A Discourse Analysis of Communicative Actions of Strategy Practitioners on Social Media

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially in the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to understand the discourse of strategy in general and tools in specific among strategy practitioners interacting on social media. Unlike traditional media like books, business press, academic/ consultancy publications and/ or conventional forms of public events like guru or celebrity manager speeches, digital media has allowed many-to-many communication among strategy professionals. Their experiences, perspectives, approaches and preferences have become more visible. In this study, personal profile pages and comments on strategy tools of the members of Strategic Planning Society-a discussion group on LinkedIn- have been analyzed. It has been a qualitative research which aimed to comprehend worldviews, meaning attributions to strategy and its tools, construction of self- presentation and talk, motivations behind communicative action in this community and massification effect on strategy in this interaction. It has showed patterns, dissociations, dominant attitudes and meanings, and representations of 62 participants who communicate around strategy.

Key Words: Strategy, strategy tools, communicative action, social media, self presentation, discourse analysis

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, sosyal medyada etkileşim içinde bulunan strateji profesyonellerinin kendilerini ve strateji yaklaşımlarını ifadelerinin söylem analizidir. Dijital iletişim teknolojilerine kadar akademisyenler, gurular, danışmanlar, gazeteciler ve yaygın tanınırlığı olan yöneticilerle, geleneksel iletişim kanalları üzerinden tek yönlü iletişim halinde olan bu profesyoneller; sosyal medya ile karşılıklı bilgi paylaşımı olanağına kavuştular. Kendi tecrübeleri, görüşleri, yaklaşımları ve tercihlerini ifade alanı ile strateji disiplininin gündelik yaşamla ilişkisi daha görünür hale geldi. İşte bu çalışmada da, dünyanın en çok üyesi olan profesyonel iletişim ağı LinkedIn'de bulunan tartışma gruplarından "Strategic Planning Society"'de sürekli etkileşim içinde bulunan kullanıcıların kişisel profilleri ve stratejik araçlar üzerine yorumları incelendi. Nitel araştırma yöntemiyle ele alınan metinlerde, kullanıcıların dünya görüşleri, strateji disiplini ile kurdukları ilişki, stratejik araçlara atfettikleri anlamlar ve bu mecrada strateji bilgisi üretiminin geniş kitlelere yayılıp yayılmadığının izi sürüldü. Çalışma, strateji üzerine iletişim kuran, farklı demografik özelliklere sahip 62 kullanıcının kesiştiği, benzerlik gösterdiği örüntüleri ve ayrıştıkları çizgileri göstermiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Strateji, stratejik araçlar, iletişimsel eylem, sosyal medya, benliğin sunumu, söylem analizi.

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Introduction

Background of the Study

Strategy is one of the key concepts frequently discussed both in academia and practice. There are many different explanations of strategy on books, papers, online databases, biographies, magazines, or presentations: none of them exhaust the need to explain it. Whittington (2001) indeed argues that strategy is a multidimensional continous process where choosing it depends on various contexts like time, place and culture. In general, defining strategy is a matter of academic work and/or it is a dramatic issue for the success of story tellers. Nevertheless, general explanations do not reflect what everyday practices actually require. Therefore, strategy gains further primacy when it is attached to specific patterns of behaviours. Strategy tools embody these ways of doings and they shape possible future actions.

Strategy tools, moreover, are prescriptions prepared for managers to perform what they aim to achieve. As emphasized by Rigby (2001, 11), "over the past decade, executives have witnessed an explosion of management tools such as Supply Chain Integration, Knowledge Management, and Balanced Scorecard". Every tool is a formula to actualize what a company's strategy promises to succeed. It is argued that strategy tools help managers to cope with uncertainty as there could be different readings. Industrial environment is unstable and incalculable. What a manager should do is bringing "unambigous signals" and past experiences together (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2006, 7). Thus, strategy tools pave a secure ground for managers before they decide how to lead. Second, they legitimize the way managers plan and act. Since “manager’s sensemaking ability” is continously questioned by other actors, according to Mazza and Alvarez (2001), tools reinforce credibility of the manager. Furthermore, management concepts depicted by these tools facilitate efficiency in communication. They provide codes and patterns for employees who interact to implement what strategy orders (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009).

Other than managers’ own need for certainty, legitimacy and effective communication, there are also consultants who constantly attract the attention to managers’ weaknesses. This latter group wants their ideas to circulate as much as possible. As discussed by Carter et. Al (2003, 5), “the consultant is the expert, helping the suffering patient (organization) to recover and improve through ‘helping’, which implies an asymmetrical relation between the consultant and the client”. Strategy tools make consultants’ prescriptions more appealing and essential. They function as a tried and tested way to overcome the complexity which the consultant uses as bait. Furthermore, management gurus produce strategy tools to maintain a glittering career. Indeed, Bamber (1999) draws attention to the difficulty of copying with complicated managerial problems. According to him, “gurus encourage managers to think that there is a solution out there somewhere” (Bamber 1999, 4). Finally, strategy tools are used by media to attract business people. Magazines covering issues on strategy include highly referenced information sources for managers. As Strang and Soule state (1998, 278), “the output of the business press and the sales of business books are on the rise”.

Actors, who make strategy tools necessary, are at the same time carriers of them. There are certain communication channels in which these people diffuse their ideas about tools in addition to those written above. For example, “consultancy publications” (Mazza and Alvarez 2001), “business schools” (Perkmann 2005), global companies (Bamber 1999), and academic journals (Benders and Heusinkveld 2006) contribute to the dissemination process. Here, academia deserves a closer look, since business schools have become an indispensable step for future managers. What is discussed in an MBA lecture and included by a business school curriculum influence how strategy will be interpreted in future actions. In a study conducted by Armstrong and Brodie (1994), strategy tools are defined as “appealing” and “easy to use” by alumni (Armstrong and Brodie 1994). Beside the effect of academic background on future business routines, scholars’ interest in strategy tools also contribute to the diffusion process. There are many academic studies which conceptualize everyday practices and analyze success and/or failure stories (Bamber 1999). Finally, Mazza and Alvarez (2001) stress the importance of the indestructable belief that knowledge comes before action. Therefore, management ideas generated by academicians are required by managers to gain insight about future actions.

Academic journals are the most significant channel for academicians to discuss their management concepts and ideas. In addition, business press is another medium where strategy tools become visible. Both of them fill up space in the agenda of the business people. While scholarly way of analyzing strategy issues has a more “sophisticated” style (Kam and Macdonald 2009, 6), business press goes into matter more superficially

(Benders and Heusinkveld 2006). This is a result of difference in rhetoric; academia, unlike mass media, prefers reasoning rather than charming titles (Bamber 1999).

Academic publications and traditional business press are severally depicted as passive media. This way of communication does not allow audience expressing their ideas on a strategy issue. However, new digital technologies have made participation of the audience possible. This shift from passive to interactive communication mediums thereby forces us to question the nature of technology and the production and dissemination of strategy tools processes in digital media.

The development of information and communication technologies led to a new medium called Internet. What differs digital media from previous forms of communication is its ability to share information mutually by its users. As Castells (2007) notes, interactivity is the core of new media. In other words, many-to-many communication is the most distinctive feature of the digital age. As users could contact each other at a global scale, some named this transformation as a revolution (Van Dijk 2009). According to Castells (2007, 248), “we are indeed in a new communication realm, and ultimately in a new medium, whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive”. Furthermore, Rheingold (2008) emphasizes the power of social networks which were possible due to digital technologies. Members of these networks, especially social media like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, digitally come together to discuss issues, share messages, inform others, and exchange ideas via different forms of media like text, sound, image, and video. Both Barney (2003) and Gripsrud (2009) stress the alteration of communication;

while the former indicates a construction of “digital sphere”, the latter accentuates enrichment of “forms of expression”.

Indeed, offering participative channels for self expression is a critical element in understanding new media. This reminds one of the most controversial concepts - Public Sphere- developed by Habermas. In “The Transformation of the Public Sphere” (1989), Habermas remarks how media started to play the role of public spaces like Ancient Greek agora or coffehouses of Enlightenment Age where rational critical debates on public issues were made. He highlights the significance of “communicative action” in developing better societal environment. According to Habermas, media is the most convenient form of public sphere in modern times although the state and entrepreneurship continously intervene the communication process.

There are conflicting approaches to the Internet. While some scholars, such as Kellner (2000), Dahlberg (2001) and Dahlgreen (2005), see participation as a crucial basis for a public sphere, scholars like Lyon (1994), Papacharissi (2009) and Van Dijk (2009) find it insufficient. Optimists suppose that if participation is the most crucial element of the public debate, then Internet should be providing a better basis for public sphere. For example, Kellner (2000, 13) argues that “the rise of the Internet expands the realm for democratic participation and debate and creates new public spaces for political intervention”. Dahlgreen (2005) portrays this as “cyber transformation of public sphere” and Dahlberg (2001) stresses the importance of “decentralized communication” in this process.

Despite this "revolutionary" potential of Internet, it is not possible to argue that it is a perfect public sphere. First of all, "access to information, reciprocity of communication, and commercialization of online space" (Papacharissi 2009, 234) are main concerns which make the issue complicated. In particular, users of new media are not necessarily and strongly active in discussing issues, sharing messages, and creating content. Van Dijk (2009) draws attention to the fact that the rates of "active contribution to user generated content sites" are very low. Furthermore, the more "diverse virtual opinions" transact, the more "fragmented" this new media become (Papacharissi 2009, 235). Finally, recalling Foucault's surveillance society (Lyon 1994), Van Dijk (2009, 48) calls attention to "tracking of personal information and digital behaviour" by the state and the corporate world.

These critics show why technodeterministic tendencies can be a problem for studies on social media. Internet surely altered our communication patterns; however, conventional sources of information cannot be completely out of use. Indeed, Barney (2003) emphasizes the fact that the Web and traditional media complete each other rather than replacing old media from communication sources. As Jenkins and Thorburn (2003, 7) state, "technology shapes the structure of the battle, but not every outcome". Selwyn (2012), indeed, emphasizes that "social nature of technology" has not been sufficiently reviewed. Nevertheless, he argues, the lineer approach that technological causes effect social action dominates literature on technology.

> "Strong technological determinism of this type leaves little room for manoeuvre, deviation or any other form of social agency in the implementation and use of technology" (Selwyn 2012, 3).

Furthermore, Potts (2008) criticizes technodeterminism by indicating that social, economic, political, and psychological factors are ignored. Similarly, Selwyn (2012, 4) states that “technologies are subjected continually to a series of complex interactions and negotiations with the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts into which they emerge”. Likewise, Smith (2006) draws attention to the interpretationist approaches which avoid positivists’ causalistic explanations on technology and which stress the significance of subjective meaning and individiual motives in the use of technology. He says that “the flux of events is always co-determined by a myriad of interacting mechanisms” (203). This social interactionist approach brings Luhmann to the fore. Indeed, Luhmann (2000) argues that media is a “subsystem” which is “self organised” by its members. In other words, neither technology alone nor audience shape the other, but they mutually reproduce each other. It is also noteworthy that as each every other subsystem, Internet develops its own language, ways of doing, and technique (Fuchs 2008).

In that case, what is different for those who communicate around strategy tools after the rise of digital media? First of all, those who are interested in the strategy field come together on social media and they exchange their ideas and experiences. As Castells (2007, 246) points out, “the diffusion of Internet, mobile communication, digital media, and a variety of tools of social software have prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time”. In other words, involving strategy means engaging a communicative action together rather than passively taking notes from books or magazines. Thus one can argue that the

Internet provides more than representative connectedness by offering participative mode of communication. Then the formation of strategy discourse should be based on different processes.

Consequently, strategy tools which are used to circulate among traditional media might be widely discussed on social media after the rise of digital technologies. While visibility of these concepts used to be only possible after certain communication filters like editorship, social media might have removed the borders that prevent the exchange ideas on strategy. This can be regarded as a symbiotic relationship between human and non-human, as Bruno Latour(1992) would agree. According to him, "the missing masses are to be found among the non human mechanisms" and social media could be claimed to be a missing mass in today's strategy society (169). To be more concrete, the production of strategy knowledge, exchange of ideas, interaction among strategy people have been possible only after Web 2. 0. Thus, digital technologies as non human artefacts could be seen as the missing masses in understanding human action based on the strategy field. In other words, rather than passively consuming traditional materials about strategy, social media has made participation possible for those who are keen on revealing strategy in general and tools in specific. Therefore, technology should be taken into consideration when one aims to understand how people approach to strategy and how they construct identity in this field. Here, the way the medium is used becomes significant beyond the prescribed frame of technology. That is to say that the medium and its audience co-shape the whole process. Finally, it should also be kept in mind that this digitization of communication around strategy could pave a way to massification of the whole field as Whittington (2015) proposes. People of this profession have found a new medium to express themselves and interact with each other.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to analyze strategy practitioners' attitudes towards strategy on social media. This general question leads the following sub- questions:

1. How is strategy interpreted on social media by its practitioners? What meanings are attributed to the field in general and its tools in specific by these practitioners?

2. What are the motives behind taking communicative action on strategy? What kind of worldviews shape the communication of these strategy practitioners? How context-sensitive are the presentation of the "selves" in terms of education, gender, age, occupation, and professional experience?

3. What kind of patterns emerge among the expressions of different participants? Are there any similar uses of language? In what way is rhetoric built by strategy people? What are the characteristics of strategy people's talk? How do they present themselves in an online strategy community?

4. Does this communication appear as a channel of strategy massification?

The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on strategy pracititoners' communicative actions on social media. To be more concrete, the discourse of strategy pracititoners' self-expressions on LinkedIn will be analyzed. Personal profiles and comments on strategy tools of 62 members of Strategic Planning Society, one of the largest discussion groups of this medium, will be examined. Related documents between 2011- 2014 will be archived.

The Significance of the Study

This research would contribute to understand how strategy in general and strategy tools in specific are interpreted in different contexts on social media. It could also contribute to the perception of the subjects who practice strategy. In specific, readers could gain insight about strategy people and the motives behind their actions in strategy. That is to say that the agenda that strategy practitioners reveal in their daily professional life could be more visible. Furthermore, it would offer considerable data to strategy researchers by depicting how strategy knowledge is carried on social media. Similarly, managers who are enthusiastic about understanding tendencies of strategy people could uncover significant data. In addition, this research has been an attempt to understand communicative action around strategy. Thus, taking the interplay between human and technology into consideration could provide a more comprehensive look to the strategy society. Finally, although both social media and strategy are popular research topics separately, no similar research about strategy practitioners networking online has been found.

