptical of the strategic theme ever being realized, because of the stagnated culture of his firm. He notes that the organization is being managed "like the Soviet Union", i.e. as a rigid bureaucracy. The organizational members are unwilling to change to facilitate the realization of any change. He does not even want to try to influence the organization or strategy anymore. He has surrendered to the thought that nothing even happens in his firm.**

The surrendered cynic feels she has made sense of strategy, yet faces an obstacle in her attempts to influence strategy in key issues. Her response is surrender. She has decided that strategy is not worth fighting for. While *hopeless cynics* represented a

homogenous population, the group of surrendered cynics was quite varied – from top management to operative personnel.

Some agents reported their main obstacle to be the *impossibility of influencing people*. One top manager related this to organizational politics, which was simply too hard to be overcome when introducing key strategic issues. His organization consisted of two main sections with conflicting interest, and tackling them both was a hopeless task. Our interviewee$_{17}$ reported that his organization's management culture was simply so stagnated with people holding to their own small territories, that nothing useful could be done in terms of strategic change.

> ***(Q73)*** *" […] sometimes it feels as if we didn't need customers at all, from the way there is a constant humdrum of "change processes" and internal meetings and strategic planning going on and so on […] In a way this is like the old communist party from the Soviet Union who had what, thousands of employees and one day, all of a sudden it was terminated. All of a sudden it was decided that it was not needed any more and so it wasn't. But they had their humdrum going on all that time. I think, in our worst hour, our organization is a bit like the communist party."*

One surrendered cynic reported that he was simply too *tired* of fighting. He had had one fight too many about an issue that he understood perfectly well was harmful to the organization. He was simply too tired to fight a useless fight championing an issue. The trouble was that he was the leader of a group of operative personnel who were forced to reorganize according to a procedure decided on the organizational level, yet which suited the team in question very badly. The leader had championed against the change for a long time, yet had not reached his goal. Talking about the whole issue seemed to make him angry.

> ***(Q74)*** *"Many things look good in theory, but fail in practice. I have a long working experience here and if I could just share some of that with others, who have less experience […] I just don't think that we used to do everything wrong before. It feels as if we have to change just for the sake of change […]"*

One surrendered cynic reported that it simply *did not pay off* to act strategically. He felt that acting strategically did not give him the benefits he wanted, in terms of monetary rewards and other benefits. It was as if he felt he had made an implicit deal with organizational strategy, one that the organization had fail to hold on to. His response was to find another employer.

> ***(Q75)*** *"Question: Do you think [the strategic theme] will be realized in [your organization]?*

Answer: If they manage to keep certain key personnel in the organization, then yes.

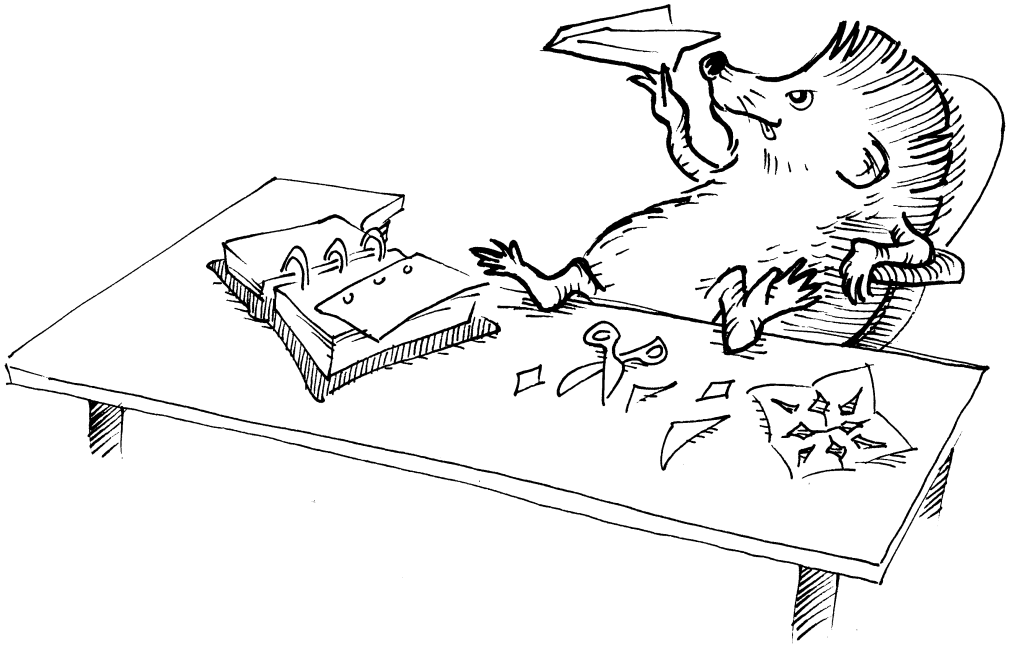
Question: Would you like to specify, which key personnel you are referring to?

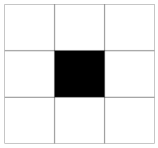
Answer: Well, those kind of people, for which it is very hard to find suitable replacements, either because they would demand such a high compensation for their work that the [employer] cannot afford it, or because the tasks themselves are so demanding and specific that you cannot really train for them in any other way than through long working experience."

The surrendered cynic is a person who has lost the fight to be either a citizen or a champion. She has surrendered to an impenetrable obstacle of some sort. The obstacles and their sources are summarized in Table 23 below.

Table 23. Summary of surrendered cynics

Obstacle	Source	Characteristics
Impossible to influence people to adopt strategy	Organizational politics / culture	E.g. politically stagnated decision making culture, people clinging to their positions
One fight too many	Experiences of championing	E.g. tired of trying to fight for a cause, decided to give up
Strategic action does not pay off	Benefits of acting strategically	E.g. leaving the organization because it does not pay to act strategically





Disinterested cynic

Interviewee$_{18}$ **is a middle manager leading a sales team in a large firm. He has less than two years of tenure under his belt. Confronted with strategy he comments that strategy plays no role in his work, because "it's just routine". While it may be nice to draw strategy process diagrams (which he thinks resemble Christmas decorations), they amount to nothing. The only goal is to make as much money to the organization as possible. Furthermore, this is the only kind of reasoning that his subordinates, the salespeople, "who are lazy by their very nature" really understand.**

The disinterested cynic does not feel any gaps in her understanding of strategy and her possibilities of influencing it. Yet she does not feel not think the strategy process has anything to do with her work. The agent who's simply regarding strategy as *useless* explains the fact that there would seem to be no tension between her happiness with her position and her seeming inactivity.

One interviewee explained her disinterest by arguing that his organization's strategy process was *just talk* with no real *intent* of actually realizing any strategic intent. He felt confident he understood the rules according to which the organization functioned. He noted that those rules had absolutely nothing to do with the notions of strategy that were conceptualized in the official strategy process.

> ***(Q76)*** *"[Yawns expressively], yeah right, I'm really moved by this [strategy diagram]. But these things don't work in practice. They are all very fine, you could decorate your Christmas tree with these, but in reality you can say right ahead that there's no chance […]"*

Another agent felt that the formal planning tools used in his organization's strategy process were harmful to *creativity*. He felt that the management was enamored with tools that tried to chain people's creativity to service some sort of managerial planning rationality. More freedom was needed.

> ***(Q77)*** *" […] the way they make strategy in this organization… It seems that the managers have adopted some pre-made conceptions on how organizations are managed and developed. These conceptions stem from management philosophies learned from outside the organization. They are easy to cling to in order to be assured that 'now I used this and this formula'. I would like the managers to be more creative in what they are doing, to use more spontaneity in the way they do their work."*

In a sense, the group of disinterested cynics is the paradigmatic, scornful image of the cynic that is upheld by certain writers (Dean & al. 1998, Reichers et al. 1997). There were only two of these cynics discovered in the interview texts, which meant that they were not a very substantial group, although they do provide insights into why some people have lost their faith in strategies.

Dislocated cynic

Interviewee$_{19}$ **is a top management team member and unit head in a public organization. He notes that he participates in the real strategy process by "thinking and communicating", while the formal strategy process of the organization is "a bunch of theoretical hooey". He initiated the execution of the strategic theme in his own unit, getting good results, after which the strategic theme was adopted into the official strategy process. He is happy about the development in of his own unit, but is openly critical, even hostile towards the organization as a whole. He notes that the only party benefiting from the current status quo are the management consultants. There should be a wide-ranging discussion involving a large group of stakeholders.**

The dislocated cynic is an agent, who feels she has not made sense of the strategy due to it being incomprehensible to her in some manner. Furthermore, she feels that she is unable to influence the strategy process to the extent that she would wish to. She is in a position that is *dislocated* in the strategy process in some way.

There were two kinds of dislocation identified in the interview text, radically different in nature. The first of these is a position of *oppression*. The agents felt that they were exploited by their organization, i.e. not given the proper say in strategic issues, controlled, made to work under too much direction. The agents all either expressed or reported a variety of strong negative emotions such as anger, frustration and bitterness, as well as some mixed mental states such as suspicions. Some agents reported that strategies were just a way for the management to get "feathers in their caps", taken out of the blood, sweat and tears of the employees. Other agents felt that the management was not candid with their subordinates, manipulating them and withholding the whole truth about organizational issues from them. One agent even expressed suspicion that the interview itself might be monitored through a surveillance camera.

> ***(Q78)*** *" […] the reason why I asked you whether we could talk safely in here is that there are cameras all over the place. I know some things that have not been publicly discussed.*
>
> *Question: Sounds kind of alarming…*
>
> *Answer: I don't like being watched. Having to show that you are really efficient all the time. It is a part of human nature that you cannot work on full steam all the time. Some days are just not as good as others."*

Most interviewees usually related their oppressed state to some *event* in their personal working *history* in the organization. Some events referred to contained an episode where the agent had been denied an opportunity in the organization: repositioning, management training, etc. Others had just ended up in conflicts with their supervisor. The notion of *procedural justice* has a strong presence here, as the agents did not regard the practices of dividing goods among individuals as fair and justified (cf. Greenberg, 1990).

> ***(Q79)*** *"In the beginning, we had a load of team spirit, the feeling of acting as a team and being one, but we have ended in a situation in which you cannot earn your way with good work. That is, if you are not best buddies with [the manager].*
>
> *Question: So your work does not influence how you can progress in the organization?*
>
> *Answer: At least I feel that way, yes. Some people get rewarded and others don't."*

Some agents did not report any historical event as a cause of their dislocation from the strategy process. They simply complained about the practices connected to strategy, getting into detail, but not personalizing the issues by linking them to their personal

histories. It was as if they were *angry customers*, unsatisfied with the services the management offered them in terms of the strategy process.

> ***(Q80)*** *"At the operative level we don't get much time for adjusting [to strategic changes][…] it is rarely that I get around to going [to the intranet] to look at these [strategy documents]. They do departmental plans every year, and of course plans on the higher level as well. We go through them at least once a year. But I don't pay much attention to them, unless they apply to me."*

One interesting notion uniting all the agents was that the agents reporting oppression could not characterize the ways in which they would have wanted to influence the strategy process. Their answers were typically quite confused and even self-contradictory. This can be understood when one remembers that knowledge and influence are related, as was noted in Section 3.3.

While oppression was a type of dislocation, another possibility was *disconnection* from the strategy process altogether. While all oppressed agents were operational personnel, cynics reporting dislocatedness were from all organizational levels from top management downwards. What was typical for these agents was that, while they described that they could not make sense of strategy and that their possibilities of influence were too limited, they also reported a phenomenon of *reclusion* similar to the recluse citizens discussed in the previous chapters. Cynics reporting dislocation emphasized a contrast between their own unit and the organization, describing the organization in a variety of unflattering terms, yet regarding their own unit as a pleasurable, safe and comprehensible sphere.

The interviewees gave a variety of criteria for the organizational level. Some interviewees, such as our interviewee$_{19}$, described it as a bureaucratic inferno, in which decisions were made in random, following all sorts of management fads and fashions or the will of external stakeholders. For these agents, their own unit was conceptualized as a safe haven of rationality and cooperation, whereas the organization represented political games and summary judgments.

> ***(Q81)*** *"I am just so tired with all this strategy mumbo jumbo. We have been planning and planning the organization for five years and made strategies and talked on and on at an extremely theoretical level. All this is totally alien to our employees and a new organization has still not been accomplished. New consultants come in all the time and bring in their theoretical models that are totally alienated from practice. It just doesn't work this way. All this could have been accomplished by putting the [top management team] in our [PR-facilities] for one or two days, to design the new organization, because we know well enough what our objectives are. We could have fought about it*

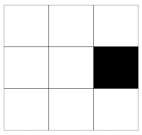
> *long enough for the "white smoke to come out of the chimney". Then we could have announced that the new organization has been born.*
>
> *Question: Why hasn't this been done?*
>
> *Answer: Well, apparently our [CEO] has been somewhat weak by not interfering, but we have one of our inside organizational units […] working this system and at times I feel that this unit is just looking for justification for its work from this constant process, and this process has gained a life of its own with no intention of ever reaching a conclusion."*

In a sense these disconnected cynics were "rebels without a cause". They had chosen not to operate as parts of organizational strategy, and not doing anything about changing the issues they had grown tired of.

While the two types of dislocation, namely oppression and disconnection, may seem to be radically different, they both reflect a dislocated social position in the general framework of structuration (see Figure 3), discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Oppression is clearly an issue directly related to the processes of *domination*, whereas disconnection is more a communicative type of dislocation – isolating oneself from communicating in the strategy process, integrating strategy into one's personal structures of meaning, etc. The two types of dislocation, along with their structuration linkages, are summarized in Table 24 below.

Table 24. Summary of dislocated cynics

Type of dislocation	Structuration dimension	Characteristics
Oppression	Domination	E.g. being bitter about current status in relation to some past event, being an "angry customer"
Disconnection	Communication	Regarding their own unit as a safe haven in contrast to the organizational level



Passive cynic

Interviewee$_{20}$ **is a clerk in a large firm, with tenure over 10 years. She thinks she has quite a good hold on organizational strategy, but feels unable to characterize its main points, or define the relevance of the strategic theme. She feels that some objectives have to be set for her team, but only in the hopes of a reward. She has not influenced any strategic objectives, but does not regard this as a problem, since she simply is not interested in influencing the strategy. When asked about the firm's future she notes that it will probably do as well as always and she will probably hang along.**

The passive cynic does not understand the organizational strategy, nor does she show much interest in changing this situation. In this sense, she resembles the *unenlightened citizen*, but, whereas the unenlightened citizen regarded strategy as something beneficial to the organization, yet better handled by others, the passive cynic thinks that strategy is either outright harmful or at least fails to bring about anything of value.

Three distinct *frames of mind* could be discerned from the interview text. These frames of mind reflected the agent's psychological position toward strategy, expressed both in explicit terms and in their manner of speaking. The *ironic cynics* portrayed a lot of sardonic wit in their answers, talking of the issues they felt worried or concerned about by ridiculing them, and also themselves, in the process. Some felt that the strategy was taking the organization in a harmful direction, while others were discontented because they were undervalued as members of the process. Yet all ironic cynics emphasized that they did not want any more influence in matters of strategy.

> ***(Q82)*** *"Most of my communication [to my unit] consists of face-to-face discussions about things.*
>
> *Question: Do these discussions usually take place in official or unofficial situations?*
>
> *Answer: Både och [both]. In unofficial situations, we speak of things in their real, disgusting form and when we get all official we sing the songs the company wants us to sing."*

Irony has been regarded as a useful channel for expressing perceived contradiction in organizational life (Hatch, 1997a). One may contest that viewpoint, however. In our context, it would seem that ironic cynics seemed to have abandoned strategy altogether. One is bound to think that humor may take the place of action in some contexts, i.e. the agent may not be motivated to face the trial of changing issues if she resorts to humor to alleviate the tension (Rodrigues & Collinson, 1995). This is related to the discussion of *dissent* in organizations. Dooley & Fryxell (1999) have discovered that dissent, in order to be fruitful, took the condition of *trust* in others and their *competence* as a prerequisite.

Some agents, such as our interviewee$_{20}$, were simply *spiteful* toward strategy and their own positions in the strategy process. They showed disregard of both strategy and their own role in it. In this frame of mind, the concept of taking action to influence strategy was regarded as not being very feasible and also as a source of extra work.

> ***(Q83)*** *"… look, it's quite a small button that I get to press in this organization."*

Some agents were *disbelievers* in strategy. These agents felt that strategy was taking the organization in the wrong direction. They could not see the grounds on which strategy could be regarded as a sensible direction for the organization to take. Therefore they had ceased to take great interest in strategic issues.

> ***(Q84)*** *"I very rarely go to them [CEO Q&A sessions], because they are you know… I think that they are, as other [strategy communication], kind of just for show."*

The passive cynics were passive in terms of three frames of mind that are summarized in Table 25 below. They reported a situation in which they had not made sense of strategy with all its seeming contradictions, yet they reported no attempt to change this.

Table 25. Summary of passive cynics

Frame of mind	Reaction to strategy	Characteristics
Ironic	Sardonic humor	Channeling paradoxes in strategy in humorous expressions
Spiteful	Disregard and disrespect	Showing disrespect toward both the strategy process and their own position in it
Disbeliever	Disbelief and disregard (no expressions of dissent)	Stopping attempts at influencing the strategy process due to a general disbelief in this ever working out

Strategic cynics: a summary

The cynics are individuals who reported a negative orientation toward their organization's strategy process. They do not act as parts of the strategy process, yet they may have a positive orientation toward their own personal work and the organization in general. Five types of cynics were discovered in the interview texts; these are portrayed in Figure 12.

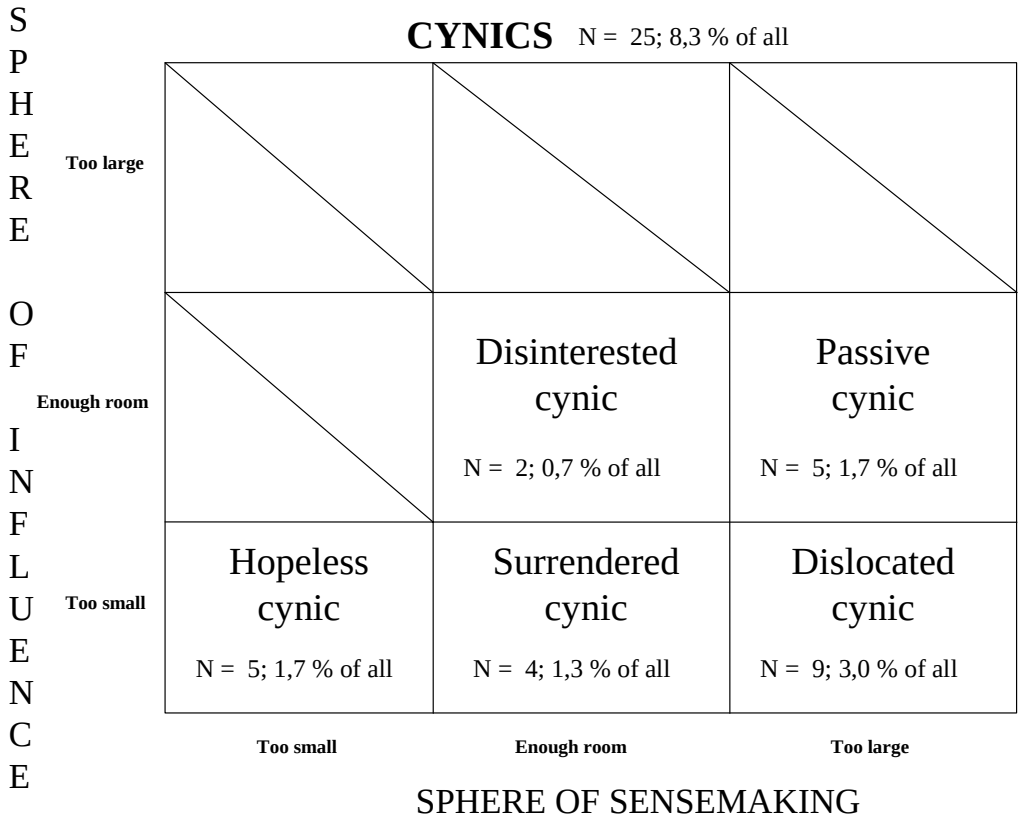
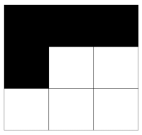


Figure 12. The cynics of strategy

Cynics were clearly the smallest activity group, amounting to less than 10 percent of the interviewees. The cynics are distributed quite evenly in the discovered positions. Whereas there were large groups among citizen positions and especially among champions, there are no such clearly dominant groups among cynics. What is striking about Figure 12 is that all the cynics are located on the lower portion of the grid, i.e. all of those individuals who had given up the strategic action felt that they either had too little or enough possibilities of influencing strategy. None of them felt that too much was expected of them. It would seem that responsibility and cynicism do not occur in concert.



The two tiles left empty among citizens were left empty with cynics as well. Two more positions were left unsupported by the cynic data, i.e. those positions corresponding to champions under stress / citizens in need, and lost citizens / overwhelmed champions. These positions were just those in which the agents felt too much was expected of them in terms of independent decision making. No cynic felt too much was expected from her in terms of strategy.