CHAPTER I

Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature on strategy including its tools, carriers, and narration is investigated. An important section is additionally allocated to the rise of digital technologies, changing forms of communication, participation in new media, online forums as subsystems, and their role in dissemination of strategy tools.

1.1.1. Strategy Tools

Strategy tools are defined as “numerous techniques, tools, methods, models, frameworks, approaches, and methodologies, which are available to support decision making within strategic management” (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009, 2). They are commonly used concepts like Strategic Choice, Scenario Planning, Portfolio Matrices, Resource-Based Analysis, and etc. (Jarzabkowski and Giulietti 2007). There are many other strategy tools such as Business Process Reengineering, Entrepreneurialism, Green Management, Japanization, Americanization, Activity Based Management, Balanced Scorecard, Benchmarking, Core Competencies, Corporate Venturing, Customer Relationship Management, Customer Segmentation, Cycle Time Reduction, Market Disruption Analysis, Merger Integration Teams, Mission and Vision Statements, Outsourcing, Pay For Performance and Real Options Analysis (Sturdy 2004, Rigby 2001). Each of these tools promise efficiency in sales, marketing, finance and/ or human resources processes. They might either be presented as brand new concepts or become outdated and may be criticized after a period of time.

> "Over the past decade, executives have witnessed an explosion of management tools such as Supply Chain Integration, Knowledge Management, and Balanced Scorecard. Demands of increasing competition in the global marketplace are driving the explosion, while accelerated, lower-cost delivery systems for ideas and information have enabled it.… Each tool carries a set of strengths and weaknesses. Successful use of tools requires an understanding of both their effects and side effects, as well as an ability to creatively integrate the right tools, in the right way, at the right time. The secret is not in discovering one magic tool, but in learning which tools to use, how, and when" (Rigby 2001, 11).

As Rigby defended on this publication; managers, first of all, should have an idea about possible future strategies before making decision. However, getting an idea about these tools and using them are different concepts. One tool might be very well known though its usage may not be as high as its popularity. Or some tools might "have low value for strategy implementation but still could be used" (Jarzabkowski and Giulietti 2010, 9). Thus, connecting plan and action through strategy tools is not an uncomplicated process.

1.1.1.1. Life Span of Strategy Tools

Favourite strategy tools might fall from favour year by year. A time-interval-based look at BAIN publications shows how importance of tools change over time. They draw attention to the fact that usage of strategy tools have been in decline. A follow-up survey indicates that some popular strategy tools might not be as favourite as they were in earlier years. As Rigby and Bilodeau (2009, 6) state, the tool usage declined worldwide with firms employing an average of 11 tools, down from 15 in 2006. They claim that “the drop suggests companies held off on launching new initiatives or took a wait-and-see approach before refocusing efforts”.

Furthermore, “a study of one hundred large-scale creative destruction episodes, including TQM, BPR, right sizing, restructuring, cultural change, and turnarounds, found that more than half did not survive their initial phase, with the vast majority of the remaining half failing partially or completely” (Abrahamson 2004, 1). The same author names these tools as “management fashions” for the process and claims that it is not different from consuming products according to fashion setters’ mediation. Despite vast media coverage or high concern of managers, some indeed argued that strategy tools might be seen as a consumer fetish because their “popularity is often temporary, and the public interest may disappear as quickly as it arose” (Benders, Heusinkveld and Nijholt 2006, 815).

Interpretation and implementation of these tools differ according to time, culture, people and size of the organization. Some researchers even estimate duration of such fashions, they assert that life cycle of such popular concepts are stable. For example, Nicolai and Thomas (2006, 64) show that management fashions generally last 11 years on the basis of a study where sixteen different popular concepts were researched. The reason, according to Abrahamson (1991), is that promises never meet reality. Finally, he argues that the “life of management fashions typically follows a bellshaped curve with early adoption followed by wide-spread up-take and an eventual downturn” (Perkmann and Spicer 2008, 2).

In sum, as Jarzabkowski (2004, 545) states, management tools and techniques are inseparable from the conditions of the era they arise:

> “During an economic upswing, when profitability is related to the management of capital, rational practices that focus upon efficient structures and technologies are prevalent. Conversely, during economic downswings, there is an emphasis on normative practices related to the management of labour. This perspective relates management practices to wider social events and explains their rapid diffusion, or ‘fashion’ during particular periods, illustrating how ‘best practice’ spreads from macro- to multiple micro-contexts” (Jarzabkowski 2004, 545-546).

1.1.1.2. Management Fashions

It is hard to defend the idea that there is a linear relationship between strategic plans and their implementations. In other words, they are responsive to time, place and culture. There is a ceaseless interaction between strategy concepts and their contexts. Thus, it is more than “plan and do” linearity. Mazza and Alvarez criticize “first knowledge, then action” (2001, 6) approach and they emphasize the rise and decline of some tools according to time-specific conditions. As argued before, huge amount of researchers show that strategy tools are similar to fashion. Although some strategic approaches might be fashionable and appealing for a specific time period, many other might become obsolete contrary to their earlier attraction. Perkmann (2005, 15) argues that this is no different than "fashion theory" which stresses the fact that "once the majority has jumped onto the band wagon, the fashion is no longer attractive to the early adopters and it loses its power to produce legitimacy for the opinion leaders". In other words, strategy tools are related to management fashion theory because "in politics, economics, education, the arts, environmental awareness and many other aspects of our lives, we operate within the limits of a prevailing fashion, and so it is in the case of management" (Bamber 1999, 2).

As a matter of fact, the concept of management fashion was popularised by Abrahamson (Abrahamson and Fairchild 1999), where he conceptualizes "the transitory life of particular organisation concepts, as they emerge, diffuse, and eventually fade (Abrahamson 1996). Related researches consider "the role of specific agents, such as 'management gurus' (Collins 2005, Jackson 2001, Clark and Salaman 1996), and the discursive and rhetorical features that underlie the popularity of management recipes and publications (Røvik 2002, Kieser 1997)" (cited in Perkmann 2005, 4).

Again, strategy tools, whether became a management fashion or not, are in circulation. Managers still rely on these tools while making strategic decisions. Yet the literature never ceases to produce content for strategy tool seekers. Then it would not be too wrong to ask why are they continously used? What is the reason of using a strategy tool? What for do content providers ceaselessly communicate to managers?

1.1.2. Producers and Diffusers of Strategy Tools

1.1.2.1. The Role of Managers

First of all, decision making process is full of uncertainties. It is hard to choose a single strategy from various alternatives. Before taking any decision in strategic planning, one needs to define in what circumstances the company is surrounded by. In other words, managers should define a reality which could be a basis for further diagnosis. According to Weick (1988), this has a very humane reason;that it is not about rationality. Managers feel insecure and strategy tools are there "to offer a degree of orientation to areas where organizations are confronted by contradictions" (Nicolai and Thomas 2006, 61). Weick (1988) draws attention to the fact that strategy is about future and it is impossible to make a perfect prediction about it. Reality could be interpreted differently by different actors. Here, "sensemaking" is essential, according to Weick. "Crises are characterized by low probability/high consequence events that threaten the most fundamental goals of an organization. Because of their low probability, these events defy interpretations and impose severe demands on sensemaking. The less adequate the sensemaking process is directed at a crisis, the more likely it is that the crisis will get out of control. That straightforward proposition conceals a difficult dilemma because people think by acting" (1988, 1). Indeed, any fothcoming crisis could easily be related to managers' definition of reality and it is their responsibility to define environment correctly. In other words, it is a continous struggle between uncertainty and rational actor in charge.

> "Strategy-making is a challenge for managers because it is always done under conditions of (greater or lesser) uncertainty. The environment never presents itself as a clear and unambiguous signal. Indeed, much of the

> information needed for making strategy may be unclear or conflicting. As strategy is about the future, there will always be an aspect that cannot be known, so that setting a strategy means deciphering existing information and deriving a point of view about what to do" (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2006, 7-8).

Thus, managers need to assure that they are able to "make sense" about an uncertain environment. Probable consequences of their strategies must be legalized before they take any action. In one way, managers refer to strategy tools to cope with their anxiety. Thus, they "overcome anxiety and gain confidence to decide in this high-velocity environment" (Eisenhardt 1989, 45). In another way, they look at them in order to legitimize their action. Moreover, people of this practice also need a guide to define reality. As Weick argues, "convincing others that this is the way things have happened, and that this account should be the template from which new actions should be considered. In other words, strategists working from an emergent perspective enact fictional futures from creative interpretations of the past" (cited in Barry 1997, 6). This "convincing others" case is explained as "psycho-dynamic view" by Sturdy (2004) where he underlines the importance of powerful leader.

Beyond concerns on what is the most rational way to move ahead, managers aim to legitimize their action. They even want to "reassure" their hierarchichal position. Many ambitious managers look for shortcuts to what they aim. Armstrong and Brodie (1994) also discuss how managers "may base their decisions on power or emotional factors, such as inclusion of sunk costs. As a result, many of their decisions are irrational from the viewpoint of profit maximization." They further stress the fact that even producers of strategy tools such as BCG matrix warn managers that their model is not able to solve every problem. Nevertheless, managers still rely on this model as a "useful starting point for strategic analysis" (Armstrong and Brodie 1994, 2).

Especially, when managers' priority is different than organisation's overall goals, they do not only insist on using one specific tool, but they benefit from many different tools. Therefore, Mazza and Alvarez (2001) make a distinction between "management knowledge for prestige" and "management knowledge for performance". Sturdy (2004, 160) calls attention for researchers like Huczynski, Gill, Abrahamson, Whittle, Jackall over- emphasize this emotional dimension, though researchers like Kunda and Alvarez do not underestimate the role of rational behaviour. Despite bounded rationality and unintended consequences, managers are keen on finding meaningful relationship between plan and performance. "Presumably, the hope would be that the apparent absence of a link, let alone a causal relationship, between the use of popular management ideas and corporate financial performance could then be rectified" (Sturdy 2004, 159). Strategy tools then "provide an impetus for managers to reexamine the way they do things, they can alert managers to the challenge of change and to the need to prepare for it; they can motivate managers to reconsider their strategies and to investigate alternatives" (Bamber 1999, 14). Thus, managers are inclined to "ethically rational, morally defensible forms of management theory and practice" (Alvesson and Willmott 1996, 36).

1.1.2.2. The Role of Strategy Tools in Communication

Together with emotional factors and rational pursuits, strategy tools also pave a more effective way for communication among people in this practice. Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) argue that these tools ensure that people understand each other and they work in accord. First, commonly used concepts make communication simple and comprehensive. Second, they "provide grounds for interaction about strategy tasks, particularly for managers who do not frequently work together or do not typically use tools" (Worren et al 2002 cited in Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009, 5). Finally, strategy tools bring a "technical, cultural and linguistic legitimacy that makes them easily appropriable" (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009, 5). Sturdy (2004) explains this dimension as "dramaturgical view" and he argues that workers need to hear what to do in the most efficient way. Simplicity of communication during strategy planning and its implementation is important. Furthermore, agents need to be motivated by their managers and the way they communicate with their agents is very essential. Strategy tools provide a more rational and persuasive tone to their language. They obtain a more "knowledge based and expertise" action (Baecklund and Werr 2001, 21). Sturdy (2004) also stresses the importance of strategy tools in terms of offering a more powerful rhetoric for managers.

Finally, as discussed in a different context above, actors are not independent from each other during planning and implementation. Their "micro actions and interactions" should be meaningful by using some codes and patterns of behaviours. Strategy tools meet this need (Jarzabkowski and Seidl 2008). Since there are many other actors such as consultants, agents and shareholders who participate in decision making process, tools are used as means of struggling approaches. In other words, they pave a better way for "asking the tough questions and achieving alignment of different interests and viewpoints within the organization. Strategy making is therefore not something that can be engineered, streamlined or simplified. Tools are more like starting points and facilitators of a process than they are the "answer"" (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2006, 41-42). In sum, they "establish a common ground between diverse actors" (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2006, 10).

Though these above comments/arguments show how strategy tools facilitate a better communication among the members of an organisation, they might also be interpreted as filters of communication which Jarzabkowski (2005) names as "interaction boundaries". Some members plan, others command and the rest implements these tools; so, hierarchichal structure forms the way these tools are internalized. Some tools might be very clear only for a specific group of organisation. As discussed by Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009, 10), "while the tool may enable shared meanings among one group of actors, top managers, it may also create barriers when communicating results to middle managers who have not been involved in selecting or using this tool".

1.1.2.3. The Role of Consultants

As summarized by Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2006), the motivations behind strategy tool production are "individual advancement, delineating territories, structuring conversation, communicating ideas, and etc." Nonetheless, there are other actors who intervene in this process in the name of backup services like consultants. Business consultants as one of the most important actors in diffusion of strategy tools will be discussed below; however, it is necessary here to mention how they make these tools necessary.

There are many research studies which show how consultant makes managers feel desparate and how they legitimize their consultancy. Baecklund and Werr (2001, 5) emphasize the fact that “one actor often orchestrates the creation of problems and associated roles in order to position him/herself as obligatory passage point”. Whenever managers hesitate how to define uncertain environment in decision making process, consultants are there to make an objective and rational analysis. They promise to cope with the ambiguities managers face. In order to keep their agency relevant, they do not refrain from inducing fear to managers. Therefore, the relationship between consultant and manager is not symmetrical. “The consultant is the expert, helping the suffering patient (organization) to recover and improve through ‘helping’ (Schein 2002, 21), which implies an asymmetrical relation between the consultant and the client” (Carter et al. 2003, 5).

Alvesson draws attention to how consultants hypnotize managers. They act so that managers feel themselves desparate and insensible. After that, they impose themselves as the only solution to illuminate the dark side of the environment. “Managers will always know more than any consultant although every consultant has to act as if this was not the case” (Carter et al. 2003, 6). As Perkmann (2005) argues, consultants even create a brand new sector where they impose their business models and through which they demand more and more privilege for organisational resources. As a “newly emerged profession, they intervene to the management” more than the manager could ever imagine (Perkmann 2005, 6). In short, “consultants seek to expand their market, and to do so with products whose obsolescence is planned, to ensure renewal of demand” (Alvesson and Johansson 2000, 12).

1.1.2.4. The Role of Management Gurus

Consultants are not alone in promising success by following certain models; gurus are other actors who intervene in decision making process. Bamber (1999, 15) claims that “managers may sometimes be inclined to regard management as a black art, to which the gurus hold the key. They risk abandoning to consultants the vital task of diagnosing their own organisational ills and prescribing solutions, leaving the managers to perform merely as administrators”. While Clark and Salaman(1996) name gurus as “organisational witchdoctors”, Hindle (2008) defines gurus as opinion leaders who conceptualize business practices to guide their future actions. They bring new concepts into business life, the more they appeal managers the more their concepts are used as strategy tools. Hindle also lists most influencive gurus like Drucker, Levitt, Toffler and Kaplan remarking the power of their communication style as well as their spectacular approaches. Greatbatch and Clark (2001) also draw attention to the charisma of gurus especially on their live performances.

1.1.3. Diffusion of Strategy Tools

On the one hand, consultants and gurus play an active role in strategy tool production process. On the other hand, they contribute to diffusion of these tools. Moreover, they are not alone in this process. The diffusion of tools is provided by several people and institutions. Management tools and techniques which “are commonly disseminated into practice through textbooks, classrooms, popular media and consultants" (Jarzabkowski and Giulietti2010, 2).

While Mazza and Alvarez (2001) call attention to the increasing number of publications on strategy tools, they also admit that these tools are "made available to managers through books, the popular press, broadcast media, management gurus, the Internet, and formal education" (Mazza and Alvarez 2001, 1-2). Nicolai and Thomas (2006) name these diffusers as "management fashion setters" who, they claim, legitimize the way of doing something.

1.1.3.1. Phases of Diffusion Process

Both diffusion of tools and their adoption influence each other; "widespread adoption increases its legitimization and legitimization ensures its acceptability and therefore dissemination" (Nicolai and Thomas 2006, 58). Thus, it is a mutual process where producers and consumers of strategy tools might be both consumer and supplier. Indeed, without the increasing demand, strategy tools would not be that preferred. As discussed by Strang and Soule (1998, 277- 278), "the consultant, guru, and management scholar populations are on the rise, as are the output of the business press and the sales of business books". Abrahamson (1996) argues that without these carriers, strategy concepts would not be fashionable. He also claims that "they are responsible for the 'supply' of management fashions that is divided into four phases: creation, selection, processing and dissemination (Perkmann 2005, 8-9).

Seiving (2008) mentions about four phases of strategy tools, as well. First of all, there is the “primary stage, where leading adopters try new innovations.” Second comes “the diffusion stage” where these innovations are implemented by follower organisations. Then comes “the condensing stage in which the last areas are being penetrated”. Finally, “the saturation stage” comes to the scene where the tool starts to be abandoned and new favourites enters to the scene. Kam and McDonald (2009) stress the inevitable end of this process by claiming that this is not a “never- ending” story, but tools will decline one way or another.

It would not be sufficient to only sum up with periods of the process but it is also noteworthy that strategy tools are not copied as the same way as leaders use them. In other words, a strategy tool may have a different meaning in its inital stage. However, it might have various meanings as regards to time, space and people (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009, 8). They might seem as they have standard meanings and ways of doings, nonetheless, they are not free from meaning attribution and political contexts. While such practices may seem ostensibly ‘rational’, in practice, their use is social, interpretative, and subjective (Jarzabkowski 2004, 546). Finally, Bamber (1999, 13) criticizes “the tendency of ‘engineering solutions’ to ignore entrenched patterns of behaviour at the workplace and to ignore broader economic, social and cultural issues.”

1.1.3.2. Channels of Diffusion Process

According to Hindle (2008), strategy tools are not only produced in university classrooms but also widely used in books, press, vocational journals and public seminars. Eventually, there are many diffusion channels. Mazza and Alvarez (2001) state that it is the dissemination of these tools on a “distribution chain” which makes management a more important discipline. This chain consists of “academia (lectures, conversations, consulting projects), academic texts and management publications” (Mazza and Alvarez 2001, 4). Other than academia, press, gurus and consultants; there are “multinational companies, joint ventures, nongovernmental organisations and professional associations” (Sturdy 2004).

Perkmann and Spicer (2008) also add other carriers such as “NGOs and technical consultancies” to the list and they underline that none of them could be successful alone. Different carriers support each other and it is the interaction of channels on a chain rather than one specific channel which brings long term popularity and contribute to the promotion of strategy tools. Strange and Soule (1998) especially emphasize the role of innovative multinational firms in the diffusion of strategy tools. According to them, “business communities display parallel dynamics in cycles of technological and managerial innovation. These “progressive” firms play a leading role, their strategies are followed by other firms. As discussed by Strang and Soule (1998, 280), “they compete but also learn from and build on each other, as opposing strategies such as TQM and reengineering become hard to distinguish in practice”. On the other hand, according to Clark and Greatbatch (cited in Mazza and Alvarez 2001), publications of management gurus are more important. They are continously in interaction with strategy professionals and they have a good sense of what is necessary to be heard.

> “Gurus collaborate with a range of professional groups during the course, in developing, disseminating and revising their ideas. These groups include book editors and publishers, ghost writers, literary agents, fellow

> consultants and academics, managers (in their capacity as clients or research subjects), conference organizers and public speaking coaches” (Mazza and Alvarez 2001, 11).

In sum, as supported by Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009), Abrahamson(1996) and Mazza and Alvarez (2000), rise and preferability of strategy tools and management techniques depend on their circulation among popular press, business schools, academic texts, consultancy reports and industrial practices.

1.1.3.3. Where Strategy Tools Are Generated

Another significant dimension is that strategy tools are mostly generated in Western countries. In other words, the flow is from developed countries to developing countries. Though it is open to critique, it is widely accepted that these tools are mostly adapted by managers who have experience in Western countries, especially in United States (Kurt and Görmüş 2010). As Bamber (1999, 5) argues “many people in other countries have accepted this American self-assessment, and have accordingly tended to adopt American notions of management partly in the belief that they represent what we now call ‘best practice’”. Thus, America is seen as the center while developing countries could be categorized as the periphery of this process. Sturdy (2004) also emphasizes how “capitalist and Western forms” of strategy tools dominate other forms. In sum, strategy tools cannot be reckoned without Western-centric flow of information.

1.1.4. Strategy Tools and Reputation

Some strategy tools gain more visibility while some others remain silenced. The reason might not only be their territorial origin but the way they are presented; the agents of the tool, the channels it is discussed, its publicity, etc. As discussed above, management ideas and techniques are not just rational tools, but emotional factors are also influential on their production and dissemination processes. For example, the reputation of the guru who first introduces a tool, or the appeal of its presentation on magazines, or cases used as best practices and their mythological discourse might have direct effects on their glory. In other words, strategy tools can be seen as narrations rather than scientifically objective truth.

> "Narrativity encompasses both the telling and the told; it can be applied both to strategizing and to strategies. Extant, formalized (and perhaps realized) strategies can be examined as artifacts: their rhetoric, tropes, metaphors, and sequencing can be identified, compared, and evaluated in various ways" (Barry 1997, 5).

1.1.4.1. The Role of Celebrity Opinion Leaders

For instance, some tools draw attention only because of the "celebrity touch". In other words, globally popular gurus attract managers through different channels such as lectures, seminars, conferences, books, media appearences, and so on. A study of Clark and Salaman (1998, 140) shows how management gurus' performing abilities influence managers' emotions; they use "theatrical behaviour, anecdotes, exhortation, challenge, threat, confrontation and humour" to gain their trust. Such publicity activities contribute to succesful dissemination. Especially, they are in continous interaction with leading managers whose firms are followed by the rest, as mentioned above. As Clark and Salaman (1998, 139) state, “management gurus are a part of a management fashion setting community”.

According to Greatbatch and Clark (2001, 2), “international management lecture circuit” is very decisive on which strategy tool to become more visible and attractive. They stress the fact that “as perhaps the highest profile group of management speakers in the world, they use their lectures to build their personal reputations with audiences of managers”. Therefore, most popular tools might not necessarily be the most rational and effective solution for managers. However, awareness about their promise seems more important than its consequences in practice. Notwithstanding uncertainty of its institutionalization, the “stronger publishing activity” any tool has, the more adoption results in practice (Perkmann and Spicer 2008, 16).

Nevertheless, the popularity of a strategy tool does not guarantee a high adoption rate, neither. Some tools might seem fashionable and necessary for a while; though in consequence, managers might not prefer it in practice. As stated by Perkmann and Spicer (2008, 17), “the guru promoters of ‘excellence’ were able advocates for the fashion and invested significant cultural work through popular business books, speeches and consulting engagements”. Nonetheless, it is hard to implement what is prescribed in their appealing sentences. They do not provide sufficient technical support. Again, they continue to attract attention. Then, the construction of such narratives should be focused.

1.1.4.2. The Role of Narration

Barry (1997) particularly emphasizes the significance of narration. He most especially seeks answers for what is told by whom and in what way. In other words, “telling” and “told” are keywords of his concerns.

> “From a narrative perspective, the successful strategic story may depend less on tools like comprehensive scanning, objective planning, or meticulous control/feedback systems and more on whether it stands out from other organizational stories, is persuasive, and invokes retelling. What the story revolves around, how it is put together, and the way it is told all determine whether it is worth listening, remembering, and acting upon. Thus, strategic effectiveness from a narrative perspective is intimately tied to acceptance, approval, and adoption” (Barry 1997, 6).

Clark and Salaman (1998) claim that discrediting previous strategic approach and promising brand new ways of strategizing are very common in gurus’ narrations. They note that it is all a persuasion ability rather than presenting real solutions. Huczynski (1993) also explains narrations as an anxiety generation and offering remedies process. Callon (1995) names this process as “problematization” in which gurus and/ or consultants impose their diagnosis to the manager and they offer their help to cure it. While Huczynski (1993) claims that managers are already in the mood to try something new to overcome frustration; Mintzberg (1980) and Freeman (1985) stress gurus’ and consultants’ ability to convince that it is unfeasible to succeed without them. Sintonen

(2013) draws attention to the role of “language and stories” claiming that communicating irrationality is “the core of organisational rationality”.

Barry (1997, 5) stresses the difference between “traditional conceptualizations of strategy” and narrative approach by claiming that strategy tools are nothing different than constructed meanings and discourses. He adds that “whereas traditional strategy frameworks virtually ignore the role of language in strategic decision making, a narrative approach assumes that tellings of strategy fundamentally influence strategic choice and action, often in unconscious ways”.

1.1.4.2.1. Managers as Narrators

Managers play an important role in the narration process because popularity of their success stories strengthen their charisma and preferability. As Collins (2008) cites from Tom Peters, one of the most popular management gurus, “good stories are the keystone of modern business success. Those organizations with the best stories, he insists, will have faithful employees, excellent products and ardent customers”. In a sense, not only managers or CEOs benefit from the reputation of their practices but the organisation itself also makes use of these stories. Thus, Collins (2008) argues that “organisational storytelling” is very significant. By sharing the success of the strategy tool used, companies consolidate customer relationship and they gain credibility for future transactions. On the other hand, managers keep their position as indispensable leaders in the eyes of shareholders. They also intimidate other managers who are potential competitors. Mazza and Alvarez (2001) stress the role of narratives in managers’ careers and they claim that managerial styles compete within each other through these narratives. Nicolai and Thomas(2006) even mentions how competing management fashions embody competing managers. They write about eternal competition between “diversification” and “core competences” views in Germany.

1.1.4.2.2. Consultants as Mythmakers

Narration is not only crucial for managers and organisations but also for consultants. Baecklund and Werr (2001, 2) even call them as “myhtmakers” and add that “consultancies in this tradition are seen operating as organizational “mythmakers”, compensating for uncertainties due to the absence of rationality in the pursuit of management”. Over again, uncertainty appears as the basic ground of strategy tool production. In other words, uncertainty might worry managers, but it is rather perceived as an opportunity than anxiety for consultants. To attract managers’ interest, they narrate their advises so that without them the result will be catastrophic. By “confusing managers through their rhetoric, dazzling them with their performances” (Clark and Salaman 1998, 146), consultants impose their vision on others. Czarniawska and Joerges (1990) say that narration is storytelling where gurus and/ or consultants first define any situation, then use metaphors to make further explanations and finally setting norms to the situation according to past experiences. As a matter of fact, Linde (2001, 4) describes narrative as “a representation of past events in any medium: Narratives can be oral, written, filmed or drawn”. Since Clark and Salaman (1998) describe consultancy as “solving mysteries, deconstructing certainties and offering mastery” process, and Sintonen (2013) similarly claims that stories are perfect tools to make sense for new strategies; it can be said consultants use their mastery by developing narratives based on their past cases.

Consultancy may not only be a peculiar service to a specific period but firms sometimes aim to build dependency to make continous use of their clients' resources. As discussed by Perkmann (2005, 12), "different professional communities gather around the key management concept and compete for limited organizational resources". This competition is a rivalry between discourses (Perkmann 2005, 14) and the more legitimacy any discourse obtains, the more credit its diffuser consultant acquires. However, any case of disfavour of that discourse interrupts the relationship between consultant and the company. Perkmann (2005, 14) defends the idea that "the rise and fall of fashions will be linked to the success and failure of specific groups in co-developing, supporting, defending and institutionalising a body of management expertise around a specific organisation concept".

1.1.4.2.3. Construction of Narratives

In sum, whether used by a reputation obsessed manager, or by a success story devotee company or by a mythmaker consultant; strategy tools are not mere rational objective maniphestos but they are also meta- narratives. Researching them is not only a process to look after consequences but it is also a matter of understanding the whole construction process. In other words, telling process is as worthwhile as understanding what is told. As Linde (2001) argues, narratives improve social interactions and this process is based on tacit knowledge rather than quantifiable explicit knowledge.

> "[Narrative induction] is the process by which newcomers to the group learns to take on the story as their own. That is, part of a becoming member

> of an institution involves learning the stories about that institution which everyone must know, the appropriate times and reasons to tell them, and the ways in which ones own stories are shaped to fit a new institutional context" (Linde 2001, 3).

Therefore, strategy tools could also be read as narratives which improve interactions among strategy people. Seeing that narratives are produced tacitly, the construction of their rhetoric is also important. Many researchers claim that "pathos"- Aristotle's concept of emotional side in a rhetoric -,and "ethos" -his definition of credibility of the speaker- emphasis is as important as "logos" -rational ground of a speech- side in narration of these tools (Özen 2009, 66). It is necessary to take the attention of business people and this is usually possible by only accentuating pathos and ethos. These elements base narratives which are "impossible to represent knowledge explicitly" (Linde 2001, 4).