The interesting question concerning them is what each group of cynics would like to be. The very notion of cynicism would seem to indicate that there is no single comfortable position within that group - cynicism is not something a person usually strives toward. There was no gravitational center for the cynics, whereas with champions it was clearly the *empowered champion* position, and with citizens the *satisfied citizen* for the most part. The position of the *disinterested cynic*, however, was scarcely populated and did not entail any roles, but only accounts as to why the agents could not care less about strategy.

There was a set of roles discovered in the group of *hopeless cynics*, however. These were agents who had been frozen in an uncomfortable and disregarded position, ending up being cynics such as toothless critics or disillusioned realists. The *surrendered* cynics had given up on the face of a large obstacle. The *dislocated cynics* felt they had not made sense of strategy and had too little influence, being either oppressed by strategy or disconnected from the strategy process. The *passive cynics* had not made sense of strategy, and did not even want to. The different varieties of cynics are summarized in Table 26 below.

Table 26. Cynics summarized

Cynic	Sensemaking sphere / influence sphere	Characterization	Distinguishing factor	Typical cases
Hopeless	Too small / too small	Lost hope of ever having an active position	Roles	Disillusioned realist, toothless critic
Surrendered	Too small / enough room	Stopped fighting	Obstacle	Politics, one fight too many
Disinterested	Enough room / enough room	Shows no interest in strategy, regards it as useless	Grounds for disinterest	"Talk, talk", killing creativity
Dislocated	Too large / too small	In a displaced position	Type of dislocation	Oppressed, disconnected
Passive	Too large / enough room	Not made sense and not interested	Frame of mind toward strategy	Ironic, spiteful, disbeliever

6.4 Champions, citizens, cynics. A summary

I have given a description of all the twenty social positions. I began each description with a summary of a micronarrative extracted from one person's interview text, widening the scope to discuss all the individuals falling under the category. I have briefly discussed those seven categories hinted by the schema in Figure 9, but which were not supported by the data.

As I warned the reader at the beginning if the section, multiple paths emerging from the data were to be encountered in this chapter. There are two ways the multiple paths can be summarized, a numerical viewpoint and a conceptual viewpoint. I will close this chapter with the numerical viewpoint. The conceptual viewpoint will be the task of the third and final encounter with the data, the topic of discussion in the next chapter.

The frequencies of the positions are portrayed in Table 27 below.[21] Champions are the largest group. There were not as many citizens, but the group is still quite large.

[21] A frequency table in the midst of a phenomenological discussion may no doubt raise a few eyebrows. I wish to point out, however, that I am only *displaying* my data in a different manner. No external variables have been introduced.

Cynics are a minor group. The major individual positions were the *empowered champions* and *unenlightened citizens*. There were also quite a few puzzled champions.

Table 27. Discovered frequencies of the social positions

	Sphere of Sensemaking	Sphere of influence	N	%
Champions			158	52,4
Excluded	Too small	Too small	10	3,3
Abandoned	Too small	Too large	1	0,3
Discontent	Enough room	Too small	20	6,6
Empowered	Enough room	Enough room	**72**	**24**
Under stress	Enough room	Too large	7	2,3
Disregarded	Too large	Too small	7	2,3
Puzzled	Too large	Enough room	**29**	**9,6**
Overwhelmed	Too large	Too large	12	4
Citizens			118	39,4
Recluse	Too small	Too small	15	5
Neutralized	Enough room	Too small	9	3
Satisfied	Enough room	Enough room	24	8
In need	Enough room	Too large	3	1
Troubled	Too large	Too small	14	4,7
Unenlightened	Too large	Enough room	**42**	**14**
Lost	Too large	Too large	11	3,7
Cynics			25	8,4
Hopeless	Too small	Too small	5	1,7
Surrendered	Enough room	Too small	4	1,3
Disinterested	Enough room	Enough room	2	0,7
Dislocated	Too large	Too small	9	3
Passive	Too large	Enough room	5	1,7

More than one in two interviewees were analyzed as strategic champions. This is somewhat striking. My experiences in talking with people responsible for strategy would not indicate such a wide championship. A somewhat banal yet common conception of strategy implementation in real-life organizations would seem to be that it is very problematic to motivate people to think outside of their immediate spheres of work. Yet the people gave accounts of something very different. On the other hand, only one fourth of the interviewees were *empowered champions*. The major groups of champions deviating from empowerment were *puzzled champions* who felt that the sensemaking challenge was too large, and *discontent champions* who were dissatisfied with their possibilities of influencing the strategic issues.

With citizens the remarkable phenomenon seems to be that more citizens were *unenlightened* than *satisfied*. This would seem to indicate that there are more people out there who have not made sense of the strategy - and are content with that

situation. Those who have made sense of strategy and are content fitting their own work practices to support strategy as *satisfied citizens* represent a smaller group in the citizen population.

Cynics seem to be quite rare. Less than a tenth of the interviewees corresponded to that category. Yet I suspect that many more people are treated as cynics. There were citizens and champions who disagreed with the organizational strategic direction yet who regarded strategy as worthwhile and were willing to participate in activities to change strategy in a direction they deemed important. In real life, the line between cynics and *strategic dissidents* may have become blurred.

7. Role-players, role-seekers and bystanders. Third encounters with the data

In the last chapter, I described twenty social positions in the strategy process, falling under the categories champion, citizen and cynic. In a sense, one might think my task would be finished. My research question: *How can an individual agent be socially positioned in the strategy process?* has been answered through the description of the twenty positions. Yet there are questions that still remain unanswered.

Many positions discussed have a lot in common between them. In writing descriptions of the social positions, I noticed that there were *recurrent themes* that ran through positions, and across borders between cynics, citizens and champions. Many positions contained a variety of roles, through the performance of which the agents acted strategically. Many position accounts contained descriptions of obstacles, prohibiting strategic action. These are just a two examples. I feel that the recurrent themes call for saturation of some sort.

The discussion of positions in the last chapter was structured according to the *activity* dimension, discussing champions, citizens and cynics as separate groups. I did this because it I felt the activity categories were easier to comprehend in isolation than sensemaking or influence. The fact that there are recurrent themes would seem to stem from this structuring of the text; the recurrent themes would look different if the discussion were structured according to 'too little – enough – too much influence', for example. If a unified framework of positions is to be built, a fourth dimension from which the positions can be perceived should be found.

In order to identify this dimension, I started recording themes that were relevant to various positions and then crosschecking the position descriptions in association with the themes to see which positions were interrelated through which themes. I relied heavily on the summary tables I had written for each position, trying to think of unifying factors. The answer was found as I started to look at the *distinguishing factors* I had used in characterizing individual accounts within positions, such as roles, obstacles and frames of mind. Looking at the distinguishing factors, I realized

that the positions could be grouped in accordance with a *performative dimension*, reflecting Goffman somewhat (1959; cf. Chapter 3 of this thesis).

The performative dimension helps me to move beyond champions, citizens and cynics, the basis for the structure of the second encounter. The performance dimension is structured in accordance with an *actualized* performance of an individual in the strategy process. As was noticed, not all champions, for instance, felt that they were able to *perform* the role they would have wanted to. The notion of knowledgeability explicated by structuration theory has justified them in describing their willingness and attempts to champion strategic issues, even if they were prevented from realizing their aspirations. In the light of the performative dimension, it is possible to group the positions into the following three *performance categories*:

1) Positions in which agents performed *roles* in the strategy processes
2) Positions in which agents *sought for* roles to play in the strategy process
3) Positions in which individuals did not play, nor desired strategic roles.

I shall use the term *role-players* for agents in the first group, *role-seekers* for agents in the second group, and *bystanders* for agents in the third group (Figure 13).

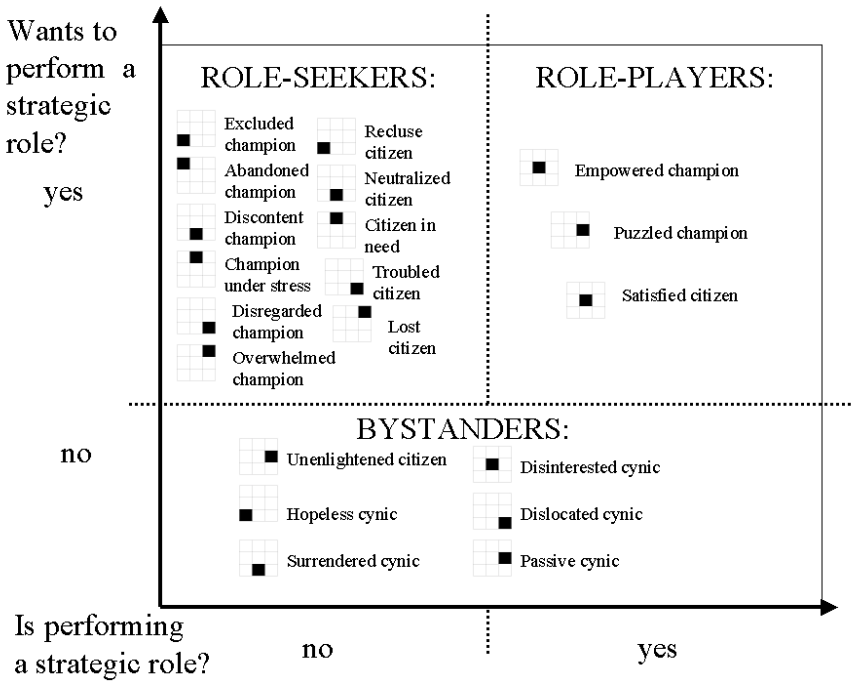


Figure 13. Role-seekers, role-players and bystanders

Empowered champions and satisfied citizens were clearly role-players. Empowered champions felt they had both the comprehension and the power to influence issues they thought strategic, and so they did. Puzzled champions were also strategic role-players, but of a more cautious nature – they felt that issues were too complex for them to claim to have made full sense of them. Satisfied citizens were content with acting as members of the strategy process within their immediate spheres of work.

All the cynics were bystanders. While some of their accounts contained roles, these were clearly set outside the strategy process. Cynics explicitly denied seeking or playing a strategic role. Unenlightened citizens likewise denied playing or wanting a strategic role, feeling strategy was best performed by others. They felt, however, that the strategy process was overall a beneficial and relevant phenomenon for their organizations.

There was a group of champion and citizen positions in which the agents did not feel they were able to perform the strategic roles they should have performed. Individuals in these positions are role-seekers. The accounts of these individuals were typically characterized by their giving reasons for them not being able to perform strategically. Some positions, such as recluse citizens, seemed relatively static, but unlike cynics, all role-seekers expressed a willingness to be in some other position, even if they may have been pessimistic about their chances of being able to find a strategic role. The overall performative categorization of positions is summarized in Table 28 below.

Table 28. Performative categorization of positions

Performance	Characterization	Positions
Role-player	Acts in a strategic role	Empowered champion, puzzled champion, satisfied citizen
Role-seeker	Aspires to act in a strategic role, but is prevented from realizing the aspiration	Excluded champion, abandoned champion, dissatisfied champion, champion under stress, disregarded champion, overwhelmed champion, recluse citizen, neutralized citizen, citizen in need, troubled citizen, lost citizen
Bystander	Does not act in a strategic role, nor wishes to do so	Unenlightened citizen, hopeless cynic, surrendered cynic, disinterested cynic, dislocated cynic, passive cynic

7.1 Role-players

A role-player is an individual who is able to perform in a strategic role. The *empowered champion* assumed a strategic role because she was empowered to do so. Empowered champions were individuals who typically had an official sanction to act strategically, and were often top and middle managers. These formal positions were associated with such roles as *prophets, teachers* and *parents*. Among empowered champions there were also *free agents* who were typically operational personnel members finding unofficial channels in which to participate. Empowered champions played an active part in influencing people and the organization in strategic issues. *Puzzled champions* tended to concentrate on discussing issues causing puzzlement, yet they also gave hints of roles similar to those played by empowered champions.

The *satisfied citizens* assumed more passive roles in the strategy process, acting to support the process but not seeking to influence issues outside of their working practices. Satisfied citizens were typically content in following rules and belonging to the process, corresponding to such roles as *implementers* and *rule-followers*. The best way I could think of characterizing the role-types was by noting their *orientation* to strategy. The roles, along with their orientations are visualized in Figure 14 below.

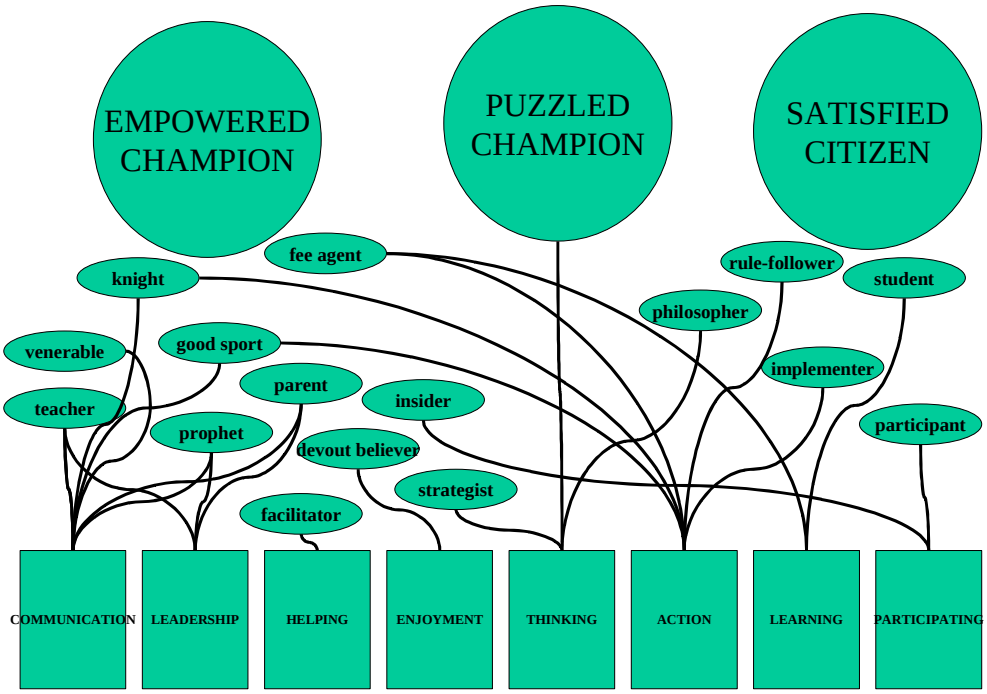


Figure 14. Roles and their orientations to strategy

Implementers, rule-followers, good sports, knights and free agents had an *action* orientation to strategy. Their roles were performed through realizing strategy by acting strategically. Implementers, rule-followers and good sports correspond quite closely to Kelley's conformist roles, discussed in Section 3.6. Conformists are the kinds of followers that have a high level of activity but a low level of independence.

The free agent role was also characterized by a *learning* orientation, along with the student role. The strategy process is an abstract entity, especially in a large organization. To play a strategic role is a process of learning, as was emphasized by these two roles. The free agent is what I think most closely resembles Kelley's exemplary follower. She is at the same time active in her attempts to act strategically, and independent and resourceful in finding out about strategy and learning a role in it. The free agent role is also sympathetic to Hamel's notion of strategic revolutionaries.

The parent, prophet and teacher are the kinds of roles usually associated with top managers and opinion leaders. Their orientation is towards *communication* and *leadership*, communicating strategic contents, influencing people, nurturing their growth as strategic thinkers, teaching them a new way of doing things. These roles are concentrated on the issues involved in Mintzberg's interpersonal leadership roles. Pitcher's artist leaders correspond to the prophet role, whereas teachers and parents are more closely related to Pitcher's craftsman leaders.

The knight has a strong communication orientation as well, but corresponds more closely to a more middle-managerial setting. This role emphasizes the activity of championing, identified by Floyd and Wooldridge on middle management strategic roles. The knight is attempting to change the organization from the middle, both upward and downward. The middle-managerial activity of facilitation, also identified by Floyd and Wooldrige is emphasized in the facilitator role. The facilitators encountered in my data were typically agents in support functions rather than operative middle managers, however.

The insider and participant roles were characterized by the emphasis on the importance of participating, having a role in the strategy process. The insiders emphasized the preciousness of their privileged positions, whereas the participants portrayed a collectivist emphasis on acting in concert with others in the strategy

process. The insiders were typically middle managers and their role corresponds somewhat to Floyd & Wooldridge's championing role: having the ear of one's superior and the possibility of championing issues.

The strategist role places its emphasis on strategic content, making the right decisions and identifying strategy – i.e. thinking. As a champion role, the strategist role bears a certain emphasis on Pitcher's technocrat leaders. Philosophers were also thinkers but in a more passive manner. Their reflections centered on retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 1995), whereas strategists had a more prospective emphasis. While the identification of puzzled champion roles was harder, they certainly had an emphasis on thinking as they sought to understand strategy.

The venerable role is centered on sharing one's wisdom and experiences, i.e. on communication. As such, it bears a resemblance to knowledge management notions of strategy, such as the idea of sharing tacit knowledge proposed by Nonaka & Takeuchi. The devout believer had a unique orientation towards enjoyment, being in love with her organization.

7.2 Role-seekers

In the end of the previous section, it was noted that a third of the middle managers interviewed and forty percent of the operative employees were role-seekers. This category also applied to a fifth of the top managers. The essence of being a role-seeker is that something is keeping the agent from performing in the strategic role she would want to perform in.

The theory of structuration is built on the notion of a constant process between action and structure, in which structure is reified, and from which action derives its meaning. The structures, such as a strategy process, exist in constant interaction between agents, consisting of power, communication and sanction (cf. Figure 3 in Section 3.3). Regarded from this frame, it would seem that role-seekers have yet to find a meaningful stance of interaction with the strategy process. It is as if there is a form of misalignment between the agent and the strategy process, as if the strategy process was not reified at all in the actions of the agent, because the agents' social position failed to 'lock' in meaningful interaction with the strategy process.

Needs and aspirations

Some agents had identified what they needed to form a meaningful interactive stance with strategy. The citizens in need are the locus category here, to which several other categories are related. With citizens in need, the reported need was related to the agent's ability to act in a certain strategic position. Some agents needed further *instructions* to act as rule-followers (satisfied citizens). Some citizens wanted to act as implementers (satisfied citizens) and needed *management decisions* to legitimate their actions. A similar need for the legitimation of action was reported by some overwhelmed champions, as well as champions under stress.

Many champions under stress needed *help* from others in things that were causing the stress, in order to act as empowered champions. Some middle manager champions said they were "between a rock and a hard place", being denied support from both superiors and subordinates to make strategy work. Many recluse citizens felt that they needed something to get out of their excluded position. Some needed more help in terms of *attention and support* from their supervisors. Others needed more information and others looser job descriptions (legitimation of strategic action). Troubled citizens also reported needing more *encouragement* to participate in discussion. They also needed *sensemaking facilitation* in the form of better definitions of strategic concepts and more reasons given for strategic decisions.

Some managers who were citizens in need or champions under stress needed better leadership skills to act as *empowered champions.* They were suspicious of their own leadership capabilities, but still did their best to act as strategic champions, aspiring to be better leaders. Some troubled citizens also reported an aspiration to adopt a more active attitude towards strategy in the future.

These needs can be regarded in the light of the three types of interaction explicated in the theory of structuration (communication, power, legitimation). It would appear that all the three types of interaction were behind the needs of role-seeking agents. Some felt there was a lack in communication (lacking instructions, lacking sensemaking facilitation). Some felt they needed more legitimation for their actions (need of instructions and rules). Others felt a lack of power (help, superior decision making).

Often multiple types were missed in concert. Some needs did not concern interaction, but could be better characterized as individual aspirations of bettering oneself.

All in all the agents generally reported needing personal support through either co-operation, decision making, information or sensemaking facilitation from other agents. Some needed structural support in the form of rules from the organization. Some needed to *be something more* themselves, i.e. *aspired* for better skills in, for example, leadership. The needs are summarized in Table 30 below.

Table 30. Needs

Need	Form of interaction	Reported by
Further instructions	Legitimation, communication	Citizens in need
Decision making	Legitimation	Citizens in need, overwhelmed champions, recluse citizens
Sensemaking facilitation	Communication	Recluse citizens, troubled citizen
Supportive actions (help, attention, encouragement)	Power	Champions under stress, recluse citizens, troubled citizen
Better skills	N.A. (personal aspiration)	Citizens in need, champions under stress
More active attitude	N.A. (personal aspiration)	Troubled citizen
Rules	Legitimation	Citizens in need

Obstacles

Many role-seeking accounts could best be characterized through the obstacles that the agents reported, the external forces that kept them from reaching a satisfactory position. These agents conceived their misalignment with the strategy process, not through a need or aspiration, but through a blockage or stonewall.

Many role-seeking positions included notions that *strategy content* itself posed an obstacle, by being misguided in some way, by not being given proper grounds for it, or by not being comprehensible. Some troubled citizens felt that the organization was going in the wrong direction and that they were somehow unable to stop this. They needed the strategy to change or at least make better sense of it. Their reaction was going back to work, doing that well and trying not to worry too much. Similar concerns were voiced by some neutralized citizens. Some *citizens in need* who could

not understand what strategy meant would have needed guidelines. Some felt that the strategic content was itself separated from practice and hard to comprehend. The complaint that organizational strategy was incomprehensible or even inconsistent was echoed by some disregarded champions.

Some disregarded champions faced a lacking *time resource* that stopped them from immersing themselves in strategy. Neutralized citizens echoed them somewhat, feeling, furthermore, that they did not have the legitimate position to act as much as they would have wanted. Some felt that organizational *culture* limited their use of voice. Discontent champions echoed the complaint of culture, stating that it was in some cases too stagnated to facilitate change.

The obstacles can be reflected against the three types of interaction as well as the needs described in the previous section (Table 31 below). The obstacles usually reflect a complex of interaction types.

Table 31. Obstacles

Obstacle	Interaction	Reported by
Strategy content	Communication (e.g. not understandable), power (e.g. wrong direction)	Troubled citizens, neutralized citizens, citizens in need, disregarded champions
Resources (time)	Legitimation (position does not warrant the use of time)	Disregarded champions, neutralized citizens
Culture	Legitimation (use of voice), power (stagnation opposing change), communication (hierarchy preventing information flow)	Neutralized citizens, discontent champions

Isolation of an individual of the strategy process

Certain role-seeking positions did not contain a simple description of an obstacle or a need. Social positions that were based on a gap in both sensemaking and in influence were challenging, because usually there was no single dimension or issue in which they could be analyzed. Then it began to appear that the individuals addressed the very link between their position and themselves, the complex of interaction that constitutes structuration between an individual and the strategy process. These individuals gave an account of *being isolated* from the strategy process.

Excluded champions stated their exclusion in terms of this isolation. *Seniors* were individuals who had too narrow an official sphere, but large amounts of experience that they sought to share through their social networks. *Ghosts* were individuals who had no real connection to the strategy process, but were angrily trying to create a link. Many recluse citizens also described their situation in terms of the isolation metaphor. Some felt that their whole unit or team was *disrespected*, as were they themselves as part of it. Some felt that their official job descriptions were too narrow to warrant strategic action, even if they wanted to take it. The type of isolation portrayed here is mainly a question of legitimation, and it could be called *office isolation*, employing the concept of office from Katz & Kahn (cf. Section 3.6).

Many lost citizens echoed the notion of isolation, claiming that they were *conceptually* isolated from strategy, not being able to make sense of what should be done. Some chose to willingly lock themselves away from the strategy process, sticking to the completion of their work. The abandoned champion was a special case of an individual who had been left with a large responsibility for making sense of strategic issues in her work, with no real possibilities of comprehending the strategy process. Some overwhelmed champions were in a similar situation. They felt they were too inexperienced to handle the responsibility entrusted to them.

Some troubled citizens described their predicament as being *suppressed* by systems and culture. Discontent champions differed in all the rest of the social positions presented in association with the connection theme in the sense that they presented only an influence gap, and not a sensemaking gap. Yet the obstacles they described, such as *unit borders*, *culture*, *hierarchy*, and *organization size*, are so vast and complex in nature that they are better presented as issues of connection between the individual and the strategy process, not as single obstacles. Those issues are mediators that link the individual and the strategy process, presented as reasons for the isolation of the individuals. This type of isolation could be called *externalized* isolation, because the agent presents her isolation as being caused by something external, and not being a property of the interaction itself.

The three types of isolation are summarized in Table 32 below.

Table 32. Isolation

Isolation type	Interaction	Reported by
Office isolation	Legitimation	Excluded champions, recluse citizens
Conceptual isolation	Communication	Lost citizens, overwhelmed champions, abandoned champion
Externalized	Complex (e.g. culture)	Troubled citizens, discontent champions

Summary of role-seekers

The role-seeker is searching for a strategic role, while feeling prevented from acting in it. Three types of accounts describing the misalignment between the individual position and the strategy process have been discussed. Many types of problems arising from the existence of an individual in an organization have been highlighted. From a structuration standpoint, the position of a role-seeker can be thought of in terms of misalignment between an individual and the strategy process, i.e. the three processes of interaction: communication, legitimation and power. I have illustrated the interaction processes with the misalignment types in order to display the issues role-seekers are struggling with in Figure 15 below.

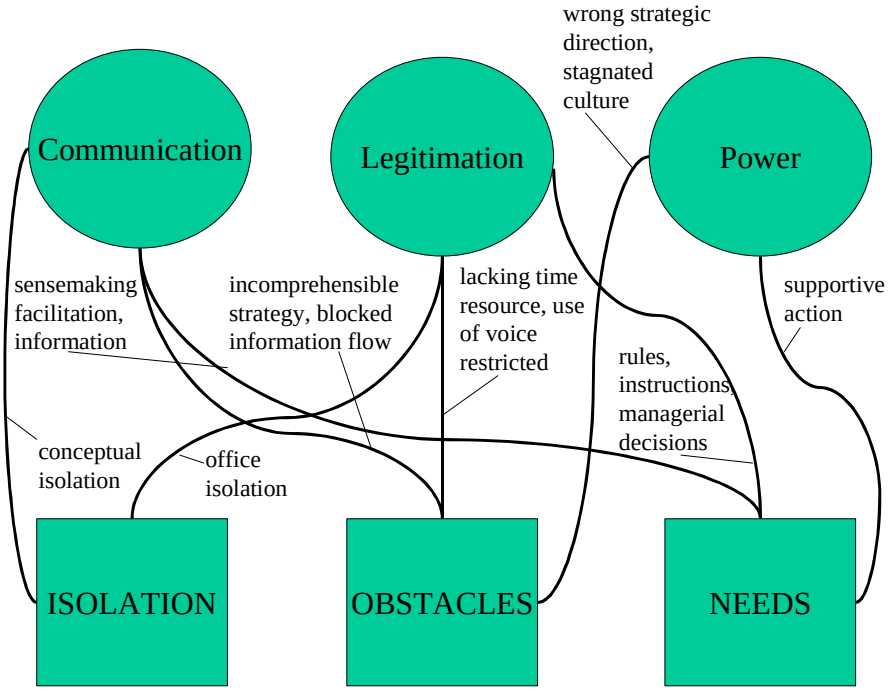


Figure 15. Summary of reasons for role-seeking in a structuration framework

Figure 15 can be used as a summary for understanding the reasons preventing role-seekers, agents intent on performing strategic roles, from performing as members of the strategy process. Some role-seekers could characterize what they needed in order to be able perform in a strategic role. Some others emphasized the kinds of things they were up against as they sought out their strategic role. Some agents could not give a clear description of either of the above, but instead gave a description of their isolated status.

7.3 Bystanders

Bystanders are those individuals who are not playing or seeking a strategic role. Some are openly critical or even hostile toward strategy, while others feel it is best dealt with by others. Unenlightened citizens, the largest group of citizens, were characterized by the latter attitude. While they gave a variety of reasons for not having made sense of strategy (does not remember, has not had the time, etc.), their accounts are characterized by a general willingness to let others worry about strategy. Some regarded this as a straightforward question of *legitimation* (strategy was not a part of their job description) while others also related *communication* aspects to it (e.g. no sense made of strategy documents). The overall spirit was, however, that unenlightened citizens did not want a strategic role.

Cynics did not want a strategic role, not because strategy was best put into effect by others, but for the reason that strategy was not a worthwhile activity at all. Passive cynics had not made sense of strategy nor did they want to. They did not give any further explanations, but just communicated that strategy was not worthwhile. Some of them were *ironic* and resorted to their sardonic wit in discussing strategic issues. Some were *spiteful* towards the strategy process and themselves. Others communicated *disbelief* toward strategy and their own positions in it. Disinterested cynics had made sense of strategy and thought they could influence it if they wanted to. They just did not want to have anything to do with it. They gave grounds for their disinterest by stating strategy was either a killer of creativity or simply has no effect on real-life issues. Surrendered cynics had ceased to be active in affecting strategic issues, though they used to care about them in the past. After encountering an obstacle, they had stopped trying. Some felt that strategic action *did not pay off* in terms of personal benefits. Some reflected the large-scale notions of discontent

champions (culture, hierarchy, organization size, unit borders, etc.) and noted that it was impossible to counter them. It seems that most surrendered cynics used to be champions who had been disappointed at some stage. Dislocated cynics regarded the strategy as an openly threatening phenomenon. Some felt that it was a mechanism of oppression that was used to trample their right to have a say in the organization's future, or even of their right to control their own destiny. Some felt that it was a mechanism best avoided altogether. They tried to stay disconnected from the strategy process.

Reasons why bystanders refrain from seeking a strategic role are summarized below (Table 33). It seems that in some cases bystanders regard their stance towards strategy as preferable (unenlightened citizens, passive cynics), but in other positions the passive stance towards strategy stems from frustration or otherwise unpleasant experiences with strategy.

Table 33. Summary of bystanders and their reasons

"Strategy is..."	Elaborations	Reported by
Somebody else's business	Position does not warrant participation, no time to participate	Unenlightened citizens
Not worth knowing	Not interested in giving strategy further thought	Passive cynics
Not worth doing	Strategy does not warrant action	Disinterested cynics
Disappointing	Lost faith in strategic action	Surrendered cynics
Threatening	It is best to keep out of strategy's way	Dislocated cynics

7.4 The link of social positions to strategic performance

The discussion in this chapter has dealt with the issue of whether individuals perform strategic roles or not. Role-players could and wanted to, role-seekers could not yet wanted to, and bystanders did not want to, regardless of whether they could or could not. The essence of this discussion is the question of whether individuals enact organizational strategies. If an individual envisions herself playing a role in the strategy process, then strategy is being enacted, at least from her point of view. One can therefore argue that role-playing is a condition for strategic performance, at the individual level of analysis.

Role-playing social positions (free agents, prophets, implementers, etc.) provide strategic agents with role-models to choose from, whereas the discussion of role-seekers has provided us with a viewpoint on the problems that people encounter in trying to play strategic roles. These problems need to be dealt with in order to facilitate strategic action: obstacles removed, needs fulfilled, etc. Bystanders are something of an enigma – some of them seem to regard strategy as someboldy else's business, which may even work in some contexts, but the ones portraying open hostility towards strategy are problematic. We have gained insight on the reasons why strategy can make somebody cynical. The understanding of those reasons should enable champions to avoid creating more cynics.

What is the relation of the condition of role-playing to the fulfillment of the organizational strategy in general? The complete execution of organizational strategy is a very difficult question; yet role-playing is a partial answer to this. Other answers have been given in classical strategy literature: answers mainly related to structure and systems. All in all, the weight that is given to role-playing as a condition is based on what strategy is. The structuration model presented here makes social positions and role-playing a central question. A rational planning model regards these as less important because all that a rational model needs from operative individuals is compliance. An environmental determinist model would perhaps not regard role-playing as very important because organizational strategy is already determined from the outside, no matter what roles the individuals play[22].

Strategy process authors generally admit that individual actions do matter in most cases. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) have argued that strategic planning models exist *de facto* only in special cases such as some military organizations. Most non-emergent strategies are *umbrella* strategies that set general guidelines for action, *process* strategies that create structural boundaries for action, or *ideological* strategies in which a collective vision is shared – i.e. models in which individuals have an interpretive capacity. Hart (1992) has argued that strategy processes that allow organizational members the role of active players produce higher performance due to a greater balance between the contributions of top managers and organizational

[22] The more I think of this, the more curious the thought becomes. I have always had a difficulty comprehending determinist ecolological models.

members. In literature, few authors are willing to counter arguments such as those presented above, yet as noted many times earlier, curiously little research has been done on the level of the individual organizational member.

One of the main determinants for the *expected* role of the individual is her formal position. To conclude my discussion on individual strategic performance, I will relate the discussion to the formal positions held by individuals to their performance categories.

Role-playing and formal position

As I described the different positions in the second encounter, I did not discuss the interviewees' formal positions except in the situations in which they mentioned them themselves. In reflecting the roles against literature (section 3.6), I have raised the issue of formal positions, because this is the way the *literature* is structured: people write on middle management roles or top management roles.

While I have been cautious of discussing official positions due to the phenomenological paradigm represented by this thesis, there is quite a strong logical relation between formal and phenomenological social positions, because organizations do have a formal dimension to them. Furthermore, no doubt many readers will ask themselves how formal positions are reflected in the social positions categorized here. Moreover, according to its basic definition, a role is constituted of the expectations directed toward an individual. Formal position certainly affects what is expected of an organizational member.

The distribution of top and middle managers, as well as operative personnel members in the activity categories (champion, citizen, cynic) and the performance categories (role-players, role-seekers, bystanders), is presented in Table 29 below. It should come as no surprise that almost all top managers were analyzed as champions. What I think to be the most important lesson in Table 29 is that only half of the middle managers and less than a third of the operative employees performed roles in the

strategy process. A third of the middle managers and forty percent of the operative personnel are role-seekers, unable to perform the roles they would like to.[23]

Table 29. Formal positions and performance categories

	% Champions	% Citizens	% Cynics
Top managers	**92,3**	2,6	5,1
Middle managers	78,3	18,1	3,6
Operative personnel	31,8	57	11,2
	% Role-players	**% Role-seekers**	**% Bystanders**
Top managers	74,4	20,5	5,1
Middle managers	**54,2**	36,1	9,6
Operative personnel	28,5	**40**	31,8

What is striking about these results is that quite a few people in operative and middle management positions are seeking to play a strategic role yet are prevented from doing this. While individual role-playing may not be a determining factor to the realization of strategy in all models of strategy, it is a determining factor in many models. Concerning the models worrying about individuals enacting strategy, it must be sadly noted that in real life, strategy is certainly not an everyday phenomenon in the work of many potential strategic agents.

[23] A more thorough statistical description of the data can be found in Appendix 4.

8. Discussion

The research question set for this thesis was defined as:

In what ways can an individual agent be socially positioned in an organizational strategy process?

I have first explored this topic by building a theoretical link between the individual agent and the strategy process in two encounters with theory. In the first encounter I moved from the strategy downward toward the individual (Chapter 2) and then in the second encounter from the individual to strategy (Chapter 3). I then conducted a three-encounter, iterative analysis of the data consisting of 301 semi-structured interviews, first building a schema for analyzing the data, then using the schema to understand and describe 20 social positions in the strategy process, and giving a final structure to the answer by presenting three performance categories: the role-players, role-seekers and bystanders.

The answer to the research question can be summarized as follows:

Individuals can be socially positioned in the strategy process as role-players, role-seekers or bystanders according to their performance in the strategy process. Three varieties of role-players were discovered: empowered champions, puzzled champions and satisfied citizens. Eleven varieties of role-seekers were discovered: excluded champions, abandoned champions, discontent champions, champions under stress, disregarded champions, overwhelmed champions, recluse citizens, neutralized citizens, citizens in need, troubled citizens and lost citizens. Six varieties of bystanders were discovered: unenlightened citizens, hopeless cynics, surrendered cynics, disinterested cynics, dislocated cynics and passive cynics. The three performance categories have been investigated in Chapter seven, while the twenty varieties have been discussed at length in Chapter six.

8.1 Contribution

The phenomenological ontology underlying this thesis implies a willingness to treat strategy as a ‘flesh and blood’ phenomenon, as experienced by a variety of organizational members from their respective social positions. The focus was set

therefore on the **individual and not office**. This meant that the individual's account of her social position, not her function, was regarded as ontologically and epistemologically primary.

This contributed to a more varied chorus of voices to be heard about strategy, consisting largely of operative personnel members and middle managers. This has rarely been done before, at least in mainstream literature. Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) wrote of a university strategy process, including multiple voices. Pettigrew et al. (1992) described strategy process in a health care context, and multiple voices were heard. But I have not encountered a study on strategy that would have gone as deep as this one into the organizational grassroots level. Furthermore, the studies mentioned above discussed one organization each, whereas this study had a wider range of 12 organizations.

I regard the emphasis on the individual as an attempt at answering the criticism of the paradigm of organizational strategy, offered by many (e.g. Hardy, Palmer & Phillips 2000; Knights & Morgan 1991; Lilley, 2001; Shrivastava, 1986; Whipp, 1996), of strategic management being ideological and quite non-reflexive about it. Since the main critique of this position is managerialism, I think it is fair to say a large number of non-managerial voices have been heard, promoting issues from a variety of viewpoints.

Furthermore, the focus was set on the **individual and not the organization**. There have not been many studies of strategy process at the individual level of analysis. Those that do exist, have largely been concerned with strategy creation, from, for example, an entrepreneurial or a cognitive viewpoint (cf. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1999), again concentrating on the managerial framework.

The normative literature on *strategy implementation* has been concerned with prescribing the right managerial actions for executing strategies. The authors with an emphasis on leadership tend to emphasize the need for a dialogue between leaders and followers (see Chapter 3.1). Associated notions such as 'open, fact-based discussion with the lower levels' (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000), a 'partnership among all relevant stakeholders' (Beer & Eisenstat, 1996), a 'pan-organization team process of formulating strategy' (Giles, 1991), and 'broad-based inputs and participation'

(Hambrick & Cannella, 1989), to name a few, communicate a norm of a wider dialogue in the strategy process and strategic leadership. The notion of dialogue requires more than one standpoint, however. Dialogue cannot only be about one party, i.e. the strategist or the leader, communicating with a follower or an implementer. In order to understand and prescribe dialogue, the multiple positions participating in the dialogue must be taken into account. The elaboration of social positions conducted in this research can be regarded as an attempt to widen this discussion to cover a multitude of stakeholders.

Social positions, the locus of this research, have been conceived from the frame of the theory of structuration, another stream of research in organization studies, not widely discussed in empirical terms. Through this positioning I wish to add a small contribution to the emerging stream of research of 'strategy as practice', reviewed by Whittington (1996, 2000).

Summarizing the main results of this study, roughly three can be identified, corresponding to my three encounters with the data. First of all, a three-dimensional schema was created to facilitate understanding of social positions in organizational strategy processes. The schema is general enough to be applied to other research settings concerning social positions in organizations, perhaps, for example, in more context-specific studies of strategy processes.

Secondly, using this schema, twenty social positions were identified and described. This is where the data was allowed the greatest freedom of speech, with a variety of themes and issues emerging. This is where I think the greatest chance of a hermeneutical interplay between the reader and the data can be established. This data set can also be further investigated and reinterpreted in terms of particular interpretive lenses: organizational culture, systems, management, etc.

Thirdly, the themes in the position descriptions were discussed in a more conceptualized frame. The performance categories of role-players, role-seekers and bystanders were created. The first category was opened up in terms of the roles played by individuals. These roles contribute to the scarce literature on roles in the strategy process. The discussion of the second category also entailed the reasons that role-seeking agents gave for not being able to function in the roles they considered

relevant for themselves. The third category was discussed in terms of the attitudes bystanders portrayed towards the strategy process and reasons they did not want to function in associated roles. The conceptual discussion was reflected against literature on structuration and roles.

8.2 Implications for practitioners

What is the relevance of my research to practitioners in organizations? First of all, being faithful to the spirit of a constructivism, I would like to see practitioners making their own interpretations about the normative paths leading out of this text. Furthermore, I wish to stress that by 'practitioner' I am not referring just to management consultants, organization developers or managers – the first potential practitioners for reading a text such as this – but all organizational stakeholders.

Realizing these wishes as somewhat unrealistic, I will point out a few things I regard as holding normative notions. All in all, it is extremely difficult to create clear-cut norms out of, for example, the obstacles and needs the role-seeking individuals reported. These are better reflected against each unique organizational context by each stakeholder. I think the normative suggestions that can come out of a text like this are conceptual in nature and must be reinterpreted by each reader to suit her context.

First of all, the complexity of the everyday concepts of 'cynic' or 'dissident' has been illustrated. At first glance, it might be easy to label whomever disagrees with official strategy statements as a 'dissident', 'troublemaker' or 'cynic'. The leadership of such individuals is easily conceptualized as the business of overcoming resistance to change. However, resistance of change can be regarded as misguided and outdated (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Piderit, 2000). Instead, a question must be asked on how ambivalent attitudes can be cultured in organizations (Piderit, 2000). Consideration of the conceptual categories created here could be useful in answering the question of ambivalent attitudes. Is the person really a bystanding cynic, or might some of the role-seeking categories be more appropriate to describe her position? In such a case, the business of leadership becomes the business of empowering the individual to act as a strategic agent, using dissent in crafting a better strategy.

The suggestion above was mainly directed to leaders. Yet I feel it has been clearly shown that the strategy process is a two-way street in many cases. Individual agents themselves also carry the responsibility of creating the right social position for themselves in the strategy process. The conceptual categories can be useful here as well. “Am I really a role-seeker or have I let myself become a bystander? Should I be a bystander or should I seek for a more active position?” These are the kinds of questions that can be asked by each individual organizational member. They are, after all, knowledgeable agents, capable of reflecting and molding their own positions.

Care must be taken to ensure the understanding of the position of bystanders. As was noted in the discussion of followers in Section 3.6, the activity of the follower is as much determined by the organization as herself. Many strategy processes encourage the position of the *unenlightened citizen*. When thinking of prescriptions for bystanders, it would seem the first question relates to what each party is really after. If all parties want to keep strategy as the business of a small circle, *bystanding* is certainly no problem.