> "An actor's search for rationality and objectivity through the use of tools is actually a political, symbolic and socially interactive process" (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2006, 6).

Thus, the interaction becomes more efficient by using narratives. Linde's study (2001) on an insurance company shows that "repeated stories of its history, and the life and character of its founder" effectuate the core of values of this company and its strategy cannot be considered without them. So, as Clark and Salaman (1998) also stress, value setting is essential in constructing narratives. Here, stories play a crucial role by exemplifying values which brought success or failure -"triumphs and disasters" as

Linde (2001, 7) names- in the past. Sintonen (2013) argues that without storytelling, "techno-economic rationalist management thinking" would not be sufficient to make sense of new strategies.

1.1.5. Academia and Strategy Tools

As in many different contexts discussed above, academy has a very crucial role in production and dissemination of strategy tools. From academic research studies to lectures and from industry- academy collaborations to curriculum setting, the role of academia is a very important part of strategy tool literature. Before having a more detailed look at its role, it is noteworthy to remind that the pendulum between academy and practice in adoption and use of strategy tools process is at the core of this research.

1.1.5.1. History of Management Education

Academy have always had a very significant role in producing management ideas. Both university and practice have a symbiotic relationship: On the one hand; academy uses everyday practices of business people to make conceptualizations. On the other hand, business people need to update their knowledge about management. Furthermore, they refer to academic research studies when they decide on any strategy. It reinforces what they argue in this uncertain environment. This mutual relationship has strengthened especially after business schools came to the scene:

> "The first business school, Wharton, was founded in 1881, and the Harvard Business School was established in 1908. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, management teaching began in 1914 as an adjunct to the study

> of engineering. This was also the case at the Manchester School of Management, which began in 1919. It claims to be the first in Europe" (Bamber 1999, 4).

The result has been increase in management knowledge production. Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003, 1) draw attention to the fact that "the post-World-War-II era witnessed a sharp focus of attention by academics and practitioners on the discipline and profession of management. The pace of knowledge production in this field has been accelerating ever since". Although entrance of management schools enforced research on management, inclusion of popular business press has accelerated doing research process. This is a result of managers' need to verify whether academic knowledge really has a meaningful response in practice, as Bamber noted (1999). Moreover, as stated before, academy have also played a very important role in the production of management fashions and strategy tools (Kurt and Görmüş 2010). In sum; universities, especially MBA's, have had a significant role in the development of management literature and this has created a synergy between academy and practice.

1.1.5.2. Motivations Behind Academic Research

What is the motivation behind an academic research on management? Why have all these schools become interested in managers' decisions? How does the volume of academic research on strategy increase over time? According to Bamber (1999), finding regularities in managers' behaviour is a primary motivation:

> "It is possible to conceptualise what managers do, to learn why some managers are better than others, and then to help people to learn the

> appropriate skills, styles and alternative approaches to good management. University business schools have at least two primary tasks: exploring and explaining what constitutes good management in various contexts, then translating our findings to principles and practices which students and practitioners can learn" (Bamber 1999, 1).

Mazza and Alvarez (2001, 5) explains this with a model based on causality. According to them, ""knowledge first, then action" remains the dominant lock-step sequence of informed practice". They name this model as "rational model" and it gives academy the role of generating, diffusing and verifying what happens in practice. Second, academics get influenced by success stories of managers. This is a very important motivation to make a research. Academy seeks meaningful answers for what makes a good strategy differ from unsuccessful one. For example, "in the 1980s, scholars interpreted Japanese business practice for the American manager, and management faculty taught MBAs the virtues of the multidivisional form" (Strange and Soule 1998, 272). As this last sentence implies, it is not only academic motivation which leads a research but the industry itself sometimes orders it. Elliot (2003) states that management educators who are in relation with managers pioneer management knowledge. Herein, he refers to academicians who are "organic to the ruling class", that is, they collaborate with managers to accomplish organisational goals. However, he remarks that critical management researchers are sceptical about making research on what managers need rather than who they are or what they do. It is a questionmark whether the relationship between educator and practitioner should stay at an observation level or "co-creation" (Elliot 2003, 8) of knowledge level. Furthermore, academy pioneers management knowledge by making literature reviews necessary. As discussed in a study of Tranfield, Dwenyer and Smart (2003, 1), “in management research, the literature review process is a key tool, used to manage the diversity of knowledge for a specific academic inquiry” . Each academic publication gives considerable place to reviews of former research studies about that topic. Kam and Macdonald (2009) argue that education has never been that crucial before. Universities in general and academicians in specific compete with each other. The more publication they have, the more preferable they become. This rivalry also pioneers new research and therefore more references are getting used. Kam and Macdonald (2009, 5) claim that “just as there are now many more students, universities, and academics, there are many more academic journals”. However, as Elliott (2003) remarks, it is a matter of power to have a satisfying assessment for academic work. According to him, “examination of assessment procedures” should be researched more to have a better understanding of management education process.

Literature is not only reviewed on papers but also on lectures and in discussion sessions. Though usefulness of the knowledge provided by academy is a matter of question (Wright and Paroutis and Blettner, 2013), getting a curriculum is never apart from real life experiences. Perkmann and Spicer (2008, 14) show that even “during the early 1950s the curricula of French commercial schools such as the HEC were redesigned to reflect the concerns of modern management”. They also illustrate how MBA education should teach to future managers how to implement strategy tools and management techniques. This process also includes invitation of successful role models to the class. Eventually, the interaction among lecturer, professionals and students let these schools be an important tool of cultural capital[1]. Manager-to-be develops his/her network by attending lectures and taking courses in this environment (Carter et al. 2003, 8). Therefore, academic activities become more appealing with the increasing participation of industry. It can be argued that the whole literature of “strategy as practice” is based on this facta result of this. Indeed, Jarzabkowski (2004, 529) takes attentioon to this fact that “recently, concern over the gap between the theory of what people do and what people actually do has given rise to the ‘practice’ approach in the management literature”. Similarly, practice also needs academic support to make their action more meaningful and persuasive. Baecklund and Werr’s study (2001, 23) displays that“the scientification of management knowledge is also a prerequisite for the establishment of truly global, specialized, context-independent, and objective business knowledge”. As a result, both academy and practice nourish each other. Beyond pure intellectual curiosity, academy needs to verify whether their knowledge has a meaningful reaction in practice; and practitioners need to legitimize their decisions by using academic credibility and scientification.

1.1.5.3. MBA Talk

It is noteworthy to have a deeper look at the interaction among students, academics and professionals during the course of MBA education. They build a specific code which base their communication in the future. In other words, any strategy professional without an MBA degree would be isolated if he/ she does not have this MBA language. First of all, one should be aware of some strategy literature to give references. This provides efficiency in communication with executives. For example, Jarzabkowski and

[1] Bourdieu, P. 1989 “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of the Taste”, Routledge

Giulietti (2010) have made a research on the concepts especially used by MBA alumni. Their survey on "UK business schools alumni shows that strategy tools taught in MBAs are "relevant in practice, and they are necessary to develop a meaningful relationship with colleauges. "Burrell (1997) refers to 'MBA speak', which, in our view should be read not in a pejorative manner, but rather as a manifestation of an elaborate communication code" (cited in Carter et al. 2003, 9). Ghoshal's (2005) paper, in which she discusses academy and practice relationship in terms of business ethics, mentions about the fact that non business school alumni are also assimilated by this language. To make their opinion more noticeable, they translate their ideas into MBA speak. In consequence, the interaction between academy and practice develops a discourse peculiar to business school alumni. However, as Elliott (2003) indicates, thinking skills and language provided by management schools do not satisfy seniors in practice, management education do not guarantee to take the right action.

1.1.5.4. Comparison of Academic Journals and Business Press

As written above, business press functions as cross check medium of academic research since managers need to be sure of the applicability of the concept. Certainly, though sometimes referencing each other, there are many differences between academic journals and popular business media content. As discussed by Mazza and Alvarez (2001, 13), "academic sources such as books and courses are sought for gaining generalized, theoretical knowledge, while mass media outlets are used for basic business information as opposed to more theoretical or academic knowledge". Time is limited and practicability of academic knowledge is hard to measure. Moreover, committing up papers to be published on academic journals requires different skills than writing up articles for business press. The former has a harder approval process than the latter. Indeed, Kam and Macdonald's study (2009, 6) accentuates that "authors worry about pleasing editors of top journals, and have little interest in readability, either. Editors talk about who they publish; authors about where they publish: neither is much concerned about what is published". In other words, they have different target groups. Similarly, Benders and Heusinkveld (2006, 817) emphasize that "there is a considerable distinction between databases covering academic publications, and those containing practitioners' magazines. The latter are more apt for gaining insights into what managers are offered as reading topics". Actually, the reason behind this preference was discussed under the ethos- logos- pathos context as stated above. Bamber (1999) argues that academic journals involve more logos element while business media contains more pathos. This leads to underestimation of magazine issues by some academics. Perkmann even mentions how academics are sometimes criticized by practitioners due to their irrelevancy from managers' everyday agenda. Though having different roles and motivations, "business schools, management training and the production of popular management texts", all of them function as "web of science" (Carter et al 2003, 26).

1.2.New Media: New Channels for Diffusion of Strategy Tools

As carriers of strategy tools, it is vital to analyze the role of media in generation, adoption and use of strategy tool process. Until here, especially in the last paragraph above, the interaction and tension between academic journals and popular management press have been reviewed. Both of them illustrate traditional media where audience has little space to influence the content. However, media has been transformed into a more participative and interactive mode since the rise of digital technologies. That is to say, there are new interpreters of the given content who continously give feedback on digital media. Discussion platforms, chat rooms, social media posts, blogs, and so on; give the researcher the opportunity to see what kind of interactions are made around strategy. Therefore, the process of consuming management ideas after the rise of digital technologies will be discussed. In order to grasp the whole process, a comprehensive literature review on social media is necessary.

1.2.1. Digital Revolution: From Traditional to Social Media

Digital technologies have been transforming the way people communicate. Unlike previous media technologies, they allow media consumers to participate on the content production process. Digital media is described as "non-localized, non- dialogical, open-ended space of the visible in which mediated symbolic forms can be expressed and received by the plurality of non- present others" (Thompson 1995, 245). In other words, communication is rather a continous interaction of audience rather than from a center to periphery activity. This "decentralization" (Poster 1995) is even named as a revolution which Jenkins and Thorburn (2003) find overestimated but worth to discuss. What are the consequences of digital information and communication technologies? In what ways has the communication process been transformed? How positive are the effects? The answers given by media theoricians will be reviewed below.

Digital revolution means a shift from analogue technologies into digital information and communication technologies which especially rose during the 1990s (Dilmen 2007). Digital technologies paved a way for a new medium called Internet. The fundamental difference of Internet from earlier communication systems is the replacement of physical atoms by digital bites during message transmission (Batı and Vural 2010). In contrast to print media like newspapers and magazines or electronic media like television and radio, Internet allows people to influence the content. In other words, interactivity is the basis of it. Moreover, data is transmitted via different forms like sound, text, image, video and animation, which is to say that it is multimedia rather than one single medium. Furthermore, it blurs boundaries among time and space since every user from different regions in different times is able to connect and to become a part of it (Hosgor 2001) . According to Fuchs (2008, 139), it is not one-to-many but "many-to-many communication. Due to the decentralized structure of the Internet, each receiver/consumer of information is a potential sender/producer of information".

Castells (2008, 90) develops the concept of "mass self communication, that is, networks of communication that relate many-to-many in the sending and receiving of messages in a multimodal form of communication". Finally, digitization of media led to cooperation in content creation. Beyond reading or watching passively, audience is able to create a message in different forms and share it with millions which is unimaginable for traditional media.

> "In comparison to traditional mass media such as telegraph, telephone, radio, television, books, or newspapers, the Internet is not just a communication medium but also a system that enables cooperative working processes. With the help of the Internet, human beings can form social systems, share information, and jointly produce digital content without spatiotemporal copresence (examples are open source projects, open theory, and wikis)" (Fuchs 2008, 139).

This cooperative structure means more freedom in communication since any content can be put by any user. What people share on Internet is different from “media organizations, their political economy, ownership, control and regulation” (Dahlgreen 2005, 149). Castells (2008) also underlines Internet’s relative independency from traditional control mechanisms such as government or mass media. Since “the Internet advances the spatiotemporal disembedding of social relationships and communication” (Fuchs 2008, 139), it can be said that audience has more power not just locally but also globally.

Unlike traditional media, especially print media where people passively and silently read what is given (McLuhan 2001), digital technologies allow its users to generate peculiar content. New media is based on interaction and participation and “people can share their thoughts, ideas and creations” (Batı and Vural 2010, 1). Van Dijck emphasizes the power of feedback mechanism which has never been that possible before digital media. According to him, “what is different in the digital era is that users have better access to networked media, enabling them to ‘talk back’ in the same multimodal language that frames cultural products formerly made exclusively in studios” (Van Dijck 2009, 43). Thus, new technologies transformed ways of communication. Castells (2007, 248) also says that “we are indeed in a new communication realm, and ultimately in a new medium, whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive”.

1.2.1.1. User Generated Content: Pioneers of Web 2.0

As a matter of fact, early phase of Internet, namely Web 1.0 (Fuchs 2008), was not full of interactive communication but it was rather a more distinct way of information transmission. Fuchs (2008, 17) accentuates that Web 1.0 was a phase where Internet was developing and "Web 2.0 is a phase that is dominated by human communication on the Net". In other words, at the beginning, Internet used to be available for audience rather than user. After Web 2.0, which allowed the audience to generate content, Internet has become much more participative and interactive. As discussed by Van Dijck (2009, 41), "users are generally referred to as active internet contributors, who put in a 'certain amount of creative effort' which is 'created outside of professional routines and platforms'". Web 2.0 technology based online platforms such as "blogs, vlogs, podcasts, wikis and peer to peer networks make possible the circulation and reformatting of any digitally formatted content" (Castells 2007, 247). According to Fuchs (2008, 127), "Web 1.0 is a tool for thought" and "Web 2.0 is a medium for human communication". Actually, young people benefit from Web 2.0 based communication facilities more:

> "The eager adoption of Web publishing, digital video production and online video distribution, social networking services, instant messaging, multiplayer role-playing games, online communities, virtual worlds, and other Internet-based media by millions of young people around the world demonstrates the strength of their desire—unprompted by adults—to learn digital production and communication skills" (Rheingold 2008, 97).

As Jenkins (2006) argues, Web 2.0 is an empowerment of audience which was not possible during traditional way of communication systems. He also asserts that new media will led to a more participatory culture. Indeed, participation is one of the key concepts in analyzing digital communication. Here, social media deserves a deeper attention.

1.2.1.2. Social Media

Social media are websites where members simultaneously and ceaselessly interact with each other. They follow each other and they share their messages via texts, images, audiovisuals and animations. Social media sites have huge amounts of members from different cultural, social, economical and geographical backgrounds. As stressed above, feedback mechanism on social media is crucial. Members following each other share their opinion on what is posted. Castells (2008) argues that social media is the new "global public sphere" and spaces like "YouTube, MySpace and Facebook" form a brand new way of global communication. Rheingold (2008) also stresses the significance of these new media, since their number of members continously grow.

In sum, social media socialize people by sharing comments, writing messages, posting images or videos and making discussions. This ceaseless interactivity draws attention of social scientists more and more each year due to a need for conceptual framework for this virtual world. As discussed by Batı and Vural (2010, 1), "this virtual environment - that is called as social media - is a user based environment and seems to be important in terms of bringing crowds and people together and increasing the interaction among them" (Batı and Vural 2010, 1).

1.2.1.3. From Consumer to Produser

Together with enabling interactivity, participation and mass self communication, social media also energized production skills of media consumers. As Rheingold (2008, 97) stresses, users of social network sites are not just “passive media consumers” but they also became active generators of “cultural production”. He also shares findings of a study on new media which shows that “more than 50 percent of today’s teenagers have created as well as consumed digital media”.

In other words, media has altered from being a tool of representation and identification into a space of producing and sharing all together. According to Trenz (2009), mass media had reduced the role of communication into mere representation. However, digital technologies have made self expression possible due to in person made cultural content. So, Trenz takes Castells’ “mass self communication” concept one step further and he adds how this communication is full of user creativity. Indeed, there are new terms such as “co- creator”, “prosumer” and “produser” which imply the fact that media consumers are more than passive audiences (Van Dijck 2009). Social media is such a communication channel where users show their production skills. In other words, it is difficult to differentiate the producer from the user in new media. Even journalism faces a shift from agency based news to consumer based content. Mobile technology users record what they live and they share them like a news agency. Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009, 568) explains this alteration of media in four steps: “Modifications in editorial workflow, alterations in news-gathering practices, acceleration of temporal patterns of content production, and the convergence of print, broadcast, and online operations”. In conclusion, Web 2.0 technologies in general and social media in special “give users more power over content” (Van Dijck 2009, 46).

1.2.2. Social Media: A Public Sphere for Strategy Professionals

Social media sites give rise to new forms of communication. As Rheingold (2008, 100) states, “the asymmetry between broadcaster and audience that was dictated by the structure of predigital technologies has changed radically”. Moreover, it offers richer ways to communicate in multiple forms with many other users at the same time (Rheingold 2008, Barney 2003, Fuchs 2008). Its powerful feedback mechanism ensures mutual expression of ideas on a global scale. Indeed, this interaction capacity brings “public sphere” to mind. The following section will shed a light to social media in terms of Habermas’ public sphere. Then, analyzing strategy tools on the basis of social media will gain a more purposeful meaning.

Until here, how digital technologies transformed communication systems was elaborated. What is the importance of this transformation in terms of diffusion of strategy tools? First, as a participative form of communication, social media allows users express their ideas on management and strategy. In other words, “many to many communication”, as Rheingold (2008) prefers to use the term, means a living forum where people revealing on strategy tools come together and interactively share their attitudes via texts, sounds, videos about specific topics on business world. In a sense, as Barney (2003) and Rheingold (2008) defend, Internet can be described as a public sphere, since it allows its users to exchange their opinions about certain issues. Thus, the way strategy tools originate and diffuse should be different from their circulation in traditional media. To have a deeper comprehension of this research's questions, the concept of public sphere should be discussed in detail.

1.2.2.1. Habermas' Public Sphere and Mass Media

According to Habermas, public sphere is "a network for communicating information and points of view" (Habermas 1996, 360). As Castells (2008) describes, it is not the state nor the society but somewhere between two sides. In other words, it is a space for citizens free from the control of legal authorities and private economic power. This interspace, which allows participants to discuss about societal issues independantly, includes "newspapers and journals, as well as institutions of political discussion such as parliaments, political clubs, literary salons, public assemblies, pubs and coffee houses, meeting halls" (Kellner 2000, 3-4). According to Habermas (1991), it emerged during 1700s and it is related to the rise of bourgeouis. Calhoun (1993) states that the main concern of Habermas was understanding how "rational critical debate about public issues" should be. Gripsrud (2009) argues that to give fulfilling answers, public and private should be defined clearly. He reminds the fact that attempts have been made to distinguish them since antiquity and Middle Ages. Gripsrud (2009, 6) adds that "the specifically modern notion of a public sphere, however, has its origins in the 18th century intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment philosophers interpreted the then-emerging public sphere as a sphere of freedom and as a medium for the constitution of power in communication".

Actually, Habermas' "Structural Transformation of Society" where modern representative parliamentary systems are compared to Greek democracy precipitated the still ongoing discussions about free communication. As Kellner (2000) notes, the idea of public sphere is based on the principle of "using own understanding" and expressing opinions freely. Thus, public opinion can only rise on the basis of "rational public debate".

> "The public sphere presents a domain of social life in which public opinion is expressed by means of rational public discourse and debate. The ultimate goal of the public sphere is public accord and decision making, although these goals may not necessarily routinely be achieved. Agreement and rational deliberation are desirable outcomes; however, the value of the public sphere lies in its ability to facilitate uninhibited and diverse discussion of public affairs, thus typifying democratic traditions"(Papacharissi 2009, 232).

To summarize, from Ancient Greek to Renaissance, and from Enlightenment to modern times, distinction between public and private have always been essential since single elements of society can be silenced by the sum of it. Public sphere allows communication among different interest groups. According to Habermas (1989, 4), "only in the light of public sphere did that which existed became revealed, did everything became visible to all". How becomes visibility possible, then? Do only certain issues become revealed in streets, schools and cafes? Or do they discussed in public events? The answer is all of them, according to Habermas (1989). However, mass media has a special importance since it connects millions of people from different backgrounds. According to Gerhard and Schaefer (2010), there are three categories of public sphere. First of all, everyday activities bring people together and make discussions about public life possible. Second comes the public events such as “town hall meetings, public lectures or protest rallies.” Finally comes the mass media where huge numbers of people come together if not interactively but representatively. According to Kellner (2000), this classification displays how Habermas’ ideal, which was inspired by 18th century Western Europe, changed in time. Unfortunately, mass media enables public discussion only to a certain degree. First of all, interaction is limited. Second, it may serve to state or to private interests, if we speak about modern capitalist system. As discussed by Kellner (2000, 2-3), “big economic and governmental organizations took over the public sphere, while citizens became content to become primarily consumers of goods, services, political administration, and spectacle”. Similar to Kellner, Gerhard and Schaefer (2010) also draw attention to the fact that political and economic power elites dominate this communication system. Indeed, Habermas (1989) himself emphasizes the threat of intervention by state and capital owners to mass media while it is still the most appropriate form of public sphere.

1.2.2.2. Transformation of Public Sphere by New Technologies: Public Spheres

As discussed above, mass media has not been an ideal public sphere due to intervention of dominant power elites. Again, it became the space of rational legal debate by offering channels of representation. Why did it function as a representation tool rather than interaction? First of all, technological infrastructure was not sufficient to include audience actively to the communication process. On the contrary, Internet is a medium of interaction rather than mere representation. Dahlgreen (2005) underlines digital media's "many to many communication" model compared to mass media's "one to many" form of communication. According to him, new technologies combine mass and individual together. It is a mix of representation and interaction. Trenz (2009) agrees with Dahlgreen's approach that participation is fundamental in new media, though he also adds that this is not always the case. It still preserves reprentative characteristics, however, expression of ideas is much more possible than in old media.

Being visible on broadcast, being heard on a radio station or being written on a book have their filters such as editorship, directorship (Dahlgreen 2005). Thus, there are elimination mechanisms before giving voice to a channel in traditional media. However, Internet gives the opportunity to create channels to meet audience. Neither approval of an editor nor order of any rating system is required to get into communication with many others. Any public sphere might emerge around a specific topic, person or activity. In brief, Internet is not only a public sphere but it is media of many public spheres.

As a matter of fact, Habermas' theory of public sphere was strictly criticized due to exclusion of many social groups. Eventually, these critics indicate more than inaccessibility to technological structure. This disclosure was a result of ignoring society as a whole. To illustrate, women, minorities and members of lower socio-economic classes were not included to the public sphere (Kellner 2000; Barney 2003; Papacharissi 2009). Both technological facilities and attitudes towards society would not allow mass media to be a pluralist public sphere. Nonetheless, Internet multiplied public sphere by providing many channels to communicate. There are "public spheres" as Kellner (2000) and Barney (2003) note. Each public sphere binds relevant sections of society together. They are surrounded by people who have common interest and similar concerns. However, Gitlin (1998) warns that while Internet offers multiple public spheres, it is not able to offer an integrative public sphere. Thus, members of different public spheres do not interact within each other. Moreover, Barney (2003) criticized Habermas' ideal of public sphere on being too "logocentric". This implies that members of a digital forum, a public sphere in other words, do not only share rational legal opinions about society.

1.2.2.3. Power of Feedback Mechanism

Though content might not always be about rational societal debates, digital technologies provide a limitless interaction detached from filters of traditional media. Both Kellner (2000) and Gripsrud (2009) stress the significance of feedback mechanism. In other words, as Dahlgreen (2005) names, digital technologies and their media make way for "cyber transformation of public sphere". As discussed by Gerhards and Schaefer (2010, 145), "this new medium has the potential to fundamentally change societal communication and that, in a nutshell, internet communication makes a better public sphere than have the old mass media". Gordon (2007, 308) especially mentions smart phones which gives citizens the opportunity to "make vivid contributions to the public sphere" by sharing their momentary activities and ideas. Again, powerful feedback mechanism makes discussions around just-posted content possible. Indeed, Van Dijck (2009, 43), takes attention to the fact that "what is different in the digital era is that users have better access to networked media, enabling them to 'talk back' in the same multimodal language that frames cultural products formerly made exclusively in studios".

In conclusion, media is a vital part of public sphere and digital communication systems made Habermas' ideal type of public sphere more practical.

> "If communication networks of any kind form the public sphere, then our society, the network society, organizes its public sphere, more than any other historical form of organization, on the basis of media communication Networks. In the digital era, this includes the diversity of both the mass media and Internet and wireless communication networks" (Castells 2008, 79).

1.2.2.4. Internet and Optimism: Obstacles for Becoming A Perfect Public Sphere

As exemplified above, digital technologies have been welcomed optimistically by critics. Gripsrud (2009, 10) states that "there is no doubt whatsoever that the digitisation of media, not least television, and especially the development of the Internet, has considerably increased the possibility for individual citizens to participate actively in public discourse". Gripsrud (2009) appproaches new media as an alterative force on public sphere practices. Gerhard and Schefer (2010) also support this argument by describing Internet as a "promoter of free and plural societal communication". Moreover, Benkler (2002) emphasizes the democratizing role of Internet since it attributes the role of production in place of passive consumption. His explanation displays how new media promise to be a more powerful public sphere than traditional media:

> "They need not be limited to reading the opinions of opinion makers and judging them in private conversations. They are no longer constrained to

> occupy the role of mere readers, viewers, and listeners. They can be, instead, participants in a conversation. … The network allows all citizens to change their relationship to the public sphere. They no longer need to be consumers and passive spectators. They can become creators and primary subjects. It is in this sense that the Internet democratizes" (Benkler 2006, 272).

On the other hand, not all evaluations/readings accord with these optimistic views. For example, while appreciating the transformation towards more participatory and plural commmunication system, Papacharissi (2009) balances both "utopian" and "dystopian" views by making a more comprehensive pro-contra analysis. Furthermore, Van Dijck (2009) questions the use of Internet due to conflict between theoretical promises and practical consequences. According to him, availability of content production does not guarantee everyone to become active producers. Moreover, users get different benefits. Finally, service providers do not passively manage what the audience produce, they sometimes intervene what users do online.

1.2.2.4.1. Digital Divide

Other than Van Dijck's concerns listed above, availability of digital technologies is a very significant concern. Despite social media's promise for free communication, one should bear in mind that technological asset is necessary to be a part of it. Papacharissi (2009) criticizes cheering Internet as a pure public sphere since it excludes those who have not access to digital media. Therefore, he prefers to use "public space" rather than using public sphere to explain Internet. Indeed, statistics taken from 2013's ICT Facts and Figures show that there is a huge gap in access to Internet between developed regions and the rest. While 75% of Europe and 61% of Americas can connect to Internet, only 16% of Africa and 32 of Asia/ Pacifics have Access to digital technologies.

Thus, access to information is an important obstacle for Internet to become an ideal public sphere. Jenkins and Thorburn's study (2003, 8) supports this fact by stating that "the promise of a new public sphere depends on whether technical, economic, and cultural barriers to full participation- the so- called digital divide- can be overcome".

1.2.2.4.2. Availability or Productivity of Knowledge: 90+9+1 Rule

In addition to the digital divide, the productive capacity of users is also a very considerable dimension in evaluating social media. First of all, being online does not necessarily mean that all users have active role on the content production process. Creating content and posting them online require certain skills as well as technological facilities. Moreover, users have different gratifications, while some of them prefer to play an active role on the web, many of them preferably use it as a follower. Van Dijck's study (2009, 44) shows that "a group of 100 people online, then one will create content, 10 will "interact" with it (commenting or offering improvements) and the other 89 will just view it". Therefore, participation has different meanings for each user. Kozinets (2010) classifies social media users according to their position to the central activities on the community. First of all, there are "makers" who are at the center and strictly connected to each user. Second, there are "networkers" who have strong ties with other users while they prefer staying at the periphery. Third group consists of "interactors" who are not at the center but highly interactive. Finally, "lurkers" are neither at the center nor hard interactors. Furthermore, an OECD report dated to 2007 shared by Van Dijck (2009, 44) declares that "participation does not equal 'active contribution' to UGC sites; participation is thus a relative term when over 80 percent of all users are in fact passive recipients of content". Likewise, Papacharissi (2009) defends the idea that being an Internet user does not mean being equally interactive about the issues followed. In brief, being a part of social media does not signify that every user have similar tendencies toward using it.