The descriptions of roles given by role-players can be used as a starting point by any agents who regard their organization’s strategy process as relevant. Role-players can reflect on their own roles in the strategy process, looking for new elements in the variety of possibilities described by role-players. Role-seekers can reflect on a role they would like to be in and the kinds of actions that would take them there.

On a wider note, the notion of role-seekers as *disempowered strategic resources* could be useful, at least as a practical guideline. The viewpoint of social capital as a strategic resource is relevant to current discussion (e.g. Yli-Renko, Autio & Sapienza, 2001). This discussion does not entail the *empowered individual* as a strategic resource, accounting for the notion of social capital in terms of organization-level ‘dimensions’ (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). If a micro-level standpoint were included, the viewpoint of social positions would become relevant. I would argue that role-players are a strategic resource that should be cultured, regarding role-seekers as unactualized strategic potential.

8.3 Limitations and the Issue of Credibility

Before the credibility of research can be assessed, the overall ontological and epistemological principles on which the assessment can be built must be explicated, i.e. the paradigm of the research is located in. I have already noted that the ontological basis here is phenomenology. I have also expressed sympathy towards symbolic interactionism, which also bears quite a strong relation to constructivism (cf. Chapter 4). Lincoln & Cuba (2000) note that constructivism involves a *relativist* ontology, *subjectivist* epistemology with created findings, and a *hermeneutic/dialectical* methodology. The constructivist researcher acts as a "passionate participant", facilitating multivoice reconstruction.

In discussing social issues in a microsocial framework such as this, I strongly feel there is no such thing as the truth of a matter. Since we are dealing with issues in the individual Lifeworld, we are involved in a constant process of interpretation, where there is no static reflection point against which the research text can be assessed as true or untrue. So, while I am an ardent believer in truth as a measure of 'brute natural facts', I am in favor of a *process ontology* (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) in terms of first-person ontology (the term 'first-person ontology' is borrowed from Searle (1995)). The concept of truth loses some of its edge when the individual Lifeworld is under scrutiny. [24] The epistemology here is subjectivist, because the data are based on interaction between interviewee and interviewer, interpreted by me as an analyst. I do not think there is a detached, objective frame of analysis, but multiple interpretive choices have to be made. This is what I refer to as a *hermeneutic standpoint*, where the analyst is always attached to her personal *interpretive horizon* (Gadamer, 1993).

Yet I am a fervent believer in logic and reasoning, in the sense of a general common sense shared by human beings, at least within wide cultural contexts. That is why grounded theory was assumed as the approach here.[25] I wanted to convince both the

[24] I dislike the notion of relativism because it would seem to imply a non-scientific 'anything goes' attitude. Truth is a problematic concept in discussing the Lifeworld because the Lifewold is dynamic rather than static. If truth is regarded as a correspondence between statements and reality, it is very hard to measure correspondence with a dynamic entity.

[25] Glaser and Strauss have in their latest work sought out to create grounded theory as a post-positivist methodology of sorts. This is in something of a conflict with constructivism. That is why I used their classical book (1967) as basis of structuring the analysis.

reader and myself of the credibility of my reasoning by structuring it as well as I could. I created frameworks, categories and all the models to help myself and the reader to follow the line of interpretation from beginning to end. I did this to contribute to the *transparency* of reasoning. As to whether or not my analyses have been 'reliable', this is left to the reader to decide as she follows my arguments.

Credibility

Patton (1990) notes that the discussion of the credibility of a qualitative study will need to address three questions[26]:

1. What techniques and methods were used to ensure the integrity, validity and accuracy of the findings?

2. What does the researcher bring to the study in terms of qualifications, experience and perspective?

3. What paradigm orientation and assumptions undergird the study?

The *third question* concerning paradigm-related assumptions has been discussed at the beginning of this chapter as well as in other parts of the thesis. Beginning to address the *first question*, the interviews were conducted with a wide variety of interviewees in twelve organizations, using a common interview outline (Appendix 1). The four researchers conducting the interviews agreed on a shared style of interviewing, in which no personal opinions were expressed to the interviewee. A general stance as neutral as possible was maintained towards the interviewee. The interviewer did, however, retain the possibility of asking the interviewee to elaborate on issues. Each interviewer may have had biases in terms of which she explored issues further, yet the interview outline was created to accommodate all the interests. So, while there may have been variations on the general structure of themes discussed, the interview outline was specific enough to ensure that these were just variations. Furthermore, the concept of social position is general enough to facilitate small variations caused by multiple interviewers.

[26] I think Patton has managed to condense the main issues in few, discussable questions, so I used his questions as a basis for the discussion of credibility. Those looking for a more detailed list of questions are encouraged to look at Miles & Hubermann (1984).

Some may regard the phenomenological approach of treating interview accounts at face value with suspicion. How did we make sure that the interviewees did not lie to us? This is a tough question that comes back to the dynamics between interviewer and interviewee. The interview situation is a situation of *data-production* in which both persons participate. No doubt some interviewees may have painted the picture they themselves wanted to see. But I fail to see how phenomenological research would be more vulnerable to such biases than postpositivist research conducted with surveys, for example. At least it is harder to lie to a person sitting in front of you than writing it down on paper. The interview situation enables a process of interpretation that is less vulnerable to these biases than surveys. Furthermore, the number of interviews is quite large, which should prevent individual biases from dominating the text.

Patton notes that the possibility of rival notions has to be accounted for in order to ensure the integrity, validity and accuracy of the findings. I tried to keep this in mind in particular when describing the social positions in the second encounter. While I categorized the accounts using the schema, I tried to discuss the richness of voices within each category, and also elaborate uncertainties by giving reasons why certain accounts belonged to certain categories, and why not to rival categories.

The overall emphasis I have placed on tables and categorizations in this study reflects a willingness to keep my own reasoning as explicit and transparent as possible. I regard this to be the major answer to the question of integrity of the research in terms of the analysis of the data and writing the results. My analysis process was systematic throughout as I coded the interviews. There was an iterative stage as I formulated the schema of analysis, but as soon as the schema was ready, each interview was coded according to the same principles. My analysis path through the three encounters with data has been illuminated in this text. My progress as I conducted the analyses has been recorded in my notes. Secondary coding was conducted, with fair to good results, and is reported in Chapter 5.

Answering the *second question*, in the early stages of my career as a scientist, I have very little to rely on in terms of my personal qualifications. The PhD process is built on critique and tutoring by a group of experienced colleagues, however. This research has been read and commented on by a group of people far more experienced than I am. Yet, of course, none of these people can be held accountable for my work in the

strictest sense because it all comes down to my personal work ethics. On this, I can only note that I have been as rigorous in my analyses as I have had the ability to be.

There is also another sense to question two, however. The question of what Patton refers to as the 'evaluator effect' is particularly important in a constructivist study. Since I am, in a sense, always trapped in my personal interpretive horizon, I must reveal as well as I can the personal biases that affect my judgment – and be aware of them. I have sought to account for my personal interest and history with the topic in the preface. I have tried to keep these issues in mind during analysis and writing, yet the reader may be able to detect some hints of them in the text, since I don't think a researcher can be freed of her biases in any final way. If any of these are detected, the reader may regard them as limitations to credibility, yet hopefully not fatal ones.

Generalization

Generalization is one of the major controversies in qualitative research. Schwandt, (1997) identifies four stances towards generalization among qualitative researchers. The postmodernists deny the possibility of generalization altogether, claiming that each situation is unique. The second position is a milder form of postmodernism that is based on *critical* examination of relations between unique instances. The third position is held by researchers who claim that qualitative inquiry produces a specific form of *immediate knowledge*, based on the Aristotelian concept *phronesis*. Generalization, for them, seems to be beside the point. The fourth position argues for simultaneous contextual thickness of a case, and *transferability* from case to case through *analytic generalization*.

Looking at my results, the main question about generalization is very much about the **transferability of the conceptual frameworks created**. I cannot give conclusive predictions as to whether, for example, the number of empowered champions will be the same among the members of the next organization. What I have to offer are the frameworks, and conceptualizations themselves. I fall in line with the fourth position arguing for analytical generalization. As Geertz put it:

> *"Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the "said" of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behavior… The aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but densely textured facts; to support broad*

> *assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them with complex specifics." (Ibid.: 27-28.)*

While I think social positions are unique in a certain sense, there are also general properties to them. As Geertz notes, culture is social because meaning is social, as was noted in the description of Wittgenstein's city of language in Section 2.5. I believe social positions are cultural symbols as much as they are an individual's property. I have tried to keep the position descriptions thick enough to let individual voices be heard, and included more than eighty quotations to illustrate contextual specifics. Yet my overall goal has been to create a conceptual model for social positions general enough to be transferable to specific contexts.

Limitations

The data for this research was produced in interviews that were conducted in a one-off 'snapshot-type' setting in each case organization. This approach did not facilitate a longitudinal analysis of the data, ruling out certain questions. I could not look at how social positions change over time. I did not, for example, have access to the processes in which role-seekers find positions for themselves, in which role-players lose their positions, becoming bystanders or role-seekers, or in which bystanders become interested in strategy, ending up as role-seekers or role-players. This would no doubt have been interesting. Yet, my research question was how individuals can be socially positioned in the strategy process, not how these positions change over time. The second question of the processes of position change is highly interesting and will no doubt be my next interest.

The explorative stance in this research and the associated qualitative approach rule out the possibility of giving 'if X then Y' -type predictions. My major contribution was a typology of social positions, yet questions on how the positions come about cannot be answered in any final manner here. While certain issues discussed, such as the reasons that keep role-seekers from becoming role-players, or the reasons for disinterest given by bystanders, can give partial answers, my research question did not involve giving predictions. This is the price of an exploratory stance; explanations can be regarded as the next step.

When generalization is discussed, the discussion inevitably turns to the discussion of the context in which the study was conducted. This is also the first item of discussion concerning the limitations of this study. The interviews were conducted in twelve Finnish case organizations located roughly in the knowledge and service sectors. No basic manufacturing-type organizations were present in the data. In many cases this meant that the operative employees were experts of some sort, and their work included at least a certain element of decision making. The organizations were either middle sized (100-200 members) or units of larger organizations. The interviewees were selected at random from all organizational levels. The interviews took place during the years 2000-2001, at which time Finland was reaching the end of a relatively strong economic period of growth. Had the interviews been conducted during economic recession, for example, the attitudes toward strategy might have been darker, i.e. had strategy been traced as the cause of firings, for example.

The context has been a limiter to this research as it is, to some degree, in any study in social science. I think we had quite a rich sample of individuals in our interviews, yet they may represent a somewhat “positive” group, firstly because their organizations had willingly participated in a research such as this. Their organizations’ having agreed to participate in a study such as ours implied a basic assumption that organizational strategies are realized through the work of individual organizational members. Furthermore, a large majority of interviewees had a professional education.

While there may have been limitations in this sense, their effect on the transferability of the conceptual tools I have created should not be great. A small worry is presented by the overall economic and social context of Finland at the time of the interviews, yet I suspect this may have influenced the potential weighting between social positions and not the content of the categories themselves. I believe there are empowered champions and recluse citizens in organizations at the time of economic recession as well. Their numbers may vary, but the categories would seem general enough to hold their plausibility, with moderate variations between the cultural and economical contexts.

A research setting combining observation and interviews may have provided interesting insights. True, but that would have been time consuming, reducing the number of interviews, and probably the variety of the positions discovered as well. On

the other hand, some may have collected multiple accounts from the same interviewees, discussing their interpretations with the interviewees. Again, this would probably have reduced the richness of the positions discovered, as well as bringing action research elements into the research setting, which would have posed other challenges. All in all, it seems that "to win some, you lose some". After the process, I still feel that a 'snapshot' type research setting involving a large number of interviewees suits an exploratory research task such as this quite well, providing rich variety to the data.

8.4 Suggestions for further research

One of the things I find nice about an exploratory setting such as this is that many possible paths lie open, many questions unanswered. The first question I would like to form a coherent view about is **where the role-seekers would have ended up, given the possibilities**. This is obviously related to the question of **management actions to create possibilities of finding strategic roles.** These two questions could be explored in concert in an action research setting, the researcher acting as a consultant in case organizations, understanding the obstacles and needs of role-seekers in that particular setting, and developing procedures to overcome them. These kinds of questions cannot be answered using the data in this research, because role-seekers usually did not discuss the specific roles they wanted to play, probably because they had never played them before.

The **organizational context** provides a multitude of interesting questions. If one glimpses at the data in Appendix 4, there would seem to be variations between different organizations on the frequencies of role-players, role-seekers and bystanders, for instance, yet no great variations between public and private organizations in general. A single or multiple case study concerning social positions in specific organizational contexts would be intriguing, especially research was conducted in truly outstanding or peculiar organizations in terms of individuals in the strategy process.[27] The social positions of agents in consultancies offering strategic

[27] Pratt (2000) studied identity formation in a network marketing organization, while Martin (1998) studied emotionality at Body Shop. Both studied atypical cases and provided extremely interesting insights.

management services, for instance, could be interesting to study. Another possibility would be a network organization consisting of independent cells, such as Amnesty International.

A case study setting would seem to be the most natural step toward a more explanatory research stance. Identifying the mechanisms that create, uphold and change social positions in the strategy process, including both official and unofficial actions would, no doubt, answer many questions. Further data has been collected from four of the twelve organizations present in this study.

Organizational environment involves an interesting question, i.e. does the environment dictate an optimal distribution of social positions in a strategy process? Is there a contingency theory for social positions? Is it true that in uncertain and complex environments, the need for independent champions is greater, while in simpler and more stable environments a large number of implementer-type citizens is the basis for an optimal composition of positions? Hints of this may be found in such accounts as Emery & Trist (1965), Courtney, Kirkland & Viguerie (1997), Hatch (1997a), and Brown & Eisenhardt (1997). On the other hand, it might be interesting to test a hypothesis on whether there is a 'golden proportion' of positions in organizations. Is it necessary, for example, to have a supply of cynics to criticize things or should the criticism be provided by critical role-players only?

Another contextual factor that is of great interest is strategy type. Are strategy processes behind environmental strategies, for instance, different from marketing strategies in terms of the social positions of agents? How about imposed strategies, in which even the top management does not have a strategic choice?

An interesting question for managers responsible for communicating strategy involves the types of rhetoric that are needed to reach people in different social positions. What kind of rhetoric is needed to turn bystanders into role-players? How should rhetoric be designed to keep champions or citizens motivated?

A path different from explanatory case study research would be the **operationalization of the schema and positions into a quantitative research instrument**. A larger number of interviewees in a small number of different countries could answer the questions about the weightings of different positions more

conclusively. The data could also be reflected against various background variables, such as, for example, the use of various strategic management instruments. Does the use of balanced scorecards, for instance, correspond to the number of role-players in the organization? Furthermore, if a general research instrument is built, it may have applications in HRD functions.

Literature

Albert S., and Whetten D. (1985) Organizational identity in Cummings L.L., and Staw B.M. (eds) *Research in organizational behaviour*, Vol 7. Greenwich CT: JAI Press.

Alexander, L. D. (1985) Successfully Implementing Strategic Decisions. *Long Range Planning* 18 (3) 91-97.

Alexander, L. D. (1991) Strategy Implementation: Nature of the Problem. *International Review of Strategic Management* 2 (1) 73-96.

Ashforth, B. E. & Mael, F. (1989) Social Identity Theory and the Organization. *Academy of Management Review* 14 (1): 20 - 39.

Andrews, K. R. (1971) *The Concept of Corporate Strategy*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1963) *Intention*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Ansoff, I. (1965) *Corporate Strategy: An Analytic Approach to Business Policy for Growth and Expansion*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Argyris, C. & Schön, D.A. (1978) *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bacharach, P. & Baratz, M. S. (1962) Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56: 947-952.

Ball, T. (1993) Power. In Goodin, R. E. & Pettit, P. (eds.) *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Barnard, C. (1938) *The Functions of an Executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Barney, J. (1991) Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management* 17: 99-120.

Barry D. & Elmes M. (1997) Strategy retold: toward a narrative view of strategic discourse. *Academy of Management Review* 22 (2): 429-452.

Bartlett, C. A. & Ghoshal, S. (1994) Changing the Role of Top Management: Beyond Strategy to Purpose. *Harvard Business Review* 72 (6): 79-88.

Beer, M. & Eisenstat, R. A. (1996) Developing an Organization Capable of Implementing Strategy and Learning. *Human Relations* 49 (5): 597-619.

Beer, M. & Eisenstat, R. A. (2000): The silent killers of strategy implementation and learning. *Sloan Management Review* 41 (4): 29-40.

Belbin, R. M. (1981) *Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail*. London: Heinemann.

Belbin, R. M. (1993) *Team Rules at Work*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1967*) The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.

Blumer, H. (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Boje, D. M. (2001) *Narrative Methods for Organization and Communication Research*. New York: Sage.

Bolino, M. C. (1999) Citizenship and Impression Management: Good Soldiers or Good Citizens. *Academy of Management Review* 24 (1): 82-98.

Bouchiki, H., Kilduff, M. & Whittington, R. (1995) Editorial. *Organization Studies Special Issue: Action, Structure and Organizations* 18 (1): v-vii.

Bourgeois, L. J. & Brodwin, D. R. (1984): Strategic Implementation: Five Approaches to an Elusive Phenomenon. *Strategic Management Journal* 5 (3): 241-264.

Bratman, M. (1999a) Introduction: Planning Agents in a Social World. In Bratman, M. (1999) *Faces of Intention. Selected Essays of Intention and Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bratman, M. (1999b) Shared intention. In Bratman, M. (1999) *Faces of Intention. Selected Essays of Intention and Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, A. D. & Starkey, K. (2000) Organizational Identity and Leaning: A Psychodynamic Perspective. *Academy of Management Review* 25 (1): 102-120.

Brown, S. L. & Eisenhardt, K. M. (1997) The Art of Continuous Change: Linking Complexity Theory and Time-paced Evolution in Relentlessly Shifting Organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42 (1): 1-34.

Bruner, J. (1996) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chaffee, E. E. (1985) Three models of strategy. *Academy of Management Review* 10 (1) 89-98.

Chakravarthy, B. S. and Doz, Y. (1992) 'Strategy Process Research: Focusing on Corporate Self-Renewal'. *Strategic Management Journal* 13 (Special Issue): 5 – 14.

Chandler, A. D. (1962) *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the American Enterprise*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chomsky, N. (1959) A Review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior. Language 35 (1): 26-58.

Copleston, F. (1962) *A History of Philosophy. Vol. I Greek and Rome.* New York: Doubleday.

Courtney, H., Kirkland, J. & Viguerie, P. (1997) Strategy Under Uncertainty. *Harvard Business Review* 75 (6) 67-79.

Cutler, I. (2000) The Cynical Manager. *Management Learning* 31 (3): 295-312.

Cyert, R. M. & March, J. G. (1963): *A Behavioural Theory of the Firm*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Daft, R. L. & Weick, K. E. (1984) Toward a Model of Organizations as Interpretation Systems. *Academy of Management Review* 9 (2) 284 - 295.

Dahl, R. (1957) The Concept of Power. *Behavioral Science* 2: 201-215.

Dean, J. W. Jr., Brandes P. & Dharwadkar, R. (1998) Organizational Cynicism. *Academy of Management Review* 23 (2): 341 – 352.

Dewey, J. (1997) *How We Think*. New York: Dover.

Dooley, R. S. and Fryxell, G. E. (1999) Attaining Decision Quality and Commitment from Dissent: The Moderating Effects of Loyalty and Competence in Strategic Decision-Making Teams. *Academy of Management Journal* 42 (4): 389-402.

Dougherty, D. (2002) Grounded Theory Research Methods. In Baum, J. A. C. (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Dyne, L. V. & Cummings, L. L. & Parks, J. M. (1995) Extra-role Behaviors: In Pursuit of a Construct and Definitional Clarity (A Bridge Over Muddled Waters). *Research in Organizational Behavior* 17: 215-285.

Eccles, R. G., Nohria, N. & Berkley, J. D. (1992) *Beyond the Hype. Rediscovering the Essence of Management*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Eden, C. (1992) Strategy Development as a Social Process. *Journal of Management Studies* 29 (6): 799-811.

Eden, C. & Ackermann, F. (1998) *Making Strategy. The Journey of Strategic Management*. London: Sage.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989) Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review* 14 (4): 532-550.

Eisenhardt, K. M. & Zbaracki, M. J. (1992) Strategic Decision Making. *Strategic Management Journal* 13, Winter Special Issue: 17-37.

Emery, F. E. & Trist, E. L. (1965) The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments. *Human Relations* 18: 21-32.

Farjoun, M. (2002) Towards an Organic Perspective on Strategy. *Strategic Management Journal* 23 (7): 561-594.

Floyd, S. W. & Lane, P. J. (2000) Strategizing throughout the organization: Managing role conflict in strategic renewal. *Academy of Management Review* 25 (1) 154-177.

Floyd, S. W. & Wooldridge, B. (1992) Middle management involvement in strategy and its association with strategic type: A research note. *Strategic Management Journal* 13, 153-167.

Floyd, S. W. & Wooldridge, B. (1994) Dinosaurs or Dynamos? Recognizing middle management's strategic role. *Academy of Management Executive* 8 (4): 47-57.