1.2.2.4.3. Chaos

While number of social media users increase gradually (Kozinets 2010), content also becomes richer. On one hand, this helps media to become more plural. On the other hand, elimination of stimulus and choosing the required content becomes harder. There are too many messages shared, more than necessary information in circulation and increasing network which cause "chaos, inefficiency, unpredictability, and so forth" (Dahlgreen 2005, 150). Similarly, Papacharissi (2009) argues that digital media enlarges opportunities numerically while becoming qualitatively less useful. Poster (1995) draws attention to the fact that online identities are not reliable and this decreases the credibility and quality of communication. Furthermore, Castells (2007) says that in such an chaotic environment full of attention demanding messages, only those who become also visible on traditional media gets outshined. Finally, audience develops self-filtering mechanisms and they get keen on those websites which promise filtered information due to over capacity of messages. In short, social media does not guarantee clean and plain communication due to over expression.

1.2.2.3.4. Manipulation

Discussions above suggest that digital media is a more efficient tool for free communication than traditional media. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there is no manipulation on Internet. On the contrary, dominant power groups unceaselesly use new media to manipulate the audience. As Kellner (2000), Barney (2003), Gripsrud (2009) and Gerhard and Schaefer (2010) note, Habermas' idea of public sphere implicates mass media's vulnerability to intervention of dominant elites in society. Actually, this idea is based on Mills's (1956) argument that mass media shapes values of society according to ruling class' interests. Mass media promotes interests of those small groups in society which are privileged socio- economically. As discussed by Kellner (2000, 8), "giant corporations have taken over the public sphere and transformed it from a sphere of rational debate into one of manipulative consumption and passivity". Rheingold (2008) also emphasizes how Habermas hesitates mass media to name as a perfect public sphere since "fake discourse—from the public relations industry to campaign media strategies" occupy it. Moreover, Hosgor emphasizes Internet's transformation in favour of the commercial interest groups. She adds that if not one central one, there are various mechanisms which control communication on Internet. In short, control and manipulation of mass media by private economic realm and state reduced audience's citizenship role to a passive consumer role.

Visibility is a significant manipulation tool. As a matter of fact, "only in the light of public sphere did that which existed became revealed, did everything became visible to all" (Habermas 1989, 4). Digital technologies facilitates visibility of various information sources. Castells (2007) suggests that this is a new era for power structures because conditions of visibility changes:

> "I understand power to be the structural capacity of a social actor to impose its will over other social actor(s).Therefore, the relationship between technology, communication, and power reflects opposing values and interests, and engages a plurality of social actors in conflict" (Castells 2007, 240).

Then what sort of ways are used to become more visible on social media? First of all, labeling contents according to number of clicks and highlighting them with more attractive presentation tools influence visibility.

> "YouTube singles out 'most viewed' videos; it also lists 'most discussed' videos and has rankings for 'Topfavourites' and 'Top rated' – familiar categories deployed by most commercial radio stations. Obviously, rankings and ratings are vulnerable to manipulation, both by users and by the site's owners." (Van Dijck 2009, 45)

Moreover, as Van Dijck (2009) and Gerhards and Schaefer (2010) draw attention, every step the audience take online is monitored by web engines and their corporate clients. For example, any search on Google might be used as a marketing hint and patterns of online behaviour are watched to categorize prospect customers. All of these data are used in advertising and direct marketing campaigns. Privacy of personal data is not ensured, on the contrary, users have little control over data distribution. That is to say user generated content, downloaded links, liked pages, shared messages, etc. are tools to classify users according to business interests. Being an actor on social media might empower sense of public, unfortunately, this might be an illusion in some cases. Once again, public turns consumer although uses and gratifications are richer than traditional media.

1.2.2.3.5. Agency vs. Structure Dilemma: Avoiding Technodeterminism

Above discussions display that interaction, participation, content production, strong feedback mechanism, and synchronization of communication despite temporal and spatial gaps have been main alterations that Internet induced. All of these determinations contain one implication: Technology forms the audience. To illustrate, Marshall McLuhan (2001) defends in his well known book Gutenberg Galaxy the idea that media determines audience behaviour. The basis is the sense organs used during the communication. Reading book isolates one by activating eyes and deactivating other senses, however, watching television requires synchronized use of eyes and ears. Moreover, the speed of the spread of messages is crucial in transformation of societies as in diffusion of nationalist ideas by books and newspapers case. Habermas also underlines the power of specific mediums in societal changes.

> "In Transformations, he sketches the degeneration of media from print-based journalism to the electronic media of the twentieth century, in an analysis that, as his critics maintain, tends to idealize earlier print media and journalism within a democratic public sphere contrasted to an excessively

> negative sketch of later electronic media and consumption in a debased public sphere of contemporary capitalism." (Kellner 2000, 10)

Though evaluated in different contexts, both McLuhan and Habermas attribute technology a more significative meaning. Nevertheless, researchers like Papacharissi (2009), Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009) and Fuchs (2008) takes technology in relation with human action. They defend the idea that both Internet and audience are in interaction and they continously shape each other. While appreaciating the alterations this new technology caused, they do not jump into the conclusion that digital sphere made a revolution. Papacharissi (2009) makes a remarkable inference; he argues that technodeterminism should be avoided. Contrariwise, the way Internet is used does not make it an ideal public sphere. In brief, the use and context of digital media have more decisive role than their technological potential.

1.2.2.3.5.1. Latour and Missing Masses

Similar to those who avoid technodeterminisim, Latour (1992) argues that society should be considered in a more holistic perspective with respect to human and non human effects together. However, he attributes a more distinctive role to technology in understanding society. According to him, the outcome of using a technology could be different than what its creator would prescribe before its launch. By the same token, its effect on human action is extremely hard to predict precisely. Both of them shape each other and reflect each other's will. That is to say that it is a mutual relationship of "figurative and non-figurative"(1992, 162) elements which embodies social structure. Therefore, the missing mass in comprehending social action could be the technology.

In other words, human can be understood by integrating non human. Thus, participative mode of Internet is eventual both technologically and purposefully.

1.2.3. Luhmann's Autopoiesis

Above discussions around Habermas' have indicated that new communication technologies generate a sense of public sphere where users produce content, interact globally and communicate mutually. Therefore, Internet deserves to be analyzed in terms of public sphere concept. Likewise, Luhmann's concept of autopoiesis also deserves attention. To have a deeper understanding of this research's area, Luhmann's system theory should be reviewed.

Luhmann's approach is dialectic since he underlines the "transition from quantity to quality" in explaining systems human construct (Fuchs 2008). Single units of a system and its whole are in continous interaction and they reproduce each other gradually. That is to say each system produce itself as distinct from start point projection. According to Luhmann, each subunit of modern world, from law to media and from state to education, have their own way of self- organizing; each of them use different forms of communication, rituals and ways of doings (Luhmann 1996, Fuchs 2008, Dunsire 1996). In other words, each of them are "complex, non-linear, autonomous and especially living systems" (Schatten & Baca 2010, 837).

> "A self-organizing system is a system that dynamically produces and reproduces order from within and, based on its inner logic, it is autocreative and a *causa sui*, that is, it is its own cause and produces itself." (Fuchs 2008, 334)

Media is not far from Luhmann’s generalisation. It has its own logic, it continously creates its own structure. Moreover, “communicative process” is more significant than single human action. Media’a own filter mechanisms, standard routines, agenda setting procedures ceaselessly function on the basis of this communicative process. Of course, state or capital intervene to mass media to a certain degree, however, they cannot completely change the system media environment created itself. Luhmann (1996) lays stress upon “individiual motive” and social system’s influence on these motives. That is to say that the way users consume media is shaped by their own motives as well as media’s influence as a whole.

Moreover, Internet is a subsystem where users’ motives are more influencive than traditional media. In other words, audience plays greater role in creating system than media professionals do. The organisation of communication on social media is different than in traditional media since “the electronic medium appears to be changing the way participants selectively construct and bind expectations of personhood and communicative ties to themselves and others (Lee, Goedde and Shryock 2010, 137). Fuchs also stresses how important user element in self- organisation of new media process is:

> “The emergence and self-organization of the World Wide Web is not a purely technological process; it is in need of active, knowledgeable human actors who create the structure of the WWW, links, new Web sites, and so on, and browse the Web. Without human beings, the Web is a dead mechanical entity that is not self-organizing” (Fuchs 2008,123).

Therefore, it can be said that “a social network site is a social system that produces itself by meaningfully organising its own elements” (Lee, Goedde and Shryock 2010, 139). Beside self – organising aspect of social media, networks’ role in organising new media also deserves attention (Castells 2007, Fuchs 2008, Van Dijk 2006) since Luhmann’s subsystem approach ignores the role of them (Fuchs 2008 and Martens 1998). In other words, a web forum can bring different users from various backgrounds together, so they can exchange ideas originated through different subsystems. As discussed by Lee, Goede and Shryock (2010, 145), “users select a cultured network that appeals to them with such specific differences in mind and switch to other networks as their personal tastes change”. Furthermore, both Tuomi (2000), and Leydersdorff (2000) state that social systems are based on common meanings which reduce complexity and which are transmitted via communication. Thus, internet can be seen a web of networks where messages are shared to make more meaningful interpretations..

1.2.3.1. Social Media as a subsystem of strategy tools

Luhmann (1996) argues that uncertainty motivates organisations to find sufficient information to make more rational decisions. Managers, according to him, do that by “by continuous oscillation between self-reference and external reference. The decision itself represents the self observation of the system, but the content of the decision has to acknowledge environmental ’facts’ (Luhmann 1996, 346). As Rheingold (2008), Papacharissi (2009), Castells (2007) and Barney (2003) state, Internet is a space of connection to express ideas. Once users start a discussion around a specific topic, new approaches emerge, different perspectives originate and opinions are diffused. Social media functions as a subsystem where public opinion is shaped and reshaped continously. Furthermore, this subsystem is not limited by time and space, users construct it globally. Especially, forums of strategy professionals become scene of transferring ideas from different users. Strategy tools, in special, become visible and popular because of these discussions. As a result of them, social media can be seen as a medium which allows managers to express self experiences and to absorb others' stories. As Luhmann (1996, 3) states, "the process of dissemination is only possible on the basis of technologies" and both self reference and external reference are in exchange on social media. He also adds that "communication emerges only if the difference between information and utterance is observed, expected, understood and used as the basis for connecting with further behaviours" and strategy people "inform themselves with the self-reference of society"(Lee, Goede and Shryock 2010, 140).

In conclusion, strategy tools seem to be common codes of communication in managerial process. In other words, they are specific and practical interpretations of strategy in general. Although they are time- sensitive and their popularity lasts until a main point, their rise and decline process reflects some characteristics of strategical approaches. To be specific, a strategy tool could be seen as an outcome of a search of certainty. Managers are in need of finding efficient and successful ways to overcome uncertainties. To base their decisions on a rational sensemaking process and to convince resource providers, they use certain information sources such as academia, consultancy firms, gurus and business press. As a matter of fact, there might be other motivations such as reaasuring hierarchical status and increasing prestige behind this communication. However, it is an interaction among strategy community which becomes more legitimate and efficient by using these codes and patterns. Thus, narration of strategy in general and its tools in specific becomes essential. In other words, strategy knowledge is not unconnected with rhetoric building. Especially, opinion leaders such as gurus, consultants, academicians and celebrity managers aim to attract the attention of prospect clients or certain communities (in business or in academia). To be more preferable, they do not only use rational arguments but also emotional codes such as problematizing a manager's situation with fear, despair and threat. Therefore, it is essential to ask who uses which code, to whom with, in which channel? Here, channel deserves a closer focus since strategy tools rise and diffuse in certain media such as business press, academic publications, and/ or consultancy books. Moreover, business networking events, guru speeches and academic lectures also contribute to the circulation of strategy knowledge. Nevertheless, these channels are named as traditional media which mainly facilitate a one way communication between the audience and information source. On the other hand, digital media transformed this hierarchy by allowing all participants from different regions to interact at the same time. Moreover, content production has also turned into a more open and interactive form. Thus, Habermas' idea of public sphere and communicative action have become more remarkable. Moreover, digital media also embody Luhmann's idea that systems organise themselves as an outcome of continous interaction between the micro and macro elements. Social media especially appears to be a communication channel where self and external references are in exchange. Therefore, Latour's argument that social systems are hard to analyze without its technology becomes essential. In other words, -avoiding technodeterminism- understanding a strategy community interacting around strategy and its tools in such a digital channel gains significance.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

In this chapter, first, the research questions related with the purpose of the study are presented. Secondly, the overall research design is explained. Third, information about the research field is given. Then, the data collection procedures are described. Subsequently, the steps that will be followed in the analysis of data are depicted.

2.1. Research Questions

The aim of the study is to understand what discourses strategy practitioners produce in an online communication channel where they exchange ideas, experiences and suggestions. In other words, their attitude towards strategy and its practice in online interaction will be studied. For this purpose, following questions have been developed:

1. How is strategy interpreted on social media by its practitioners? What meanings are attributed to the field in general and its tools in specific?

2. What are the motives behind taking communicative action on strategy? What kind of worldviews does shape their communication? How context-sensitive are the presentation of the selves in terms of education, gender, age, occupation, and professional experience?

3. What kind of patterns does emerge among the expressions of different participants? Are there any similar uses of language? In what way is rhetoric built by strategy people? What are the characteristics of strategy people's talk? How do they present themselves in an online strategy community?

4. Does this communication appear as a channel of strategy massification?

2.2. Overall Design of the Study

This is a qualitative study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, 8), qualitative research does not deal with "quantity, amount, intensity or frequency" but "qualities of entities and on processes and meanings". Indeed, this study aims to discover how strategy concepts are described by different users. Since Berg (2007, 3) states that "quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing-its essence and ambience", it is inevitable to develop a qualititave approach. Jensen states that "culture and communication, accordingly, may be conceived of as a source of either meaning, in phenomenological and contextual terms, or information, in the sense of discrete items transporting significance through mass media" (1991, 4). Here, it is important to realize that an organization concept used on media has two dimensions: the label and its content. "Almost by definition one uses the label of the concept when carrying out research on print media indicators. However, concepts – and management fashions in particular – always have a certain degree of interpretative viability (cf. Ortmann, 1995; Benders and Van Veen, 2001): they are characterized by certain degrees of generality, ambiguity and vagueness. (cf. Giroux, 2006) so that users can shape the concept in different ways and in various contexts" (Benders and Heusinkveld 2006, 821).