Floyd, S. W. & Wooldridge, B. (2000) *Building Strategy from the Middle*.

Fodor, J. (1975) *The Language of Thought*. New York: Cromwell.

Foucault, M. (1979) *Discipline and Punish*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Frese, M. & Sabini, J. (eds.) (1985) *Goal Directed Behavior: The Concept of Action in Psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gadamer, H. (1993) *Truth and Method*. New York: Continuum.

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Geertz, C. (1977): *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Ghoshal, S. & Bartlett, C. A. (1994) Changing the Role of Top Management: Beyond Strategy to Purpose. *Harvard Business Review* November-December 1994: 79-88.

Ghoshal, S., Bartlett, C. A. & Moran, P. (1999) A New Manifesto for Management. *Sloan Management Review* Spring 1999: 9-20.

Giddens, A. (1979) *Central Problems in Social Theory. Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society*. Berkeley: California University Press.

Giddens, A. (2001) *Sociology. Fourth edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gilbert, M. (1989) *On Social Facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Giles, W. D. (1991) Making Strategy Work. *Long Range Planning* 24 (5): 75-91.

Gioia, D. A. & Chittipeddi, K. (1991) Sensemaking and Sensegiving in Strategic Change Initiation. *Strategic Management Journal* 12 (6): 433-448.

Gioia D.A., Schultz M., & Corley K.G. (2000) Organizational Identity: Image and Adaptive Instability. *Academy of Management Review* 25 (1): 63-81.

Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Hawthorn, NY: De Gruyter.

Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1974) *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston: Northwestern University Press.

Greenberg, J. (1990) Organizational Justice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. *Journal of Management* 16 (2): 399-432.

Greimas, A. J. (1983). *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*. Lincoln: Nebraska University Press.

Hambrick, D. C. & Cannella, A. A. (1989) Strategy Implementation as Substance and Selling. *Academy of Management Executive* 3 (4): 278-285.

Hamel, G. (2000) Leading the Revolution. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Hamel, G. & Prahalad, C. K. (1989) Strategic Intent. *Harvard Business Review* May-June 1989: 63-76.

Hamel, G. & Prahalad, C. K. (1994) *Competing for the Future*. Harvard Business School Press.

Hannan, M. T. & Freeman, J. (1977) The Population Ecology of Organizations. *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (5): 929-964.

Hardy, C. (2001) Researching Organizational Discourse. *International Studies of Management and Organization* 31 (3): 25-47.

Hardy, C. & Clegg, S. R. (1996) Some Dare Call It Power. In Clegg, S.R., Hardy, C. & Nord, W. R. (ed.) *Handbook of Organization Studies*. Londin: Sage.

Hardy, C., Palmer, I. & Phillips, N. (2000) Discourse as a strategic resource. *Human Relations* 53 (9): 1227-1248.

Harré, R., & Secord, P. F. (1972) *The explanation of social behavior*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hart, S. L. (1992) An Integrative Framework for Strategy-Making Processes. *Academy of Management Review* 17 (2): 327-351.

Hatch, M. J. (1997a) *Organization Theory. Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hatch, M. J. (1997b) Irony and the social construction of contradiction in the humor of a management team. *Organization Studies* 8 (3): 275-288.

Hazen, M. A. (1993) Towards Polyphonic Organization. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 6 (5): 15-26.

Heckhausen, H. & Kuhl, J. (1985) From Wishes to Action: The Dead Ends and Short Cuts on the Long Way to Action. In Frese, M. & Sabini, J. (eds.) *Goal Directed Behavior: The Concept of Action in Psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Heidegger, M. (1997) *Being and Time*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Hellriegel, D., Slocum, J. W. Jr, & Woodman, R. W. (1995) *Organizational Behavior. 7th edition.* St. Paul, MN: West.

Heracleous, L. & Hendry, J. (2000) Discourse and the study of organization: Toward a structurational perspective. *Human Relations* 53 (10): 1251-1286.

Higgins, J. M. (1990) *Strategy: formulation, implementation control*. Chicago: Dryden Press.

Hiley, D. R. (1987) Power and Values in Corporate Life. *Journal of Business Ethics* 6 (5): 343-353.

Hrebiniak, L. G. & Joyce, W. F. (1984) *Implementing strategy*. New York: Macmillan.

Hrebniak, L. G. (1990) Implementing Strategy. *Chief Executive* 57: 74-77.

Huczynski, A. (1996) *Influencing Within Organizations: Getting In, Rising Up and Moving On.* London: Prentice Hall.

Hughes, R. L., Ginnett, R. C. & Curphy, G. J. (1999) *Leadership. Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Husserl, E. (1999) *The Essential Husserl. Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hutchins, E. (1995) *Cognition in the Wild*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Inkpen, A. & Choudhury, N. (1995) The Seeking of Strategy Where it Is Not: Towards a Theory of Strategic Absence. *Strategic Management Journal* 16 (4): 313-323.

James, W. (1950): *Principles of Psychology*. New York: Dover.

Johnson G. & Scholes K. (1999) *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. Fifth edition. Prentice Hall Europe, London.

Judson, Arnold S. (1990) *Making strategy happen: transforming plans into reality*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Katz, D. & Kahn, R. L. (1966) *The Social Psychology of Organizations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Kelley, R. E. (1992) *The Power of Followership*. New York: Doubleday.

Knights, D. (1995) Organization Theory in the Age of Deconstruction: Dualism, Gender and Postmodernism Revisited. *Organization Studies Special Issue: Action, Structure and Organizations* 18 (1): 1-20.

Knights, D. & Morgan, G. (1991) Corporate Strategy, Organizations and Subjectivity: A Critique. *Organization Studies* 12 (2): 251-273.

Kolb, D. A. *Experiential Learning. Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kotter, J.P. (1996) *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Kreps, G. L. (1990) *Organizational Communication. Second edition.* New York: Longman.

Lewin K. (1951) *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper & Row.

Liedtka, J. M. & Rosenblum, J. W. (1996) Shaping Conversations: Making Strategy, Managing Change. *California Management Review* 39 (1): 141-157.

Lilley, S. (2001) The Language of Strategy. In Westwood, R. & Linstead, S. (ed): *The language of organization*. London: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Cuba, E. G. (2000) Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (ed): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, NJ: Sage.

Linton, R. (1936) *The Study of Man*: *An Introduction*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lukes, S. (1974) *Power: A Radical View*. London: Macmillan.

Lyle, M. (1990) A research agenda for strategic management in the 1990s. *Journal of Management Studies* 27 (4): 363-375.

Lyotard, J-F. (1985) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Løwendal, B. & Revang, Ø. (1998) Challenges to Existing Strategy Theory in a Postindustrial Society. *Strategic Management Journal* 19 (8): 755-773.

Mantere, S. (2000) *Sensemaking in Strategy Implementation*. Master's Thesis. Espoo: Helsinki University of Technology.

Mantere, S. & Martinsuo, M. (2001) Adopting and Questioning Strategy: Exploring the Roles of Cynicism and Dissent. Paper presented at 17th EGOS - European Group for Organisation Studies Colloquium, July 5-7, 2001 Lyon, France.

March, J. G. & Simon, H. A. (1958) *Organizations*. New York: John Wiley.

Martin, J., Knopoff, K. & Beckman, C. (1998) An Alternative to Bureaucratic Impersonality and Emotional Labor: Bounded Emotionality at The Body Shop. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43 (2): 429-469.

Mead, G. H. (1934) *Mind, Self & Society. From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Merton, R. K. (1957) The Role Set. *British Journal of Sociology* June 1957.

Miles, M. B. & Hubermann, A. M. (1984) *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Sourcebook of New Methods*. Newbury Bark, NJ: Sage.

Miles, R. E. & Snow, C. C. (1978) *Organizational Strategy, Structure and Process*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Mintzberg, H. (1973): *The Nature of Managerial Work*. New York: Harper & Row.

Mintzberg, H. (1978) Patterns of strategy formation. *Management Science* 24 (9) 934-948.

Mintzberg, H. (1994) The fall and rise of strategic planning. *Harvard Business Review* 72 (1) 107-114.

Mintzberg, H. & Quinn, J. B. (1995) *The Strategy Process. Concepts, Contexts, Cases*. 3rd Edition. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Mintzberg, H. & Waters, J. A. (1985) Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent. *Strategic Management Journal* 6: 257-272.

Mintzberg, H. & Ahlstrand, B. & Lampel, J. (1999) *Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour through the Wilds of Strategic Management*. New York: Free Press.

Nahapiet, J. & Ghoshal, S. (1998) Social Capital and Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage. *Academy of Management Review* 23 (2): 242-266.

Noble, C. H. (1999) The Eclectic Roots of Strategy Implementation Research. *Journal of Business Research* 45 119-134.

Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, T. (1995): *The Knowledge-Creating Company. How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Patton, M. Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Second Edition.* Newbury Park, NJ: Sage.

Parsons, T. (1967) *Sociological Theory and Modern Society*. New York: Free Press.

Pearce, J. A. & Robinson, R. B. (1996) *Strategic management: formulation, implementation and control*. Burr Ridge: Irwin.

Pettigrew, A. M. (1987) Context and Action in the Transformation of the Firm. *Journal of Management Studies* 24 (6): 649-670.

Pettigrew, A. M. (1990) Studying Strategic Choice and Change. *Organization Studies* 11 (1): 6-11.

Pettigrew, A. M. (1992) The Character and Significance of Strategy Process Research. *Strategic Management Journal* 13: 5-16.

Pettigrew, A. M., Ferlie, E. & McKee, L. (1992) *Shaping strategic change*. London: Sage.

Pitcher, P. (1997) *The Drama of Leadership. Artists, Craftsmen and Technocrats and the Power Struggle That Shapes Organizations and Societies.* New York: Wiley.

Plato (1983) *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo.* (Grube, G. M. A., translator). Indianapolis: Hackett.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B. & Bacharach, D. G. (2000) Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: A Critical review of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature and Suggestions for Future Research. *Journal of Management* 26 (3): 513-563.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Popitz, H. (1972) The Concept of Social Role as an Element of Sociological Theory. In Jackson, J. A. (ed.) *Role*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Porter, M. (1980) Competitive strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors. New York: Free Press.

Porter, M. (1996) What is Strategy. *Harvard Business Review* November-December 1996.

Pratt, M.G. (2000). The good, the bad, and the ambivalent: Managing identification among Amway distributors. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 45 (3): 456-493.

Pratt M.G., and Foreman P.O. (2000) Classifying managerial responses to multiple organizational identities. *Academy of Management Review* 25 (1): 18-42.

Putnam, H. (1975): The Analytic and the Synthetic. In *Mind, Language and Reality. Philosophical Papers, Volume 2*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Quinn, J. B. (1980) *Strategies for Change: Logical Incrementalism*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.

Quinn, J. B. (1992) *Intelligent Enterprise. A Knowledge and Service Based paradigm for industry*. New York: Free Press.

Ranson, S., Hinings, R. & Greenwood, R. (1980) The Structuring of Organizational Structures. *Administratuve Science Quarterly* 28: 314-337.

Reichers, A. E. (1987) An Interactionist Perspective on Newcomer Socialization Rates. *Academy of Management Review* 12 (2): 278-287.

Reichers, A. E., Wanous, J. P. & Austin, J. T. (1997) Understanding and Managing Cynicism About Organizational Change. *Academy of Management Executive* 11 (1): 48-59.

Riley, P. A. (1983) A structurationist account of political culture. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 (3): 414-337.

Rodrigues, S. B. & Collinson, D. L. (1995) 'Having Fun'?: Humour as Resistance in Brazil. *Organization Studies* 16 (5): 739-768.

Rumelt, R. P. (1974) *Strategy, Structure and Economic Performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rumelt, R. P., Schendel, D. E. & Teece, D. J. (1994) Fundamental Issues in Strategy. In *Fundamental Issues in Strategy. A Research Agenda.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sarason, Y. (1995) A Model of Organizational Transformation: The Incorporation of Organizational Identity into a Structuration Theory Network. *Academy of Management Best Papers Proceedings* 1995: 47-51.

Schein, E. H. (1988) Organizational Socialization and the Profession of Management. *Sloan Management Review* 30 (1): 53-65.

Schultz, M. (1991) Transitions Between Symbolic Domains in Organizations. *Organization Studies* 12 (4): 489-506.

Schutz, A. (1967) *The Phenomenology if the Social World.* Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Schwandt, T. A. (1997) *Qualitative Inquiry. A Dictionary of Terms.* Thousand Oaks, NJ: Sage.

Schön, D. A. (1983): *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Practice*. New York: Basic Books.

Scott, J. (2000) *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook. 2nd Edition.* London: Sage.

Searle, J. R. (1983) *Intentionality: An essay in the philosophy of mind.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. R. (1991) Collective Intentions and Actions in Cohen, P. R., Morgan, J. & Pollack, M. (ed.) *Intentions in Communication.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Searle, J. R. (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Free Press.

Searle, J. R. (2001) *Rationality in Action.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Senge, P. M. (1994) *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Shakespeare, W. (1997) *MacBeth*. In *The Unabridged William Shakespeare*. Philadelphia: Courage Books.

Shrivastava, P. (1986) Is Strategic Management Ideological? *Journal of Management* 12 (3): 363-377.

Shrivastava, P. (1994) *Strategic Management – Concepts & Practices*. Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co.

Smircich, L. & Stubbart, C. (1985) Strategic Management in an Enacted World. *Academy of Management Review* 10 (4) 724 - 736.

Taylor, C. (1992) *Sources of the Self. Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Thompson, A.A. & Strickland, A.J. (1995) *Strategic Management – Concepts and cases*. Irwin, Chicago. 8th edition.

Trujillo, N. (1983) "Performing" Mintzberg's Roles. The Nature of Managerial Communication. In Putnam, L. L. & Pacanowsky, M. E. (eds.) *Communication and Organizations. An Interpretive Approach*. Newbury Park, NJ: Sage.

Tsoukas, H. & Chia, R. (2002) On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change. *Organization Science* 13 (5): 567-582.

Tuomela, R. & Miller, K. (1988) We-intentions. *Philosophical Studies* 53: 367-389.

Van Maanen, J. (1976) Breaking in: Socialization to Work. In R. Dubin (Ed.) *Handbook of Work, Organization, and Society*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company.

Van Maanen, J. & Schein, E. H. (1979) Toward a Theory of Organizational Socialization. In B. M. Staw (ed.) *Research in Organizational Behavior, Vol. 1*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Vasconcellos, J. D. (1990) How to Implement a Strategy. *Business* April-June 1990: 23-32.

Waldersee, R. & Sheather, S. (1996) The effect of strategy type on strategy implementation actions. *Human Relations* 49 (1).

Wanous, J. P., Reichers, A. E. & Austin, J. T. (2000) Cynicism About Organizational Change. Measurement, Antecedents, and Correlates. *Group and Organization Management* 25 (2): 132-153.

Wassermann, S. & Faust, K. (1994) *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weaver, G. R. & Gioia, D. A. (1994) Paradigms Lost: Incommensurability vs. Structurationist Inquiry. *Organization Studies* 15 (4): 565-590.

Weick, K. (1987) Substitutes of strategy. Teece, D. J. (ed): *The Competitive Challenge*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Weick, K. E. (1979) *The social psychology of organizing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Weick, K. E. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*. USA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Weick, K. E. & Roberts, K. (1993) Collective mind in organizations: Heedful interrelating on flight decks. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38 (3): 357-381.

Wernerfelt, B. (1984) A resource-based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal* 5: 171-180.

Westley, F. & Mintzberg, H. (1989) Visionary Leadership and Strategic Management. *Strategic Management Journal* 10 (1): 17-32.

Whipp, R. (1996) Creative Deconstruction: Strategy and Organizations. In Clegg, S.R., Hardy, C. & Nord, W. R. (ed.) *Handbook of Organization Studies*. Londin: Sage.

Whittington, R. (1992) Putting Giddens into action: Social systems and managerial agency. *Journal of Management Studies* 29 (6): 693-712.

Whittington, R. (1996) Strategy as Practice. *Long Range Planning* 29 (5): 731-735.

Whittington, R. (2001) *What is Strategy – and does it matter?* 2nd edition. London: Thomson Learning.

Whittington, R. (2002) Practice Perspectives on Strategy: Unifying and Developing a Field. Working paper: abridged version published in *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings 2002*.

Wittgenstein, L. (1951): *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Wright, G. H. von (1971) *Explanation and Understanding*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Yavitz, B. & Newman, W. H. (1982) *Strategy in Action: the Execution, Politics and Payoff of Business Planning*. New York: Free Press.

Yli-Renko, H., Autio, E. & Sapienza, H. (2001) Social Capital, Knowledge Acquisitions, and Knowledge Exploitation in Young Technology-based Firms. *Strategic Management Journal* 22 (6/7).Appendices

Appendix 1. The interview outlines

Top management interview outline

The interviewee

1. Have there been changes in your work lately? What kinds of changes?

The future

2. How do you perceive the future of your organization[28]?

Strategy process[29]

3. What do you understand by the term 'strategy'? (What things do you associate with strategy?)

4. What do you understand by the term 'strategy implementation'? (What things do you associate with strategy implementation?)

5. How much time is used in strategy implementation? (working days/year)

6. How do you participate in your organization's strategy process? (with reference to strategy process diagrams)

7. How do you define your role in strategy implementation?

8. How do you communicate strategies?

9. How well do you know your organization's strategy? (What is associated with it?)

10. Are there problems associated with strategy implementation? (Questionnaire 3; discussed with the interviewee)

11. How do you perceive the ability of your organization's personnel to participate in the strategy process?

The strategic theme

12. What is the strategic theme in your organization in your view?

13. Why is the strategic theme important for your organization?

14. What have you done to promote the strategic theme in your organization? (Questionnaire 1)

- Pick the five best methods in the questionnaire

[28] The underlined words were replaced with contextual words for each organization.

[29] If there was another name for the official strategy process, that name was used.

About these five methods:

15. Why do they work well?

16. Who has participated in the use of these methods? (In what way?)

17. In what other situations and with whom have you discussed the strategic theme?

18. How has the understanding of the strategic theme been supported in your organization?

19. How do you know that your organization's personnel have adopted the strategic theme?

20. Which matters associated with the strategic theme have been the most difficult to explain to the personnel?

21. What have you done to ensure that the members of the personnel have interpreted the strategic theme in a parallel manner?

22. What kinds of abilities (competences) are required from your organization's personnel for implementing the strategic theme?

23. On what level would you say that these abilities are at present?

24. How is the strategic theme present in your organization's objectives?

25. In what way is the strategic theme present in your organization's work practices right now?

26. In what way should the strategic theme be present in your organization's work practices right now?

27. What is the most central content that you have communicated to your organization's personnel concerning the strategic theme?

28. What sorts of goals have been set for your work? Who has set them? How is the strategic theme present in these goals?

29. How is the promotion of the strategic theme present in your work? Please provide an example.

30. Do you feel that you have been given a sufficient opportunity to influence goals associated with the strategic theme? (If not: how would you have wanted to influence them?)

31. In your opinion, what is the single most important thing that should be done to implement the strategic theme in your organization?

Questions? Comments? Thank you!

Middle management interview outline

The interviewee

1. Have there been changes in your work lately? What kinds of changes?

The future

2. How do you perceive the future of your organization?

Strategy process

3. What do you understand by the term 'strategy'? (What things do you associate with strategy?)

4. What do you understand by the term 'strategy implementation'? (What things do you associate with strategy implementation?)

5. How do you participate in your organization's strategy process? (With reference to strategy process diagrams)

6. How do you define your role in strategy implementation?

7. How do you communicate strategies?

8. Are there problems associated with strategy implementation? (Questionnaire 3; discussed with the interviewee)

9. How do you perceive the ability of your organization's personnel to participate in the strategy process?

The strategic theme

10. What is the strategic theme in your organization in your view?

11. Why is the strategic theme important for your organization?

12. Are there unclear issues associated with the strategic theme?

13. Where and when have you become aware of the strategic theme?

14. In which other situations and with whom have you discussed the strategic theme?

15. How has the understanding of the strategic theme been supported in your organization?

16. How do you know that your organization's personnel have adopted the strategic theme?

17. Which matters associated with the strategic theme have been the most difficult to explain to the personnel?

18. What have you done to ensure that the members of the personnel have interpreted the strategic theme in a parallel manner?

19. What kinds of abilities (competences) are required from your organization's personnel for implementing the strategic theme?

20. In what way is the strategic theme present in your team's current objectives?

21. In what way is the strategic theme present in your team's work practices right now?

22. In what way should the strategic theme be present in your team's work practices right now?

23. What have you done to promote the strategic theme in your organization? (Questionnaire 1; discussed with the interviewee)

- Pick the five best methods in the questionnaire

About these five methods:

24. Why do they work well?

25. Who has participated in the use of these methods? (In what way?)

26. What is the most central content that you have communicated to your team members concerning the strategic theme?

27. What sorts of goals have been set for your work? Who has set them? How is the strategic theme present in these goals?

28. How is the promotion of the strategic theme present in your work? Please provide an example.

30. Do you feel that you have been given a sufficient opportunity to influence goals associated with the strategic theme? (If not: how would you have wanted to influence them?)

31. Do you believe that the strategic theme will be realized?

32. In your opinion, what is the single most important thing that should be done to implement the strategic theme in your organization?

Questions? Comments? Thank you!

Personnel level interview outline

The interviewee

1. Have there been changes in your work lately? What kinds of changes?

Strategy process

2. How well do you know your organization's strategy process?

3. How do you participate in the your organization's strategy process? (With reference to strategy process diagrams)

4. Do you feel you have the necessary skills and knowledge to participate in the strategy process?

The strategic theme

5. What is the strategic theme in your organization in your view?

6. Why is the strategic theme important for your organization?

7. Are there unclear issues associated with the strategic theme?

8. How have you become aware of the strategic theme? (Questionnaire 2; discussed with the interviewee)

- Pick the five best methods in the questionnaire

About these five methods:

9. Why do they work well?

10. Who has participated in the use of these methods? (In what way?)

11. In which other situations and with whom have you discussed the strategic theme?

12. What has according to your perception been done to implement the strategic theme in your organization?

13. Have formal objectives been set for your team? How is the strategic theme manifest in these objectives?

14. Have formal objectives been set for your work? How is the strategic theme manifest in these objectives?

15. How is the promotion of the strategic theme present in your work? Please provide an example.

16. What is your motivation for promoting the strategic theme in your work?

17. Do you feel that you have been given a sufficient opportunity to influence objectives associated with the strategic theme? (If not: how would you have wanted to influence them?)

18. In your opinion, what is the single most important thing that should be done to implement the strategic theme in your organization?

19. Do you believe that the strategic theme will be realized?

The future

20. How do you perceive the future of your organization?

Questions? Comments? Thank you!

QUESTIONNAIRE 1[30]

In what way have you contributed to the promotion of the strategic theme in your organization?

	Check
Communication	
Meetings	
Briefings	
Letters and communications	
Notice boards	
Internal magazines	
Intranet	
Mailing lists (e-mail)	
Unofficial discussions	
With superiors	
With subordinates	
With co-workers (associates)	
Cultural phenomena	
Stories	
Symbols	
Slogans	
Personnel development	
Training	
Goal-setting discussions	
Socialization / breaking in	
Personnel choices	
Rewarding	
Planning	
Budget monitoring and control	
Business plans	
Operational and performance objectives	
Operations/processes	
Project management systems	
Quality systems	
Changes in organizational structure	
Networks and partnerships	
Something else (what)?	

[30] The interviewees were asked to comment on the issues in questionnaires as they filled them out.

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

How have you become aware of the strategic theme?

	Check
Communication	
Meetings	
Briefings	
Letters and communications	
Notice boards	
Internal magazines	
Intranet	
Mailing lists (e-mail)	
Unofficial discussions	
With superiors	
With subordinates	
With co-workers (associates)	
Cultural phenomena	
Stories	
Symbols	
Slogans	
Personnel development	
Training	
Goal-setting discussions	
Socialization / breaking in	
Personnel choices	
Rewarding	
Planning	
Budget monitoring and control	
Business plans	
Operational and performance objectives	
Operations/processes	
Project management systems	
Quality systems	
Changes in organizational structure	
Networks and partnerships	
Something else (what)?	

QUESTIONNAIRE 3

Problems in strategy implementation

The problems presented in the list below are typical to many organizations. Please assess the weight of these problems in strategy implementation in your organization.

	I don't know	Not a problem	A small problem	A relatively big probl	A big problem
Feasibility of strategy					
Strategy is not applicable in every part of the organization	0	1	2	3	4
Different areas/issues in the strategy are in conflict with each other	0	1	2	3	4
The organization's environment hinders strategy implementation	0	1	2	3	4
Awareness of strategy					
Strategy is being deliberately kept a secret	0	1	2	3	4
It is assumed that strategy is already known	0	1	2	3	4
The communication of strategy has been insufficient	0	1	2	3	4
The communication of strategy to different organizational levels is not perceived as	0	1	2	3	4
The flow of information is disrupted at some point	0	1	2	3	4
Strategy is not correctly understood	0	1	2	3	4
Organizational systems					
There are not enough resources for strategy implementation	0	1	2	3	4
Working procedures conflict with strategy	0	1	2	3	4
The organizational structure conflicts with strategy	0	1	2	3	4
The connection between strategy and rewarding system(s) is insufficient	0	1	2	3	4
Different personal roles have not been adequately defined	0	1	2	3	4
The concretization of strategy does not succeed	0	1	2	3	4
Commitment to strategy					
The management does not sufficiently commit itself to implementation	0	1	2	3	4
The middle-management does not sufficiently commit itself to implementation	0	1	2	3	4
The operational personnel does not sufficiently commit itself to implementation	0	1	2	3	4
There is not enough faith for the realization of strategy	0	1	2	3	4
Strategy implementation conflicts with organizational culture	0	1	2	3	4
Strategy implementation conflicts with certain personal goals or interests	0	1	2	3	4
Other activities and events divert attention from strategy implementation	0	1	2	3	4
Monitoring and development of implementation					
The implementation is not evaluated	0	1	2	3	4
After any change the old direction of activities is soon regained	0	1	2	3	4
There is no reaction to perceived problems in implementation	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix 2. Coding guidelines for secondary coders

Thank you for agreeing to act as secondary coder for my PhD thesis! By collaborating you are helping me to gain a critical look at the reliability of my analyses. This document is written to guide you during coding. Please feel free to ask me if there is something that you don't understand about this schema or the details of the interview text, excluding of course my final analyses of the social positions. Please do the coding only after you feel you have fully comprehended the schema.

General advice

Your task is to look at the way the person herself regards her social position (role) in the strategy process. You are not allowed to make judgments on whether she has reason to claim what she claims or whether she is entitled to make the judgments she makes. Your only task is to interpret what she says about her situation, not try to look beyond her words into "what's really happening".

Reading the text you may encounter terminology specific to the organization and its strategy process, which may seem strange. First, try not to be distracted by this, try to concentrate on what the interviewee discusses concerning herself in the strategy process, her personal social position. If this does not work, I will gladly explain contextual details.

As the interview progresses, you will note that the interviewer questions the interviewee regarding a specific strategic theme. This theme is an area of the organization's strategy that is regarded as important, and is discussed to gain a viewpoint on how the interviewee is connected to the strategy process on a more concrete level.

I would ask you to keep a separate .txt file open while you read the interviews, making a note whenever you feel the interviewee comments on her social position. After you have read the whole interview, making notes as you go along, please proceed to coding the interview in three dimensions: *activity*, *influence* and *sensemaking*.

Coding categories

1. Sphere of sensemaking

There are three possible categories, or "spheres" of sensemaking. Think of the sphere as the "sphere of understanding" around the interviewee. The interviewee comments on whether she has made sense of the strategy and her role in it, describing the sphere of sensemaking around her. Does the sphere fit? Is it too tight or too large for comfort?

- **Too small:**

  If the interviewee feels that she has gained too little information about strategy, she not been told where the organization is going in terms of strategy, "too small" is the right category. Using a metaphor, the interviewee feels that her sphere of

sensemaking is ”too cramped”, i.e. she does not have the information to make sense of the strategy.

- **Enough room:**

The interviewee feels content with her possibilities of sensemaking about strategy.

- **Too large:**

It is as if the interviewee is lost, with too much sensemaking to do. She does not feel she has made sense of strategy, but does not claim that there is too little information. It is as if the task of sensemaking is simply too immense.

Please pay in mind that what you are looking at is the interviewee’s personal viewpoint. If she *seems* confused, this does not warrant a coding, look at what she says about whether she has made sense of strategy. If she feels she has made sense of strategy, the **enough room** –category is in order. If not, does she feel left out, uninformed (**too small)** or simply confused, with too much thinking to do for her own comfort (**too large)?**

You may encounter difficulties if the interviewee seems to differ on her comments regarding the strategy process in general and the strategic theme on the other hand. Again, your final analysis should be based on how the interviewee regards her strategic role herself as a whole: is she content or discontent with the way things are.

2. Sphere of influence

As with sensemaking, the categories are envisioned as ”spheres” around the interviewee. Now what we are interested in is whether the interviewee feels she has had sufficient possibilities of influencing the strategy process.

- **Too small:**

The interviewee feels that she has too few possibilities of influencing issues.

- **Enough room:**

The interviewee feels content with her possibilities of influencing the strategy process.

- **Too large:**

This may be a tricky category to comprehend at first, but another way of putting it might be ”too much responsibility”. The interviewee feels that she has too little support in terms of making tough strategic decisions herself. The burden of responsibility seems too great.

In the interview outline there is a question that directly addresses the possibilities the interviewee has in influencing the strategic theme. This is a major, but not the only, source of information. Again, look at whether the interviewee is content with her

possibilities of influencing – e.g. if she notes that she has no possibilities, yet is content with this, then the *enough room* category is in order.

3. Sphere of activity

The sphere of activity reflects the interviewee's activities in the strategy process. There are three activity types: champion, citizen and cynic.

- **Champion:**

  The interviewee actively reports a willingness to influence the strategy process in a sphere larger than here immediate responsibilities according to her work description.

- **Citizen:**

  The interviewee has a basically positive or a neutral orientation towards strategy and perhaps feels that she is implementing strategy in her work. She does not, however, report to trying to influence the organization or other people.

- **Cynic:**

  The interviewee expresses a negative orientation towards strategy *in general.* She feels it is not worthwhile, or is a negative phenomenon. She does not report to trying to influence the strategy in any way, however.

Coding

Please code each interview using this form

Interviewee: _____

Sphere of sensemaking:

- **content? - yes => enough room**

  - no => too small / too large

Sphere of influence:

- **content? - yes => enough room**

  - no => too small / too large

Sphere of activity:

- **champion:** willingness to actively influence strategic issues transcending responsibilities of one's own work description

- **cynic:** expresses negative orientation towards strategy, disinterest or open hostility. Not willing to do anything about it.

- **citizen:** no negative orientation, yet no willingness to influence larger issues.

Appendix 3. Quotations in Finnish

These quotations have been presented here in Finnish in order to retain as much transparency in the text as possible. The interviewees often use colorful language, which poses the risk of something getting lost in translation. The reader fluent in Finnish is invited to examine the quotations and compare them to the translations in the text.

Sphere of sensemaking

(Q1) "Kyllä mä oon siitä kuullu. Mutta se on aika paljon, että se on ehkä silleen, että meitä [oman yksikön väkeä] pidetään. Meitä pidetään ehkä mun mielestä hiukan pienemmässä arvossa kuin näitä ketkä täällä on. Meille tiedotaan liian vähän."

(Q2) "Mä oon kyllä vaan kehittämisvaiheessa vielä [strategisessa suunnittelussa], kenttä on niin laaja ettei siitä oikeastaan näe että kun sen oman projektin […]"

(Q3) "Kysymys: Onko tämä [strategiaprosessikaavio] tuttu?

Vastaus: Joo, oikein tuttu.

Kysymys: Oikein tuttu, millä lailla oikein tuttu?

Vastaus: Sitä ollaan käyty läpi.

Kysymys: Nimen omaan tässä YT-elimessä?

Vastaus: Joo ja myös ihan omassa [yksikössä]."

Sphere of influence

(Q4) "Kysymys: Haluaisit sä vaikuttaa niihin [strategisiin tavoitteisiin]?

Vastaus: No kyllä mielelläni, siis varmaan jokaisella on joku mielipide, että miten se [strateginen teema] pitäisi näkyä meillä paremmin, mutta tietysti se, että mä ymmärrän, ettei tota strategiaakaan tonne voi mennä niin kuin koko [organisaatio] vääntään, että joku raja pitää siinäkin olla, mutta että kyl ne tulee aika annettuina mulle."

(Q5) "[…] sit jos se tilanne tulee eteen, niin mä lyön vetoa, että suurin osa meistä ei oikein tiedä, että mihin me lähetään kääntymään […] ohjeistusta varmaan tässä lähivuosina toivonmukaan on tulossa […]"

(Q6) "[…] meillä on kuitenkin aika selkeät ne raamit että minkä verran menee, minulla ainakaan itselläni ole henkilökohtaisesti tullut mitään tarvetta että sanoa, että minun mielestäni tämän pitäisi mennä eri lailla."

Sphere of activity

(Q7) "No kyllä sä voit feed backiin sanoa, että ei tule toimiin, mut mitä sitten. Mihin se auttaa, ei mihinkään. Sen voi sanoa nyt jo, että ei tule mitään tän vuoden tavoitteita, ei tule kesää."

(Q8) "Kysymys: Mikä motivoi toteuttamaan [strategista teemaa]?

Vastaus: No, kylhä se omistaja on asettanu tällasen […] periaatteen tuota, jos ei omistajan tahtoa pysty toteuttamaan niin mitäpä se sitten […]."

(Q9) "Minä aina herätän aina ihmisiä katsomaan [ongelmia strategisen teeman kannalta], tämä oli tällä lailla nätisti sanottu."

Excluded champions

(Q10) "Se ei oo luontevan kuuloinen. Mulla on vaan se kuva, että mitä tässä seuraa ja kattelee tiedotteita ja muita. Lujaa menee. Sillai. Se, että täällä on perusteellisesti muuttunut tää koko arvomaailma […] Nyt vaan raha ratkaisee kaikissa paikoissa."

(Q11) “Kyl mun mielestä, no pitäis ja pitäis, mut ainakin mä haluan tietää enemmän ja mun mielestä oikeastaan kuuluiskin tietää enemmän.”

(Q12) “ […] nää tuloskortit käsittääkseni, no nyt on ensimmäinen missä mä olen nähnyt, että siihen voi jopa ite käydä sanomassa, että tää on nyt ihan syvältä. Tähän astihan meille on tullut aivan rauhattomia tavoitteita, jotka ei ole millään tapaa sidottuja reaalimaailmaan […]”

Abandoned champions

(Q13) “Nyt niinkuin tässä niissä strategiassa, mäkin olen lukenut sitä, että [tietty numeerinen tavoite pitää saavuttaa]. Tää on, mä en tiedä miten se on mahdollista. Mistä tulee sitten lisää resursseja tai voimia?”

Discontent champions

(Q14) “Meillä on aika hysteerinen tiedonjakopolitiikka tässä organisaatiossa [...] Mä olen viime viikolla lukenut [strategian], mä sain intraan oikeuden käyttää sitä, koska mä olen [mainitsee tehtävänimikkeen] […]”

(Q15) “Minä luulen, että niillä on niin kiire, että ne valikoivat niistä kaikista maailman viesteistä mitä ne saa niin jotkut. Varmaan ne ei koe niitä tärkeitä, koska ne usein, ikävä kyllä, ne sivuuttaa. Tai sitten voi olla joissain tapauksissa, että ne huomioi ja yrittää, mutta […] ne ei niitä osaa tehdä. Eivätkä kerkiä siihen hirveästi paneutua, eivätkä ehkä viitsi, ajattelevat että helpommallakin pääsee.”

(Q16) ” […] kaikille luvataan kaikkea, luodaan sellaista että onhan teillä ollut mahdollisuus vaikuttaa, on ollut edustaja. Jos me halutaan jäntevää toiminnan suunnittelua, johon strategiat sitten […] liittyy, se ei ole ihan joka pojan tehtävä, vaan tarvitaan parhaita poikia ja tyttöjä jotka nähdään [organisaation] sisällä selkeästi tulevaisuuden lupauksiksi ja voimavaroiksi.”

(Q17) ”[…] “että kiitos palautteesta”, mutta rivien välissä, että älä laita uudelleen. Mutta sehän mua motivoi eniten. Silloinhan pitää antaa palautetta, tottakai enemmän [...] Että jotainhan siinä on, että jos sä pyydät palautetta ja silti sä et pysty kritiikkiä ottaan vastaan niin kuin se on, niin mikä siinä on takana. Hyvä kysymys. Epävarmuus.”

(Q18) “Ja musta toi [näin suuri organisaatio] on aivan pöllö. Sanoinkin kerran meidän [yksikön johtajalle], että haluaisin meille sellaista koulutusta, että sisäinen yrittäjyys, että mitä se ihan oikeesti on. Että suhtauduttaisiin tähän työhön kuin se tämä olisi oma firma. Että miten eri tavalla silloin monet ihmiset silloin tätä työtä tekisi. Ja semmosta ilmapiiri saa aikaiseksi pienissä yksiköissä.”

Empowered champions

(Q19) “Nyt me ollaan tehty paljon määrittelytyötä, sitä fyysistä työtä ja nyt sitä pitää sparrata. Mutta nyt sen maastouttaminen, se liittyy koulutuksiin, sitouttamiseen, varmistamiseen, että se asia on ymmärretty oikein. Semmoisen yhteisymmärryksen aikaansaaminen paremman huomisen aikaansaamiseksi.”

(Q20) “Mä olen esimerkiks kysynyt [alaisilta], että luetelkaa [strategian kulmakivet] ja kertokaa mitä ne sisältää. Joka ensimmäisenä on kertonut, niin on saanut sadan markan lahjakortin.”

(Q21) “No ensimmäinen olisi sitten se, että olen koittanut tässä […] muutostilanteessa, että paras henkivakuutus meille kullekin tässä on, että hoidetaan hommamme mahdollisimman hyvin ja se nyt sitten suoraan liittyy sitten siihen, että [strateginen teema] on niin kuin just se ja tietysti myöskin motivaatio hoitaa ne hommat kunnolla.”

(Q22) “Entinen osaston esimies [edeltäjäni] oli ainakin mielestään ammattimies joka alalla. Itse pyrin siihen, että meidän kotipesässä olisi jaettu kuviot. Olisi tavallaan varamiesjärjestelmä. Kun olen saanut oman kuvion kuntoon, seuraava steppi on koko [organisaatiossa] uuteen toimintakulttuuriin siirtymisestä.”

(Q23) “Mutta ei niitä voi lähteä sillä lailla tekemäänkään, että me tehdään semmonen strategia, että neljäkymmentä ihmistä siihen uskoo. Se on asia sitten joka on taas niin hömpänpömppää, ettei sitä edes kannata lähtee tekemään. Semmosta tilannetta ei edes ole. Ei siihen tarvitsekaan kaikkien uskoa.

Riittää, kun minä uskon ja pari muuta. Siis tämmösessä tilanteessa minun mielestäni. Sitten hyvä onnistuminen, niin sitten rupeaa kaikki muutkin uskomaan."

(Q24) "Ne [omat alaiset] kyllä sitoutuu siihen, mitä yhdessä päätetään ja mitä on tullut käskyjä, niin ainakin meidän [yksikössä] asiat kyllä menee niin kuin ne periaatteessa sanotaan."

(Q25) "Joo, itseasiassa mä olen nähnyt nää [strategiaprosessikaaviot] sillai, että mä olen itse tuolla netissä seikkaillut ja kattellut näitä. Mutta en mä ole näitä nähnyt sillai mitenkään valmiissa esityksessä sillai, että olisin ollut kuuntelemassa jotain esitystä missä nää on kerrottu, mutta sillai, että itse olen kaivellut näitä ja kattellut [...] Kun tääkin on just semmoinen sen verran iso [organisaatio], niin kaiken maalman verkottuminen ja kaiken maailman kontaktit ja tämmöinen niinkun jos on näinkin utelias mielenlaatu, niin se on kyllä hyvä tässä firmassa, koska aina kun kyselee ja jutskailee, niin tosi paljon selviää asioita."

Champions under stress

(Q26) "Ne [strategiaiskulauseet] on vaan sellaista hengen luontia. Kyllähän ne on meidän itse mietittävä, mitä me tehdään ja tosi harvoin oon mistään kuullut, että joku pystyisi sanomaan, mitä täällä pystytään tekemään paremmin… että joku pystyisi sen sanomaan, että mitä tehdään. Että kyllä ne keinot on meidän itse keksittävä, että mitä tehdään. Tavoitteet annetaan ja. Mutta, että jotain toimenpiteitä tulisi jostain, niin kyllä se on niinku."

(Q27) "Johto sitoutuu kyllä, keskijohdossa on melko suuri ongelma. Ne on kuin "pikkukingejä" laguunissa nää meidän veijarit. Siinä tulee sellainen että, "antaa niiden jätkien siellä pääkonttorissa suheltaa, minä teen niin kuin olen ennenkin tehnyt". Siinä on kyllä tällainen ilmiö ja tämä on yksi merkittävä ongelma. Työntekijöiden sitoutuminen on pienempi ongelma, ne on enempi alttiimpia muutokselle."

Disregarded champions

(Q28) "Että se [strateginen teema] on hirveen vaikea asia, laaja ja vaikea."

(Q29) "Että se on sitten tullut meidän ryhmäesimiehen kautta. Hän on käynyt semmoisissa [strategiatilaisuuksissa] ja sitten itse kertonut meille omin sanoin, esittänyt viisikymmentä sivua Power Pointtia, että tässä on strategia […] Se mikä siinä olisi minusta sinänsä ollut ongelma, että esimies ei ole ottanut itse sitä vakavasti ja sitten jos sen esittääkin sitten vähän, että tämä nyt on tällainen mikä on tehty, että tästä nyt voi ottaa ilon irti jos haluaa. Niin ei siihen oikein tosissaan voida suhtautuakaan, että siihen sitten vain, että tämä on tällaista ajankulua joillekin jotka tekevät näitä."