Robert (1996, 245) emphasizes how sensitive qualitative research is to the context and adds that "qualitative researchers study events, things, and phenomenon in relation to their contexts. To understand a particular action requires an understanding of the context". Furthermore, Jensen (1991, 18) stresses the significance of "humanistic perspective" in communication studies arguing that "the contents must be conceptualized as the expression of a particular subjectivity and aesthetics, and as the representation of a particular context".

Understanding attitudes toward strategy tools, interpretations of them, their texture and articulation require certain techniques. Patton acclaims the developments in techniques which "help qualitative researchers extract meaning from their data (including software) and interpret it in ways that enhance our understanding of complex phenomena" (1990, 343). A similar research carried out by Chiapello and Fairclough (2002) benefited from critical discourse analysis to understand the agenda of management gurus' and their approach to management ideas. They looked for dominant meanings, frequently used textures and language. "People not only act and interact within Networks of social practices, they also interpret and represent to themselves and each other what they do, and these interpretations and representations shape and reshape what they do" (Fairclough and Chiapello 2002, 195). This research also aims to do a discourse analysis in order to understand what kinds of meanings are attributed to strategy and its practice.

This study conforms to the main purposes and principles of qualitative research study. To start with, the direct source of data in this study is the archives of social media - namely LinkedIn. Then the content is analyzed..

This is a descriptive study where the collected data is in the form of words rather than numbers. According to Robert (1996), to make comprehensive descriptions, direct quotations are essential. He stresses the fact that "direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative research. Direct quotations reveal the respondents' levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions"(1996, 245). Likewise, direct quotations of the writers of the articles in academic publications and comments of strategy practitioners on social media will also great help in the data analysis. Essentially, qualitative research in design would be more convenient to describe the ideas, feelings, and perceptions of strategy people. Thus, meaning attribution to strategy, interpretation of its theory and practice, presentation of the self as a strategy person and Weltanschauungs in a strategy community gain a deeper analysis.

2.3. Data Source

The main data source is social media, LinkedIn which is expected to reflect the tendencies of practitioners. Since many professionals meet on web forums to express their ideas and experiences regarding strategy, these forums may provide significant data to understand their agenda. The Strategic Planning Society, a forum on social media with 17.470 members from around the world, define themselves as "a group on LinkedIn, a discussion and networking forum for owners, managers, strategy professionals and academics to share knowledge and promote strategic thinking". It was created in 2009 and members are mainly from the business development, management consulting and marketing/ advertising industries. This means professionals using strategy tools in their everyday business practices interact there. They share their ideas, their past experiences and they make comments on organization concepts. According to Rheingold (1993, 5) virtual communities are “social aggregations that emerge from the net when enough people carry on public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace”(1993, 5). SPS (Strategic Planning Society) is also a virtual community where people specialized in strategy have been interacting for 4 years about their profession and its everyday practices. Archives of Strategic Planning Society group on LinkedIn is the main data source.

2.3.1. SamplingMethod

LinkedIn provides vast amount of texts embodied by people who are interested in strategy. Specifically, Strategic Planning Society brings only those, who professionaly define themselves as a strategy person, together. However, choosing any discussion among thousands of users randomly does not ensure that this chat will provide any insight about this study’s particular concern, strategy tools. Since this research is particularly interesed in strategy tools, sampling is done non- randomly. In other words, purposeful sampling is utilized so that study in depth is ensured. The data about the use of strategy tools can only be extracted by using a purposive sample. To be more specific, having made any comment on one of Jarzabkowski’s strategy tools list identifies the criterion of the sample. Therefore, strategy tools interpreted by strategy people on SPS between 2009- 2013 is the sample in this research. This means that documents of 62 members of this group have been analyzed.

2.3.2. Descriptions of the Strategy Tools

As discussed above, the number of strategy tools increases each passing year. Only some of them become widely adopted, while the majority of these tools fail to become popular. Therefore, it is necessary to limit the number of strategy tools instead of focusing on each and every tool discussed. Jarzabkowski's research (2007) which focuses on the difference of strategical approaches between academics and practitioners would provide a solid basis for this research. Here, Jarzabkowski takes in hand 20 strategy tools that are on the agenda of the UK's top MBA alumni. She demonstrates how the agenda of practitioners differs from that of academics which have a sceptical approach to these tools. The top ten strategy tools from her study would also constitute a reasonable limit for this research. These tools are listed below along with their brief definitions.

1. SWOT (Strength- Weakness- Opportunity- Threat) Analysis

SWOT is defined as "an analytical tool which should be used to categorize significant environmental factors both internal and external to the organization" (Pickton and Wright 1998).

2. Key Success Factors

Key Success Factors is defined as a tool which "enables a company to enter an industry successfully, differentiate between themselves with generic strategies and operate optimally between higher perceived value and lower delivered costs" (Ketelhön 1998).

3. Core Competences Analysis

Core Competences Analysis is defined as "a special skill or technology that creates unique customer value. A company's specialized capabilities are largely embodied in the collective knowledge of its people and the organizational procedures that shape the way employees interact. Over time, investments in facilities, people, and knowledge that strengthen Core Competencies can create sustainable sources of competitive advantage" (Rigby 2001).

4. Scenario Planning

This tool "allows users to explore the implications of several alternative futures"(Rigby 2001).

5. Value Chain

Value Chain is defined as a tool which "describes the full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the intermediary phases of production, delivery to final customers, and final disposal after use" (Kaplinsky 2000).

6. Porter's Five Forces

Five competitive forces that drive industry including "threat of new entrants, bargaining power of others, threat of substitute product or services, bargaining power of suppliers, rivalry among existing competitors" (Porter 2008).

7. Resource- Based View

Resource Based View is a tool which "incorporates traditional strategy insights concerning a firm's distinctive competencies and heterogeneous capabilities. The resource-based approach also provides value-added theoretical propositions that are testable within the diversification strategy literature" (Mahoney and Pandian 2006).

8. Industry Life- Cycle

A model which guides executives “thinking about when and how to invest in various industries”(McGahan and Argyres and Baum 2004).

9. PESTLE (Political-Economical-Social-Technological-Legal- Environmental) Analysis

An audit tool which provides a snapshot to the external environment of the business.

10. Merger and Acquisition Matrices

Merger and Acquisition Matrices are prepared by ”a group of senior managers from two merged companies charged with delivering on sales and operating synergies identified during the deal’s due diligence. The team’s composition should equally represent both companies, and the team’s role is critical” (Rigby 2001).

2.3.2. Participants

The sample consists of 62 members of Strategic Planning Society- a forum on LinkedIn- who has made any comment about any strategy tool from Jarzabkowski’s list between 2009- 2013. As seen in Table 1, 90 comments are made about 8 tools and there are two tools which have not been discussed, namely Merger and Acquisition Matrices and Key Success Factors. SWOT is the mostly commented one with 18 users. It is followed by Resource Based View with 16 comments and Value Chain is the third strategy tool with 15 comments. Porter’s Five Forces is the fourth frequent toll with 14 comments and followed by PESTLE with 11 comments. 9 comments are made on Scenario Planning. Core Competences is only discussed 4 times while Industry Life Cycle has the lowest frequency with 3 comments.

Table 1

STRATEGY TOOL	Number of Comments
SWOT	18
Resource Based View	16
Value Chain	15
Porter's 5 Forces	14
PESTLE	11
Scenario Planning	9
Core Competences	4
Industry Life Cycle	3
Merger and Acquisition Matrices	0
Key Success Factors	0
Total Number of Comments	**90**

Source: Author

2.3.3.1. Demographics of participants

Total number of participants are 62. Their distribution in terms of gender is 54 of them are male users, only 8 of them are female.

Table 2

GENDER	Participants
Male	54
Female	6
Total Number of Participants	**62**

Source: Author

The frequency of the top users' location is coherent with the community's overall statistics. Most active users are from United States with %9 of overall users in the community, and %33 of the sample with 21 users. UK is the second most active location with %20 of the sample and %3 of the overall data. However, the third active location is Brazil in overall data with %2 of the group and there is only 1 commenter in the sample from Brazil. The third location is Australia with %6,5 frequency. While United Arab Emirates is the fourth location in the overall data, there is not any comment made from this country about these strategy tools. In stead, Malaysia and South Africa are the fourth most active locations with 3 commenter's for each. While Vietnam, Iran and Canada take place in the sample with 2 commenters for each; there is only one comment for each made from Netherlands, Germany, Qatar, Oman, Israel, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, Italy, Singapore, Brazil and India.

Table 3

NATIONALITY	Number of participants
USA	21
UK	13

Australia	4
South Africa	3
Malaysia	3
Vietnam	2
Iran	2
Canada	2
Netherlands	1
Germany	1
Qatar	1
Oman	1
Israel	1
Egypt	1
Ireland	1
New Zealand	1
Italy	1
Singapore	1
Brazil	1
India	1
Total	**62**

Source: Author

Consultancy is the most common sector in the sample with %50 frequency. Though some users intitle this profession differently according to the industry they work such as financial consultancy, management conultancy, IT consultancy and research consulting, all of them could be named as consultants. Education is the second common sector with %12 freuquency and is followed by business consultancy with %10 frequency. Both Telecommunication and Marketing have %5 frequency. %5 of the sample are professionals from Technology and Finance sectors and one commenters from International Trade, Investment, Automative, Transportation, Health, Tourism, and Retail with %1,6 rate for each.

Table 4

SECTOR	Participants
Management Consultancy	12
Consultancy	9
Education	8
IT Consultancy	6
Business Development	6
Telecommunications	3
Marketing	3
Financial Consultancy	3
Technology	2
Finance	2
International Trade	1
Investment	1
Research Consulting	1
Automotive	1

Transportation	1
Tourism	1
Retail	1
Health	1
Total	**62**

Source: Author

Commenters are generally high level professionals hierarchically. Although named differently such as manager, director, CEO, CFO, Chief Risk Officer and executive; 28 of 62 users are high level employees. 14 of the sample even own their companies though titles such as founder, president, presidential fellow and partner are preferred other than owner. 10 of the sample informs that they are either senior or minor executives. 7 members from the sample are academics, 3 of them professor, 3 of them associate professor and 1 of them visiting tutor. Finally, 2 of the members work as freelance.

Table 5

POSITION IN THE HIERARCHY	Participants
Manager	13
Director	8
Senior	6
Owner	4
President	4

Adjunct/ Associate Professor	3
Mid	3
Executive	3
Professor	3
Founder	2
CEO	2
Freelance	2
Partner	2
Principal	1
Business Developer	1
Chief Risk Officer	1
Presidential Fellow	1
Visiting Tutor	1
CFO	1
TOTAL	**61**

Source: Author

The sample mostly consists of commenters who have experience between 10 and 20 years. %33 of the sample strated to work between 1996 and 2005. Period between 1986-1995 has %27 rate. While 1965-1975 and 1976- 1985 periods both have %15 rate, only %5 of the data has less than 10 years experience.

Table 6

WHEN THEY HAVE STARTED TO WORK?	Number of participants
1965-1975	9
1976-1985	9
1986-1995	17
1996-2005	21
2006-2014	3
TOTAL	**59**

Source: Author

Finally, sample shows that this group talking about strategy tools on this web community has a high educational level with %50 of them having MBA degree. Moreover, %16 of the sample has post graduate degree. While graduate degree other than MBA has %6 rate, %22 of the population has undergraduated from Bachelor of Science or Arts.

Table 7

EDUCATION LEVEL	Number of participants
MBA	31
BS	10
PhD	7
Msc	4
BA	4
Professor	3

TOTAL	59

Source: Author

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

Document analysis is used to collect data. Berg (2007) argues together with participant observation, there are many data collection tools for a qualitative researcher such as observation of experimental settings, photographic techniques (including videotaping), historical analysis (historiography), document and textual analysis, sociometry, sociodrama and similar ethno/methodological experimentation, ethnographic research, and a number of unobtrusive techniques. Similarly, Kozinets (2009) draws attention to the online users as being "actively communicating with one another. They are reaching out to form, express, and deepen their social alliances and affiliation" (2009, 2). Thus, carrying out research on social media requires a broader perspective in order to get a deeper sense of the nature of that habitat.

In this research, personal profile pages and comments on strategy tools of the members on a web forum- Strategic Planning Society on LinkedIn- have been extracted as documents to be analyzed. These texts consist of personal information like region, work experience, current employment status, gender, educational background, celebrity influencers. Moreover, these online posts include their opinions about strategy in general and tools in specific. There are also quotations, anecdotes, references, mottos, examples from past experiences and summaries about strategy. These documents have been transferred into a Word file with 44 pages which consists of personal summaries of 62 different users, 88 comments on strategy tools in 16.525 words.

There are many discussion groups on LinkedIn where members define themselves as strategy people such as Future Trends, Change Consulting and Strategic Planning Xchange. However, Strategic Planning Society has been preferred since it is a larger group with more heterogeneous profiles and active usage. Moreover, Strategic Planning Society is a closed group though becoming a member is not very difficult. Once a LinkedIn user decides to become membership, he/ she sends a request to the admin of the group. After the approval, it is free to surf among discussions, profiles and posts.

2.5. Data Analysis Method

The data collected as documents was analyzed by doing a discourse analysis. As Johnstone (2002) notes, rather than focusing on "language as an abstract system" technically, discourse analysis is about exploring patterns of meanings, representations of worldviews and reflections of certain chains of thoughts. Phillips and Jorgensen (2002, 1) emphasize that "discourse is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life. Discourse analysis is the analysis of these patterns". In other words, it is concerned with representations of a constructed reality. According to Kvale (1992, 36), discourse analysis is based on the fact that "the individual self becomes a medium for the culture and its language". Thus, it is a pursuit of understanding who says what, in which context, with what motivation and to whom in mind? In other words, it reveals "strategies that operate in discourse" (Georgakopolou and Goutsios 1997, 8). Beyond infering what the talk embodies, it is also an attempt to find out what is kept in silence. According to Johnstone, “discourse analysts work outward from texts to an understanding of their contexts, trying to uncover the multiple reasons why the texts they study are the way they are and no other way” (2002, 27). Moreover, it is about investigating taking for granted worldviews, claimed as true concepts, statements with certainties, context sensitivities such as age, gender, ethnicity, dominant voices expressed by the speaker and unthinkable categories (Jorgensen 2002). Furthermore; words, references, quotations, stories, emotional expressions, self presentations, modality, etc. all of them are means of identity construction (Van Bommel and Spicer 2011). Thus, how the ethos is developed (Jorgensen 2002) is also in concern. In addition, discourse analysis reveals the relationship between power and knowledge considering “distal contexts” like “social class and ethnic composition” (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 22). Finally, this kind of analysis also considers the medium of the text since it is the bridge between the speaker and the audience and it influences the discourse (Johnstone 2002). Indeed, social media has paved a way for a different way of communication in terms of participation, interaction and intertextuality. It is essential to note that there is not a single operational form in making discourse analysis. According to Hardy and Phillips (2002), the less “institutionalized” this method stays, the more it keeps its “highly reflexive nature”. Therefore, such an analysis does not follow certain steps. It is a creative process where the analyst unmasks what the speaker constructs, what the medium shapes, and what the language represents. In other words, it is an attempt to scratch, grub and muckrake what is told.