Puzzled champions

(Q30) "Jos meillä olisi enemmän käytettävissä tämmöstä niin kuin eri tyyppistä tietoa, eli siitä ihmisestä tavallaan, minkä tyyppinen se on ja mitä se harrastaa, niin sitä vois ehkä hyödyntää enemmän ja sitä kautta miettiä, että mikä sille asiakkaalle oikeastaan olis hyvä juttu. Ne tietojärjestelmät vois olla vähän paremmassa kunnossa, että ne ylipäänsä mahdollistais tommosen tekemisen."

(Q31) "[…] yksi ongelma tahtoo olla, että on vaikea saada, jos puhutaan jonkun osa-alueen strategiasta jota ollaan tekemässä, niin siihen liittyen, liittyvien osien, niin asioista on vaikea saada selvyyttä. Että tämä liittyy varmaan osittain siihen ja sitten meidän strategiaprosessi, että kuinka se toimii yleensä, kun se on hyvin rinnakkainen prosessi niin sittenhän siinä voi hyvin herkästi sattua näitä ristiriitaisuuksia niiden strategioiden kesken. Että se on varmaan sellainen yksi osa-alue mitä pitää kehittää, että miten me saadaan helpommin, helpommin saataisiin liittymään toisiinsa ja miten ne, joihinkin strategioihin liittyvät asiat saataisiin jotenkin helpommin hankittavaksi tai strategiat helpommin saataville."

(Q32) "Saan varmasti vaikuttaa [tavoitteisiin] kun asetan [ne] itse. Ei se siinä mielessä ole. Kysymys pitäisi antaa X:lle [suora alainen], että onko hän saanut tarpeeksi tukea. Siinä vois sanoa, ettei ehkä ole saanut, että hän aika paljon yksin joutunut ajamaan ylös, mutta vahva persoona, hän tekee sen. Mä yritän avata ovia."

(Q33) "Kysymys: Miten viestit strategioita?

Vastaus: Strategioita.

Kysymys: Tai strategiaa tietysti voi sanoa myös?

Vastaus: Viestin [organisaation] kannalta tätä strategiaa… En minä nyt tiedä onko nyt hirveän paljon, se on sitä että [organisaatio] teki strategian ja sitten jos ajattelee niin se on aika kaukaista se [organisaatio]-taso, että enemmän sitten puhutaan kuitenkin sen [oman] yksikön strategiasta,"

(Q34) "Suomennan sitä mitä ylhäältä päin on sanottu, koska se on enemmän tai vähemmän kapulakieltä. Vaikka kyllä mä sen tasan tiedän, että niitä sanojakin on mietitty moneen otteeseen, mitä sinne kirjoitetaan […] Olen laittanut [strategiapaperit] tiimeissä kiertoon, että sen saa jokainen lukea, joka haluaa, mutta mä en oo edellyttänyt, että se luetaan. Poimin teksteistä sellaisia asioita, jotka mun mielestä koskevat meitä. Mä oon pyytänyt mun tiiminvetäjiä lukee niitä ja poimii samoin niitä asioita […] Enemmän näen, että rooli on kielen kääntäminen.

Kysymys: Onko kielenkääntäminen helppoa?

Vastaus: Eihän se tietenkään helppoa ole. Markkinointistrategian tekemisessä esimerkiksi sitä tuli luettua niin monta kertaa ja sitä käsiteltiin niin monta kertaa, että sitä rupesi ymmärtämään, mitkä siellä oli taustalla. Siellä oli paljon samoja asioita kuin joskus 6 vuotta sitten, kun on nähnyt […] Kyllä ne rupee ymmärtämään mitä niillä tarkoitetaan. Mutta jos ne vaihtuisi, niin meille keskijohdolle lyödään paperi kouraan ja sanotaan että tossa on ja selitetään kerran. Sitten pitäisi itse jakaa tietoa ja kertoa mitä niillä tarkoitetaan sen tiedon perusteella. Se kyllä vaatii aika paljon sitä, että pähkii niitä asioita […] Ei se tosta vaan onnistu […] Kyllä mä näen sen, että jos keskijohto ei ymmärrä niitä, me voidaan olla aikamoinen tulppa. On turha kuvitella että meidän alapuolella sitä kukaan ymmärtäisi, jos mekään ei ymmärretä."

(Q35) "Lähinnä tämä ongelma on meikäläisen työtavoissa ja asioissa. Ei ihminen ole koskaa valmis mihinkään tai jos ihminen on valmis, niin se on hieno asia, mutta mä ainakin koen, että joka päivä pitää oppia uutta. Kun tossa aamupäivällä mietin tätä kyselyä, niin rupesin miettimään omia asioita [strategian toimeenpanon käytäntöjä]. Tiedottamista, missä on varmasti petraamisen varaa mullakin ja koko meidän osastolla."

Overwhelmed champions

(Q36) "Eikä meillä edes ole paperilla, että miten me toimitaan sen [strategisen asian edistämiseksi]. Että se on kanssa semmoinen, mitä me ollaan paljon mietitty ja mihin on ehdotettu työryhmiä ja mihin on tehty kaikenlaista, mutta tämä on sellainen asia, mitä tuota niin, tämä menee nyt tietysti mun työni ohi […] kukaan ei tahdo ottaa vastuuta tästä hommasta […] Että nää jotka panevat alulle tämän, lyö päänsä seinään koko ajan. Niin sen tietää silloin, että me ollaan aika tuuliajolla täällä kentällä."

(Q37) "Tuota… mä tiedän että osa mun suorista alaisista käyvät kyllä [strategiat] säännöllisesti läpi omissa kokouksissa, mutta tiedän myöskin, että kaikki eivät käy."

(Q38) "Mä olen yrittänyt viestiä sitä, että miksi sitä [prosessia] pitäisi parantaa, mitä hyötyä siitä on, missä se näkyy. [Asiakkaan] tai jonkun muun kannalta se on tärkeä tämä [strateginen teema]. Mun kokemuksen mukaan näinkin turvallisessa ja rikkaassa yhteisössä kuin [oma organisaatio] niin henkilöstö ei paljon ajattele, että saadaan parempi tulos. Se ei täällä ole niin se ei kauheasti huolestuttanut joukkoa, kun me ei eletä sillä lailla veitsi kurkulla."

Recluse citizens

(Q39) "Niin no sanotaanko näin, että kyllähän tässä on kyllä semmonen määrätty kastinjako tässä henkilöstössä on, että on tää suorittava puoli ja sitten on nää [päätöksentekijät]. Sitä ei oikein sanoin osaa selittää, mutta siinä on määrätynlainen kastinjako kyllä. Että onko se sitten meidän omaa alemmuudentunnetta vai mitä se on, mut jotain on kuitenkin semmonen suojamuuri."

(Q40) "Että mun mielestä niinkun työntekijältä oletetaan hirveesti siis, että se jaksaa ja kestää kaikki. Että sitä ei niinkun ajatella ollenkaan. Että me ollaan kuin pelinappuloita."

(Q41) "Että hyvin tiedän, että se on se joulupuhe tosiaan aina, mikä on täällä kerran vuodessa sen pitämässä. Niistä strategioista ei kyllä tiedä sitten yhtään mitään. Kyllähän tää meidän päällikkö, tää XX, niin kyllähän se johtaa kyllä ihan riittävästi täällä, että ei mulla siitä ole kyllä mitään valittamista. Mutta kun mennään sinne ylöspäin, niin sitten voisi olla.

Kysymys: Mutta minkälaisista asioista sinä haluaisit kuulla nimenomaan sitten?

Vastaus: No yleensä siis, kun en mä tiedä sen mielipiteistä mitään.

Kysymys: Ja kuitenkin hän tekee semmosia päätöksiä, jotka vaikuttaa teidän työhön?

Vastaus: Kyllä varmaan tekee. Eli ei sillä lailla kanssakäymistä ole, on morjenstettu tuossa vaan."

(Q42) " […] kiinnostusta riittää näihin [strategian] osa-alueisiin, niin kuin just toi BSC-malli, niin siitäkin meitä tavallaan me ei tehdä sen eteen mitään, meidän ryhmä, koska meidän johtaja ei ole niistä kiinnostunut. Ja sit meidän on vähän vaikea mennä työntekijöinä sanomaan, et me oltais tästä kiinnostuneita, kun se pitäs tulla mun mielestä johdon taholta se suunta."

(Q43) "Ei ollut alussa varsinaista koulutusta [strategisesta teemasta], juteltiin keskenämme [kollegoiden kesken]."

Neutralized citizens

(Q44) "No meillä [meidän osastolla] ei ole siihen ollut mitään hirveästi vaikuttamismahdollisuuksia minun mielestäni, että en ole ainakaan itse henkilökohtaisesti vaikuttanut niihin [strategisiin tavoitteisiin].

Kysymys: Olisitko halunnut?

Vastaus: Ei silleen oman työn kannalta ei pahemmin ehdi. Täällä on erikseen nämä jotka voi suunnitella niitä."

(Q45) "[…] välttämättä en kaikkia [strategisia tavoitteita] allekirjoita, enkä näihin ois voinu vaikuttaa."

(Q46) "Sit semmoinen avoimuus, että voi avoimesti keskustella.

Kysymys: Mistä aiheesta?

Vastaus: Iha mistä vaan. Ihan kaikkeen liittyvästä. Sellaista avoimuutta. Että ihmiset uskaltaa […] Voisi antaa kehitysideoita ja, ja niitä kysyttäiskin joskus. Se olisi mun mielestä tosi tärkeä. Se ettei aina samat ihmiset […] aika paljon sitä aina samat ihmiset on samassa asiassa määrittelemässä kaikkee."

Satisfied citizens

(Q47) "Tämä on tämä nykypäivä. En minä nyt itse henkilö, jos minä jotenkin muuten pärjäisin niin en minä välttämättä viitsisi itseäni piiskata, ei kun ihan oikeasti, minä olen niin kauan jo ollut työelämässä, yli 30 vuotta, mutta en minä koskaan viitsimistä vastaan ole, mutta minusta tämän ikäinen ihminen jo riittää kun se käy joka päivä töissä […]"

(Q48) "No meidän ryhmäpalaverit, joita on kaksi kertaa kuukaudessa, niin siellä tuodaan esiin ihan tälläkin hierarkian tasolla tämä yleinen talon linja […] Eli se pyritään saamaan meille selväksi, että me omaksutaan tämä ja ollaan mukana, sitoudutaan siihen."

(Q49) "Olen yrittänyt ihan omalla ajalla lukemalla lukea sitä, mitä se BSC tarkoittaa. Olen tullut mukaan sen jälkeen kun asiat pantu vireille. Sen takia kaikki asiat on niin kuin että mä oon itse opiskellut enemmän, että pääsisin mukaan ja ymmärtäisin, mistä on kysymys."

(Q50) "Joskus organisaatioteorioissa tuodaan esille vanhoja asioita uusin nimikkein ja todetaan, että nyt on keksitty jotain aivan uutta. 60-70- luvulla tuli management by objectives, joka ei ole sen ihmeempi kuin joku myöhempi tavoiteohjaus tai sitten joku muu. Nää on eri variaatioita, mutta teema on sama: saada työntekijät tekemään sen, minkä johto haluaa."

Citizens in need

(Q51) "No ehkä jotenkin se, että se on aika laaja-alaisesti semmonen hahmotus mulla, mutta ehkä se pitäisi olla sitten vielä ehkä vähän yksityiskohtaisempi, ainakin tuntuu siltä, että kun meitä on niin paljon töissä, et olis jonkunlainen, moneen semmoseen juttuun jotain ohjeistusta."

(Q52) "Se [strategisen teeman toimeenpano] vähän kangertelee, se ei ole lähtenyt niin nopeasti liikkeelle. Ei ole niin helppo tehdä sitä. Prosessi on kyllä hidastunut.

Kysymys: Mitkä on ollut ne suurimmat vaikeudet?

Vastaus: Osastonjohtajan eläkkeelle lähtö ja ei ollut seuraajaa paikalla. Ei ollut niitä päättäjiä."

(Q53) "Minä luulen, että tämä on ainakin tämä strategian viestittäminen niin minä tunnen itse pistoksen sydämessäni ja voin väittää että se on kuitenkin ongelma, siis se, että sitä ei ole riittävästi viestitetty, siis strategiakeskusteluja, minä olettaisin niin että strategiaa ei voi viestittää sillä tavalla että minä panen strategian paperille ja kerrotaan että tässä se nyt on ja sitten se viestintä olisi siinä […] Tiedonkulun katkeaminen on suuri ongelma minusta.

Kysymys: Aha, missä se katkeaa?

Vastaus: No minä luulen että jossakin täällä meikäläisen ja siellä jossakin [oman osaston työntekijätason] välillä niin jossakin siinä maastossa, että minä kyllä luulisin että tältäosin mitä minun viestittäminen, viestintä, muu henkilökohtainen, kaikkien muidenkin meidän joiden pitäisi sitten kertoa ja viestittää niin se on huonosti hoidettu."

Troubled citizens

(Q54) "[…] nää on kaikkien luettavissa, mitä yleensäkin [Intranetissa] on yleensäkin […] kaikki strategiat sun muut, niin kyllä ne tulee siellä aina sitten esiin. Se on jokaisen luettavissa ja tietysti se on silloin itsestä kiinni, että lukeeko niitä vai ei […]"

(Q55) "[…] jollakin tavalla mä koen, että siinä on niin kuin se on pikkasen kuin sairaalahierarkia, joka mun mielestä on, siis sillä lailla mä koen [oman organisaation], jos mä ajattelen, että mä koen itse [oman organisaation], siis tietysti erittäin mukava työpaikka, mutta ehkä joissakin asioissa mä koen niin kuin jonkinasteisesti vanhanaikaista […] että se on tavallaan siinä, vaikka meillä on niitä madallettu niitä portaita ja sillä tavalla on, mutta jonkunasteisesti. Tietysti johtaja, joka on tuolla ylimmässä päässä, niin hänellä pitää olla selkärankaa ja kykyä johtaa. Se on hänen tehtävänsä sillä tavalla. Mutta sit kun mä ajattelen tällä alaportaalla, niin mä en näkisi mitään kauheeta semmosta, että jos asioita ehkä jonkunasteisesti vielä avoimemmin tai jotenkin johdettaisiin, niin mä en itse näkisi siinä henkilökohtaisesti mitään pahaa [...]"

(Q56) "[…] tässä on vuosi suunnilleen ollut semmosta aikaa, ettei ole oikein tiennyt, että mä olen kyllä toiminut aivan samalla lailla kuin ennenkin, mutta ei ole tiennyt, että mitä voi tehdä tai mitä saa tehdä ja tämmöset kaikki organisaatiot […]"

(Q57) "[…] tällä hetkellä kun me tiedetään tällä hetkellä että mikä on [organisaation] strategia näissä niin eihän siihen voi paljon vaikuttaa […] lähtökohta on se, että en minä voi myydä sellaista tuotetta asiakkaalle mikä hänelle ei kerta kaikkiaan sovi."

(Q58) "Sinänsähän tää koko prosessi on varsin veikeä, talo on ikäänkuin määritellyt, en tiedä millä perusteilla ja mistä, onko se tästä [strategisesta tavoitteesta] lähtien on määritellyt omiksi, tuota tämän tavoitteen ja määritellyt tämmöiset luvut, mitä vuonna 2005 pitäisi olla. Se on ikäänkuin se päämäärä mitä kohti tässä pyritään, mutta ei oo kertaakaan tässä talossa mietitty sitä, miten se tässä esimerkiks [operatiivisella tasolla] saavutetaan."

Unenlightened citizens

(Q59) "Olen valinnut alan koska viihdyn siinä. Työssä ongelmanratkaisu korostuu aika paljon […]

Kysymys: Oletko saanut mielestäsi riittävästi vaikuttaa [strategiseen teemaan] liittyvien tavoitteiden asettamiseen?

Vastaus: Varmasti olisi ollut mahdollisuus vaikuttaa. Meillä asioista voi puhua suoraan johtajalle. Jos järkevästi perustelee, niin saa vaikutettua asioihin."

(Q60) "No, ei silleen oikeestaan, että toisaalt meil… en tiedä kyl, mä en ihan kaikkee lue, mitä meilläkin painetaan ja tulee näitä […] Henkilökunnan kehittämisstrategia ois' varmaan ollu hyvä lukee, mis sit ehkä ois ollu tiivistetty, et mikä siin on ideana, et sellanen kokonaiskuva siin ei mulla ehkä ole."

(Q61) "No kyl se yleiskuva on ihan varmaan jäänyt päähän, mutta tietysti se on niitä pieni osia sit taas mitä taas ihan sit me jo käydään, mutta nyt esimerkikisi tässä jossain viimisessä suunnitteluissa, kuin tuli nyt, niin mun mielestä siellä on semmosta pari ihan, okei katottiinkin ihan näähän osui ihan niinkun suoraan, ei oo koskaan ennen viel näin käynyt, et ihan vois sanoo, et ois kerrottu, et näin teette ja suurinpiirtein joku ohje vaan asiasta puutuisi, että puhuttiin niinku ihan vois sanoo konkreettisesti asiasta, että mä en nytten seuraavaks kuitenkin kysyt että mikä se on, mutta mä en muista sitä. Mut okei se jäi sen takia mieleen, koska se ensimmäisen kerran osu ihan niinku kohdilleen."

(Q62) "[…] se nyt on tietysti vähän utopistista kun johto tekee jonkun tämmösen [strategiapaperin], niin ei se sitten välttämättä lukijalle, käytännön tekijälle välttämättä aukene siitä heti. Mutta kuitenkin, kyllähän meillä nyt on ihan selkeätä se, että asiakkaat on meidän tärkein kohde mihin me panostetaan tietysti ja sitten on tämä meidän sisäinen, että me sitten itse jaksamme niin siihen panostetaan myöskin ja minun mielestäni talo sen hyvin ottaa huomioon, että näitä strategioitten toteuttamisessa ajatellaan myös sitä, että kuinka sen toteuttajat jaksaa tehdä sen […]"

Lost citizens

(Q63) "No mun tapa toimia olis semmonen että mä ensin vähän kattelen ja pyörittelen sitä piirakanpalaa, että mitäs mä nyt tällä teen, että tässä vähän enempi joutuu liikkuvaan junaan hyppäämään [...]"

(Q64) "Välillä se voi olla itelle hämärää, et onks tää nyt ihan hyödyllistä."

(Q65) "[…] kyl sikäli on kyl hyvä työpaikka, että jos haluu ryhtyä jotain, niin kyllä pääsee, et se ei ole ongelma. Se on enemmän ollut se, että ei ole itsellä ollut niin paljon annettavaa."

(Q66) "[…] niitä [strategisia tavoitteita] ei ehkä pystytä tällä hetkellä vetämään mittareihin. Että niitä pystytään vain sillä lailla aika mutu-tuntumalla sanomaan, että okei sinä teit hyvää työtä ja kaikki sinun tavoitteet täyttyi, mutta että miten ne vaikutti sitten siihen meidän strategiavision toteutumiseen niin ne linkit on ongelma."

(Q67) "Kysymys: Näkyykö [strateginen teema] ryhmäsi tavoitteissa?

Vastaus: Ei. En olisi suostunut sellaiseen, se on kaikille esimiehillekin päivänselvää, että meillä ei ole aikaa. Kuulostaa törkeältä ja kylmältä, mutta kun ei ole niin ei ole."

Hopeless cynics

(Q68) "Kyllä nyt pitäisi ihmisille saada ainakin se saada myös tonne ylöspäin, että kaikilla ihmisillä, tai ei kaikilla oo, mutta yleensä ihmisillä on muutakin kuin se työ. Pitäisi kohdella vähän enemmän sellaisena, ottaa niiden ne tämmöiset ihmisenä olemisen asiat, nähdä nää työntekijät samalla tavalla ihmisinä kuin asiakkaat on. Eikä vaan aina, että ne on niitä työntekijöitä, jotka tekee sen työn. Inhimillisyyttä ei ole talossa."

(Q69) "[…] tuntuu siltä, että ei tarpeeksi kuunnella esimerkiksi meidän mielipiteitä ja ehdotuksia. Että ne ei niinku mee mihinkään eteenpäin. Aina tulee jossain seinä vastaan."

(Q70) "[Strategia]prosessissa puhuttiin siitä [strategisesta teemasta], mutten ole mitenkään vakuuttunut. Päällisin puolin se on sanojen muutos, riskinä se, että olemassa olevien yksiköiden nimiä muutetaan."

(Q71) "Mä itse näen sillai, että me ollaan ehdottoman tärkeä yksikkö [organisaatiossa] ja ammattitaitoinen ja kunnianhimoinen ja ammattiylpeä. Niin meidän pitäisi. Näistä lähtökohdista mä itse työskentelen. Ryhmänä meidän mun mielestä pitäisi nostaa sitä meidän profiilia. Olla uskottavampi kuin ollaan. Sillai pitäis näkyä. Mutta tää on se mun näkemys. Tällä hetkellä mä näen sen, että me työskennellään vähän niinku jokainen omalla sarallaan. Jos mä kärjistän sitä, niin mä voisin ajatella työskenteleväni free lancerina."

(Q72) "Täst on kaksi ihmistä lähtenyt […] esimiehet sanoo, että ei palkata ketään, koeta nyt järkätä ittelles lomittaja ja opettaa, ne eivät hoida vastuuta, se kuvastaa jotain […] pääasia että hommat hoituu, mutta sitten jos jossakin vähän falskaa niin sitten varmaan muistetaan. Eiks tää kerro jotain johtamisesta, johtoportaasta?"

Surrendered cynics

(Q73) "[…] tuntuu välillä, ettei me tarvittaisi asiakkaita ollenkaan, vaan kyllä täällä pyöritetään niin paljon muutoksia ja sisäisiä palavereita ja strategista suunnittelua ja näin, että tavallaan niinkun vanha Neuvostoliiton kommunistipuolue, paljonko sit, siellä oli tuhansia työntekijöitä ja sit vaan yhtenä päivänä lakkautettiin. Yhtäkkiä vaan päätettiin, että nyt ei tarvita enää, eikä sit, sit vaan ei tarvittu. Että ne oli täysin siellä pyörimässä silleen. Tääl on kyllä pahimmassa tapauksessa vähän samoja juttuja."

(Q74) "Monet asiat näyttävät teoriassa hyvältä. Käytännössä ei toimi silleen. Minulla on aika pitkä työkokemus, niin jos siitä saisi annettua vähän vinkkejä muille, joilla on sitä vähemmän. En usko, että ennen kaikki on tehty väärin. Tuntuu, että pitää uudistua uudistumisen vuoksi […]"

(Q75) "Kysymys: Uskotko, että [strateginen teema] toteutuu [organisaatiossasi]?

Vastaus: Jos tietyt avainhenkilöt pystytään pitämään talossa, niin kyllä.

Kysymys: Haluatko tarkentaa tätä, keitä nämä tietyt avainhenkilöt ovat?

Vastaus: Siis sellaiset henkilöt, jotka on aivan ensiarvoisen tärkeää tosiaankin pitää talossa joidenka tehtäville ei helposti löydy korvaajaa, joko sen takia että korvaaja vaatisi esimerkiksi niin suurta taloudellista korvausta että sitä ei [työnantajalla] ole mahdollisuutta maksaa tai ne tehtävät ovat sitten niin vaativia tai sanotaanko että ja ne tehtävät ovat niin vaativia ettei niihin helposti pysty kouluttautumaan sitten vaan se vaatii esimerkiksi sitä että on ollut pidemmän aikaa tässä kokemuksen myötä oppinut ne tehtävät."

Disinterested cynics

(Q76) "Hoh-hoijaa, joo siis ihan loistava varmasti siis ihan liikuttavia asioita. Mutta ei ne [strategiaprosessikaaviot] käytännössä toimi. Nää on hyviä nää himmelit, mut todellisuudessa se menee semmoseen niin kuin voidaan sanoa, että ei tule kesää ei tule kesää […]"

(Q77) " […] yleensä tässä strategiatyössä…Ilmeisesti johtajille on, jotenkin kun ne ovat omaksuneet jotkut tietyt näkemykset siitä että miten organisaatiota johdetaan ja miten sitä kehitetään, ja nämä näkemykset ovat sitten joidenkin ulkopuolelta saatujen oppien mukaisia niihin on hyvä tarrautua ja katsoa että nyt minä olen tehnyt tuon, minä olen tehnyt tämän kaavan mukaan. Että johtajilta tahtoisin luovuutta enemmän siihen, spontaanisuutta ja spontaanisuutta siihen johtamiseen enemmän."

Dislocated cynics

(Q78) " […] just sen takia minäkin kysyin, että uskaltaako täällä puhua mitään. Välillä tulee sellainen olo kameroita on joka paikassa, kun tietää sellaisia asioita koska tietää sellaisia asioita mistä ei ole julkisesti puhuttu.

Kysymys: Aijaa. Hurjaa.

Vastaus: Minä en tykkää ollenkaan sellaisesta, että vahditaan. Että pitää esittää, että on hirveän tehokas. Kun ihminen on kuitenkin sellainen eihän se koko ajan voi paahtaa täysillä. Välillä on sellaisia päiviä, ettei ole niin hyviä päiviä."

(Q79) "Silloin alussahan meillä oli hirveästi sitä yhteishenkeä, että tee sinä, ja ollaan yhtä ja ollaan tiimiä ja näin. Mutta sitten kuitenkin se on mennyt siihen, että sillä omalla työllä ei pysty ansaitsemaan tavallaan päästä eteenpäin jos ei ole hyvä kaveri vaikka [päällikön] kanssa.

Kysymys: Että oman työn tulokset eivät vaikuta sitten?

Vastaus: Tai minä ainakin koen sen niin. Että joitakin ihmisiä palkitaan ja joitakin toisia ei."

(Q80) "Että siihen [strategiseen muutokseen] ei ole annettu tavallaan niinkun tällä suorittajatasolla, niinkun varsinaisen työsuorittajan tasolla niin paljonkaan aikaa sopeutua […] harvoinpa niitä [strategiadokumentteja] tulee käytyy kattomassa [intranetissä]. Joka vuosihan nää tehdään nää osastokohtaiset suunnitelmat ja tietysti sitten korkeammalla tasollakin nää suunnitelmat. Ja kyllä nää nyt käydään kerran vuodessa ainakin läpi sitten, näytetään. Mutta eihän niihin sillä tavalla meikäläinen kiinnitä huomiota, jos ei koske itteään."

(Q81) "Meillä siis mä olen ollut turhautunut tähän strategiahöpötykseen, siis niin kuin täällä on viis vuotta suunniteltu tätä organisaatiota ja tehty strategioita ja puhuttu aivan äärimmäisen teoreettisella tasolla näistä, se on täysin vierasta koko tälle työntekijäjoukolle ja silti ei ole saatu aikaan vielä uutta organisaatiota. Ja nyt tulee vaan uusia ja uusia konsultteja ja todellakin niin täysin teoreettisia malleja, jotka on kovin vieraita käytännölle. Että tää ei vaan toimi näin. Ulkopuolelta haetaan eri näköistä konsulttiapua, kun tää asia olis ollut ratkaistu, kun pannaan [johtoryhmä] tonne [edustustiloihin] yhdeks päiväks, kahdeks päiväks laatimaan se uus organisaatio, koska me tiedetään, että mitkä on ne tavoitteet mihin pitää pyrkiä ja siellä sitten tapellaan niin kauan kunnes savu nousee, valkoinen savu piipusta ja todetaan, että uus organisaatio on syntynyt.

Kysymys: Mikä siinä on ollut syynä, että näin ei ole tehty?

Vastaus: No ilmeisesti täällä on siis [toimitusjohtaja] on ollut jossain määrin heikko puuttumaan tähän, mutta täällä pyörittää tämmönen organisaatioyksikkö […] täysin sisäisesti tätä systeemiä ja välillä tuntuu siltä, että se hakee työlleen oikeutusta tästä jatkuvasta prosessista ja tää prosessi on jäänyt sitten elämään tässä näin ilman lopputulokseen pyrkimistäkään."

Passive cynics

(Q82) "Kyllä tää [mun] viestintä [omalle yksilölle] on vähän tällaista face-to-face -keskusteluja asioista.

Kysymys: Onko nää keskustelut yleensä virallisemmissa vai epävirallisemmissa tilaisuuksissa?

Vastaus: Både och. Epävirallisissa tilaisuuksissa käytetään tätä inhorealistista puheilmaisua ja sitten kun ollaan virallisempia, silloin lauletaan yhtiön lauluja."

(Q83) "[…] kyllä se on hyvin pieni nappula mitä meikäläinen täällä vääntää […]"

(Q84) "Mä käyn niissä [toimitusjohtajan kyselytunneilla] hirveän harvoin, kun ne on vähän semmosia, että mulla on niistäkin semmonen kuvitelma, että ne on vähän semmosia näennäisiä."

Appendix 4. Statistical description of the data

The objective of this thesis is to study social positions in the strategy process from the phenomenological perspective of an individual agent. A thorough statistical analysis of the data clearly falls out of the scope of the thesis because of the qualitative methodology employed, as well as the framing of the research task: elaborating individual positions. There is, however, a possibility of giving an account of the data in the light of certain background variables, even if this is not the method of choice for phenomenological analysis. This description is given outside the discussion of the research question, and simply for the benefit of the reader. The data will not be used to support the main analysis of the text and is therefore not subjected to significance testing of any kind.

First of all, the frequencies of positions and performance categories are presented in the table below (Table 34).

Table 34. Discovered frequencies of the social positions

	Sphere of Sensemaking	Sphere of influence	N	%
Champions			158	52,4
Excluded	Too small	Too small	10	3,3
Abandoned	Too small	Too large	1	0,3
Discontent	Enough room	Too small	20	6,6
Empowered	Enough room	Enough room	**72**	**24**
Under stress	Enough room	Too large	7	2,3
Disregarded	Too large	Too small	7	2,3
Puzzled	Too large	Enough room	**29**	**9,6**
Overwhelmed	Too large	Too large	12	4
Citizens			118	39,4
Recluse	Too small	Too small	15	5
Neutralized	Enough room	Too small	9	3
Satisfied	Enough room	Enough room	24	8
In need	Enough room	Too large	3	1
Troubled	Too large	Too small	14	4,7
Unenlightened	Too large	Enough room	**42**	**14**
Lost	Too large	Too large	11	3,7
Cynics			25	8,4
Hopeless	Too small	Too small	5	1,7
Surrendered	Enough room	Too small	4	1,3
Disinterested	Enough room	Enough room	2	0,7
Dislocated	Too large	Too small	9	3
Passive	Too large	Enough room	5	1,7
		Role-players	125	41,5
		Role-seekers	109	36,2
		Bystanders	67	22,3

Empowered champions form the largest group, amounting to a fourth of the interviewees. Unenlightened citizens are the next largest, puzzled champions being the third largest group. Approximately a half of the interviewees regard themselves as strategic champions, with approximately forty percent actually performing in strategic roles. Approximately a third of the interviewees are looking for a role, and a fourth do not want a role. Strategic cynics are relatively rare.

The background variables

There are four background variables on which data was gathered. First of all, the interview outline itself was adjusted to facilitate discussion at three organizational levels, i.e. three forms of formal positions: the top management, middle management and the operative personnel. Secondly, we categorized the twelve case organizations into three types: private, public, and private with a public (e.g. legislated) mission. Thirdly, we were interested in the tenure of the interviewees in their organizations. Fourthly, since strategy is an abstract phenomenon, we gathered data on the educational background of the interviewees.

Table 35/5. Description of the interview sample.

Personnel group	N
Operative personnel	179
Middle management	83
Top management	39

Organization type	N
Public organization	100
Public firm	74
Private organization/firm	127

Tenure with the organization	N
less than 2 yrs	39
2-10 years	94
over 10 years	168

Education	N
No professional education	33
Vocational education	121
University	145
Not known	2

Formal positions

The frequencies of managers, middle managers and operative personnel members corresponding to the activity categories (champion, citizen, cynic), as well as the performance categories (role-player, role-seeker, bystander), have been portrayed in

Table 29 of the main text. A more detailed presentation of all the twenty positions is presented below (Table 36).

Table 36. Formal positions and phenomenological positions

	N top managers	%	N middle managers	%	N operative personnel	%
Champions						
Excluded	0	0,0	2	2,4	8	4,5
Abandoned	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	0,6
Discontent	3	7,7	8	9,6	9	5,0
Empowered	22	**56,4**	30	**36,1**	20	**11,2**
Under stress	2	5,1	5	6,0	0	0,0
Disregarded	1	2,6	1	1,2	5	2,8
Puzzled	7	**17,9**	13	**15,7**	9	**5,0**
Overwhelmed	1	2,6	6	7,2	5	2,8
Citizens						
Recluse	0	0,0	3	3,6	12	6,7
Neutralized	0	0,0	2	2,4	7	3,9
Satisfied	0	0,0	2	2,4	22	**12,3**
In need	1	2,6	0	0,0	2	1,1
Troubled	0	0,0	2	2,4	12	6,7
Unenlightened	0	0,0	5	6,0	37	**20,7**
Lost	0	0,0	1	1,2	10	5,6
Cynics						
Hopeless	0	0,0	0	0,0	5	2,8
Surrendered	1	2,6	0	0,0	3	1,7
Disinterested	0	0,0	1	1,2	1	0,6
Dislocated	1	2,6	1	1,2	7	3,9
Passive	0	0,0	1	1,2	4	2,2
Champions	36	**92,3**	65	78,3	57	31,8
Citizens	1	2,6	15	18,1	102	57,0
Cynics	2	5,1	3	3,6	20	11,2
Role-players	29	74,4	45	**54,2**	51	**28,5**
Role-seekers	8	**20,5**	30	**36,1**	71	**39,7**
Bystanders	2	5,1	8	9,6	57	**31,8**

The empowered champion and puzzled champion were clearly top management positions, whereas the satisfied citizen and the unenlightened citizen were operative personnel categories. Top managers were mostly champions, whereas most operative personnel were citizens. The percentage of cynics was somewhat higher among the operative personnel. The middle management seemed to ‘hover’ between top management and operative personnel, with fewer champions and more citizens than the top management. Cynics were not more frequent among middle managers than top managers.

The same relations seemed to hold in the performance categories, albeit in a milder form. Most top managers were role-players, but there was also a considerable percentage of role-seekers among them. There were relatively few role-players among the operative personnel, yet a high percentage of role-seekers. The percentage of role-seekers was almost as high among the middle management. Bystanders were scarce among the top and middle managers but relatively common among the operative personnel.

It would seem that a third of the operative personnel is willing to let the strategy process be somebody else's business, while forty percent is seeking a role to play.

Organizational context

The twelve organizations were divided into three categories: 'public', 'firm', 'public firm'. The third category relates to those firms that serve a legislated function of some sort, and thus cannot be easily categorized as either private or public. The resulting frequencies are shown below (Table 37).

Looking at the three main categories, the percentages seem relatively stable, with the exception that in firms the percentage of bystanders appears somewhat smaller, with a corresponding rise in role-seekers. The number of role-players remains quite stable. Context on the organizational level, however, seems to be quite a significant phenomenon. There was an organization with no bystanders and a majority of role-players, whereas there was also an organization with only four role-players. The effect of organizational context is a subject worthy of investigation in further research.

Table 37. Organizational context

	Public				Firm					Public firm					
	O 1	**O 2**	**O 3**	**O 4**	**O 5**	**O 6**	**O 7**	**O 8**	**O 9**	**O 10**	**O 11**	**O 12**	**P %**	**F %**	**PF %**
Champions															
Excluded	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	1	1	0,0	6,3	2,7
Abandoned	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,0	0,0	0,0
Discontent	3	1	1	0	1	1	3	4	1	4	1	0	5,0	7,9	6,8
Empowered	4	5	6	7	12	7	8	5	3	2	4	9	22,0	27,6	20,3
Under stress	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	4,0	1,6	1,4
Disregarded	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	1,0	2,4	4,1
Puzzled	3	1	2	4	1	1	2	5	1	3	5	1	10,0	7,9	12,2
Overwhelmed	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	6,0	3,1	2,7
Citizens															
Recluse	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	8	0	1	0	4,0	7,9	1,4
Neutralized	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	1	1,0	3,1	5,4
Satisfied	1	4	3	3	1	7	2	0	0	1	0	2	11,0	7,9	4,1
In need	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,0	1,6	0,0
Troubled	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2,0	4,7	8,1
Unenlightened	4	4	5	5	6	0	3	2	3	2	3	5	18,0	11,0	13,5
Lost	0	0	3	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	7,0	2,4	1,4
Cynics															
Hopeless	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2,0	2,4	0,0
Surrendered	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2,0	0,0	2,7
Disinterested	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1,0	0,8	0,0
Dislocated	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	2,0	1,6	6,8
Passive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0,0	0,0	6,8
Total	25	25	25	25	27	25	25	25	25	24	24	26			
Champions	19	8	9	13	15	11	16	20	10	13	11	13	49,0	56,7	50,0
Citizens	5	13	14	12	10	14	9	4	12	7	8	10	44,0	38,6	33,8
Cynics	1	4	2	0	2	0	0	1	3	4	5	3	7,0	4,7	16,2
Role-players	8	10	11	**14**	14	**15**	12	10	**4**	**6**	9	12	43,0	43,3	36,5
Role-seekers	12	7	7	**6**	5	**10**	10	12	**15**	**12**	7	6	32,0	**40,9**	33,8
Bystanders	5	8	7	**5**	8	**0**	3	3	**6**	**6**	8	8	25,0	**15,7**	29,7

Tenure

The tenure of the interviewees was divided into three categories: ‘under two years’, ‘from two to ten years’ and ‘over ten years’. The resulting frequencies are portrayed below (Table 38).

Tenure does not seem to play a major role in the activity categories, yet it does seem to play a role in the performance categories. The percentage of role-players increases with the step from 2 to 2-10 years, remaining stable after that. The percentage of role-seekers shows a corresponding drop with the same step. The number of bystanders remains relatively stable, even though there is a slightly smaller percentage among

organizational members with long tenures. It would seem that it takes a certain amount of time to find one's role in the strategy process.

Table 38. Tenure

	Tenure<2	%	2<T<10	%	T>10	%
Champions						
Excluded	3	7,5	3	3,2	4	2,4
Abandoned	0	0	1	1,1	0	0
Discontent	7	**17,5**	4	4,3	9	5,4
Empowered	6	15	23	**24,7**	43	**25,6**
Under stress	1	2,5	3	3,2	3	1,8
Disregarded	1	2,5	4	4,3	2	1,2
Puzzled	2	5	12	12,9	15	8,9
Overwhelmed	0	0	3	3,2	9	5,4
Citizens						
Recluse	1	2,5	2	2,2	12	7,1
Neutralized	1	2,5	1	1,1	7	4,2
Satisfied	1	2,5	5	5,4	18	10,7
In need	1	2,5	0	0	2	1,2
Troubled	4	10	3	3,2	7	4,2
Unenlightened	8	20	18	19,4	16	**9,5**
Lost	1	2,5	5	5,4	5	3
Cynics						
Hopeless	0	0	1	1,08	4	2,4
Surrendered	0	0	1	1,08	3	1,8
Disinterested	1	2,5	1	1,08	0	0
Dislocated	2	5	2	2,2	5	3
Passive	0	0	1	1,1	4	2,4
Champions	20	50	53	57	85	50,6
Citizens	17	42,5	34	36,6	67	40
Cynics	3	7,5	6	6,5	16	9,5
Role-players	9	**22,5**	40	**43**	76	**45,2**
Role-seekers	20	**50**	29	**31,2**	60	**35,7**
Bystanders	11	27,5	24	25,8	32	**19**

Educational background

The educational background of the agents was divided into three categories: 'university', 'vocational', or 'no professional education'. The resulting frequencies are shown in Table 39 below.

Table 39. Educational background

	N University	%	N Vocational	%	No professional education	%
Champions						
Excluded	4	2,8	6	5,0	0	0,0
Abandoned	1	0,7	0	0,0	0	0,0
Discontent	11	7,6	6	5,0	3	9,1
Empowered	46	**31,7**	23	19,0	3	9,1
Under stress	6	4,1	1	0,8	0	0,0
Disregarded	3	2,1	3	2,5	1	3,0
Puzzled	23	**15,9**	4	3,3	2	6,1
Overwhelmed	3	2,1	7	5,8	1	3,0
Citizens						
Recluse	2	1,4	6	5,0	6	**18,2**
Neutralized	3	2,1	6	5,0	0	0,0
Satisfied	6	4,1	17	**14,0**	1	**3,0**
In need	1	0,7	2	1,7	0	0,0
Troubled	2	1,4	10	8,3	2	6,1
Unenlightened	17	11,7	19	15,7	6	18,2
Lost	6	4,1	3	2,5	2	6,1
Cynics						
Hopeless	1	0,7	1	0,8	3	9,1
Surrendered	3	2,1	0	0,0	1	3,0
Disinterested	2	1,4	0	0,0	0	0,0
Dislocated	3	2,1	5	4,1	1	3,0
Passive	2	1,4	2	1,7	1	3,0
Champions	97	66,9	50	41,3	10	30,3
Citizens	37	25,5	63	52,1	17	51,5
Cynics	11	7,6	8	6,6	6	**18,2**
Role-playing	75	51,7	44	36,4	6	18,2
Role-seeking	42	29,0	50	41,3	15	45,5
Bystanders	28	19,3	27	22,3	12	**36,4**

As expected, the educational frequencies portray many of the same phenomena as the formal position frequencies (Table 36). The agents with no professional education seem to show a relatively high percentage of recluse citizens, whereas only one of them functions as a satisfied citizen. To show the relation between formal position and educational background (Tables 36 and 39), the two variables have been cross-tabulated in Table 40 below.

Table 40. Formal position and educational background cross-tabulated

	N top manager	%	N middle manager	%	N operative employee	%
University	37	94,9	49	59,8	59	33,1
Vocational	2	5,1	28	34,1	91	51,1
No professional ed.	0	0,0	5	6,1	28	15,7