In order to do such an analysis, all texts in 44 pages have been carefully read several times. After examinations, certain patterns have been contained manually. They have been classified as themes which consist of similar ways of expressions, representations and reflections appearing as full paragraphs, sentences, words, quotations, references and/ or idioms.

2.6. Validity and Reliability

The issue of validity and reliability is not similar to quantitative analysis since it is not a research which reveals numbers and experiments to verify or falsify a hypothesis. This research is not a traditional quantitative analysis. It is about interpretations, reflections and representations of truth embodied in texts. These texts have been taken from LinkedIn which has restrictions on creating personal page. Unlike Facebook or Twitter, opening fake account is a serious issue on LinkedIn and with special applications like reference system, e- mail verification, corporate approval; using real identities is ensured. This increases credibility which should be a more significant concern of a qualitative researcher than validity (Lincoln and Quba 1985; Marriam 2009). Thus, it would be convenient to be assertive on credibility since all documents extracted from this discussion group consist of participants' real expressions. They are open to public (though membership to the group is necessary). They reflect worldviews of people of a specific field, they provide sufficient data to consider their context and all self-expressions have been made in an authentic way rather than a common uniformity. Participants satiably provide data to analyze how they understand the world. Thus, credibility of this research could be emphasized instead of validity.

As for reliability, it would not be convenient to value this issue for a qualitative study neither. This has been a process of searching meaning attribution in contrast to conventional quantitative studies. Thus, consistency with findings rather than replication of a static situation is essential (Creswell 2005). In other words, “rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense- they are consistent and dependable”(Merriam 2009, 221). Therefore, data sheet has been reviewed by two different qualitative researchers. The findings of the researcher are consistent with their inferences as well.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Presentation of the Self

In his infamous work, “The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life”, Goffman (1959) focuses on face- to- face interaction claiming that it can be analysed just like a theater performance can be. He proposes that the way people present themselves in the society is strongly related to their endeavour to leave a positive impression on the others. Here, it is important to understand what motivations shape the role and who are they that the player aims to influence. Similarly, personal profile pages of the sample on LinkedIn display how they present themselves to their audience. To be specific, one user may address potential clients of his/ her business while another targets employers who might be interested in his/ her summary. In other words, summaries collected from the research’s online data show that there are different target audiences in each text. This is a consequence of the motivation of the speaker. Is it aimed to find a job? Is it meant to make a long career visible? What distinctions are emphasized to take audience attention? How do they position themselves and according to what? Findings show that there are clusters of audience they target, pronouns they prefer, elements they use to construct their rhetoric, personal characteristics presented and promoted, positioning, and promises.

3.1.1. Pronouns and Audience

There are three different use of pronouns in the texts. First of all, one group of this community's members uses first person singular in their summaries. Second group consists of texts where members use first- person or third- person singular pronouns to provide a relatively neutral viewpoint about themselves. Final group is composed of those who use third-person singular form to present themselves as celebrities.

3.1.1.1. First Person/ Self Promoters

First person singular form is used to strengthen self- promotion. However, there are two different target audiences which determines the tone of the voice. While, one group of this cluster talks as if they are in a job interview, the other group uses a style to charm potential clients. Namely, the former will be called as an "employee talk" whereas the latter is "hero consultant talk".

Both talks are enthusiastic and promising while employee is more modest than the hero consultant. It is remarkable to see that this modest talk is constructed by relatively junior members of the community. With less years in profession than the majority, one of the users (8 years of experience, senior marketing manager, male, UK) illustrates employee talk perfectly:

> *"My strong project management and influencing skills, coupled with my experience of driving operational business change, enable me to work closely with stakeholders to ensure that strategies are planned, controlled and executed properly".*

Here, he declares that he will be there for his employers whenever they need him. He is installed to make strategies function orderly in each process.

Likewise, a management consultant (7 years of experience, senior, female, Vietnam) uses "I" talk to ensure her employers that she would be the right choice for related projects:

> *"My career objective is to provide consulting services and strategic directions to SMEs as well as large businesses by synergizing my multi-skill set of business acumen, strategy and business process expertise, leadership qualities and practical thinking."*

Both examples above exemplify passionate, assertive but relatively modest talk in first-person singular form. Although hero consultants use the same pronoun with similar self-promotion motives, they ostentatiously present themselves as savior and their talk is much more ambitious than the former group. There are three noteworthy commonalities of the members of the second cluster. First, all of them are male. Second, all of them live in Western societies and finally, they are old soldiers. For example, a president of a technology company in USA(17 years of experience, male) explains himself to potential clients very self- confidently:

> *"I leverage my long and diverse experience in my consulting work to bring you much more than most technologists. My key value-add is strategic analysis combined with a practical knowledge of products, processes, customers, and markets. I have always directed technology development with a solid business perspective..... My current focus is competitive strategy, especially in tech industries."*

Similarly, a management consulting firm owner in USA with 32 years of experience, expresses himself loud and clear:

> *"I bring strategic management solutions to client problems in order to achieve great results. I am a recognized thought leader with three decades experience helping diverse organizations in 36 countries worldwide to improve performance, productivity, and profits."*

Though what kind of distinctions they underline to impress their audience will be analyzed further below, it is necessary to highlight another commonality of this type of talk. Their focus of attention is their ability to overcome uncertainties. Like an observer climbing to a tree in a jungle, they present themselves as guides in risky environments and this self- promotion addresses clients in despair.

> *"As a senior decision support advisor, I provide guidance, deep insights, and valuable solutions for senior decision-makers facing complex, high-risk problems related to strategic planning, risk management, project valuation & planning, and project portfolio analysis & management. I aim to introduce and develop within client organizations the guidance, processes, and systems that improve the firm's ability to anticipate and manage risks associated with strategic planning, capital allocation, and project selection & management."*

The quotation above is taken from the personal summary of a president of a consultancy firm in USA. With 22 years of experience, he presents himself as a hero consultant. Just like him, , another consultancy executive from Australia with more than 40 years of experience, defines his goal in terms of his guidance ability with capital letters.

> *"My goal is to help businesses and not for profit organisations to DESIGN THEIR FUTURE, through provision of information, advice and tools for improving organizational governance, corporate strategic planning, designing requisite organisational structures, and developing managerial effectiveness."*

3.1.1.2. First Singular or Third Singular/ Neutral Informers

Second cluster of self- presentation shows that self- promotion is not the only motivation behind writing these summaries. This group of members prefers a more neutral and objective talk. Without making any comment about themselves, they let the reader to make an evaluation. They generally share a list of their skills, experiences, personal characteristics, and academic background either in bullets or in sentences. To illustrate, a financial consultancy manager from South Africa with 18 years of experience, provides a list of specialties in his summary:

> *"Specialties: Broad experience across all functional areas in Banking retail funding, Investment products, LISP operations & applications, Life Insurance (Group risk & individual), Employee benefits (Retirement Funds) and Retail Lending industries. Primary focus on Business support functions, Operations management, Financial management, Strategy, Information*

> *system management, Programme / Project Management, Business development, Customer relationship management."*

Another financial consultancy manager with MBA degree like the previous example, stipulates his background without ambitious promotion of himself. Even so, it would not be convenient to claim that it is nothing assertive. He describes all high level positions from his past such as *"director of..., owner of...., Manager of....., Chairman of...., Manager of...."* but he does not evaluate himself subjectively. He shares them as facts.

Academic background is another significant commonality of this cluster including two examples above. An associate professor from Netherlands, only shares his expertise but nothing to self promotion. He describes his work as *"doing scientific research and teaching at university for more than 15 years. Consulting experience in various industries."*

Likewise, an adjunct professor from Canada does not promote his skills or expertise but only manifests his background:

> *"A research professor in the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Laval University since 1970, he was appointed Full Professor of Finance in the Finance, Insurance & Real Estate Department of the Faculty in 1977 (retired in 2010). He is the founding-director of LABVAL (Research Laboratory on Business Valuation) at Laval University."* Although *"he was one of the first researchers to carry out studies on market efficiency in*

Canada, which were published by The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts".

As can be seen, he does not present himself as a hero or guru, he solely share his success stories as facts. Similar modesty can be observed in another member's personal summary. He is a business development consultant with MBA and Msc degrees and from Canada like the former example. Though using first singular- person pronoun differently from the two above, he does not promote himself agressively.

> *"B.Sc. in software engineering, in-depth knowledge of change management strategies, models and practices, and 12+ years of professional experience with a proven track record of success in leading information technology (IT) change projects (focused on health informatics)"*

Another business development consultant with a PhD degree and 21 years of experience, does not use promotive sentences, neither. He lists his field of interests in bullets and simply adds that he is the CEO.

> *"Business Development Services, SME's Support and Advisory Services, Management Marketing and Research Services, Management Consultancy Services. Restructuring & Organisational Development Islamic Banking*
> *L&D Services, Learning and Development,*
> *Strategic Management Lecturer, Trainer*
> *Managment Trainer and Public Speaker*
> *Specialties: Strategic Management, Marketing, Human Resource Management and Asia Pacific Busiess Management"*

His talk is self- evident. Rather than making suppositions, he makes statements as a "knower". In other words, he presents himself as someone who is aware of an external reality.

> "*Once the framework is in place it can be easily achieved. Let me give u a hint its the basis on which ur SWOT is completed or filled in so it at basic senior managers successful companies carefully review analyse this particular framework some times leading to analysis paralysis."*

It is interesting to observe that the self is mostly presented as a "promiser", someone who can fulfill the needs of the client. A saviour, a hero, a trustful employee, a profound intellectual. There is only one exception. A high level consultant from UK with MBA degree, does not make a neutral list of his experiences or ostentatiously promote himself but he is in the community to *"connect people"*. Rather, he is interested in learning and understanding. *"I want to use LinkedIn to connect with people interested in strategy, organisation design and operating models"* he says and adds: *"On operating models, I have being trying to understand the links between strategy, organisation and operating models and how to represent an operating model design."* It sounds so that he wishes to benefit from the discussions in this group if any useful information in his area of interest is shared.

3.1.1.3. Third Singular/ Illeists

Third way of presenting the self consists of those who solely use third singular- person pronoun. They portray themselves as celebrities, and by doing so they strongly stress their level of recognition. As a result, they do not use “I” talk but prefer someone else’s voice. Here, this someone is probably a columnist, a book reviewer or voice over of a TV program. A summary of an owner of an investment company in Malaysia illustrates this motive:

> *“Mr* XXX *had invested more than twenty seven years of hard work, learning and implementing critical skill sets needed in business development, leadership and management. His entrepreneur skills and courage are admirable when critical tough decisions on his companies were needed from time to time. These had been reflected during 2007 to 2010, where millions were wrongly invested on International Key Accounts such as Tesco, Carrefour and so forth. Mr* XXX *is always in ready mode to reflect on all the received and experiential wisdoms painfully acquired during his career for the best possible solution.”*

A manager in a telecommunication industry with an MBA degree from Israel, portrays himself as a *“charismatic manager contributing to employees commitment and motivating them to excellence.”* Both of them are in the business since 2000’s, they are similarly active in LinkedIn- members of around 30 groups-, and have MBA degrees. As can be seen in the quotations, they do not hesitate to use adjectives such as *“charismatic, admirable, experiential wisdom”.* In other words, relatively younger generation are barely cautious to praise themselves. However, more experienced members are better maskers than their younger counterparts.

A president of a consultancy company in Singapore with 50 years of experience, expresses himself so that as if a celebrity speaker is in the town and here is his/ her biography. However, he does not overtly impose big words but uses more descriptive sentences.

> *"*XXX *is a Consulting Futurist engaged by private enterprise and government in many countries. He has a deep background in Corporate Planning as a private consultant and with PwC and KPMG. He has been Chairman of the CFO Asia Summit conferences in Singapore in 2011 and 2012, a speaker at the HR Summit Mumbai, CFO Asia Summit and the Taiwan Academy of Banking and Finance in Singapore in 2013. He is a member of the Global Board of Directors of the Professional Risk Managers International Association (PRMIA.org), the World Future Society and the KPI Mega Library Group on Linkedin."*

Similarly, a consultancy director with 31 years of experience from United Kingdom uses a promoter's voice to describe himself. He willingly highlights his fame among his network:

> *"*XXX *is an internationally recognised leader at introducing new products and services to the market with in-depth and in-breadth knowledge of the wireless business and technology acquired over twenty-five years in industry. "*

Invariably, a senior consultant with 36 years of experience uses third person pronoun to emphasize his successful career:

> *"*XXX *provides organizational alignment and strategic development consulting services to businesses, nonprofits, and churches. He has over 31 years of leadership and performance engineering experience in nonprofits, private industry, and the U.S. Navy and Naval Reserve."*

There are two female members who also present themselves in third singular person pronoun. Both of them strongly emphasize their ability to transform their customers and their academic background. As the following paragraph from the summary of a CFO with a PhD from USA displays, they are barely wary of praising themselves.

> *"*XXX *takes data to another level of analysis, unlike any other analyst, because of her background in statistical modeling, data analysis, accounting, MBA, economics, finance, tax, financial management, cash cycle management, and domestic and international experience, she can shed light on areas that have not previously been noticed, develop solutions that no others have thought about, and provide insight that most others have not recognized."*

It is noteworthy how she defines her skills by underlining "others". Here, she differentiates herself from other consultants by highlighting her multiskills ,internationality and creativity.

The other female member, who is a professor from USA, begins her summary with a question and answers herself:

> *"Who Is* XXX*? An extraordinary teacher who helps business leaders and business students to understand and apply leading edge marketing and strategy concepts to the solution of business and market problems…… Is a recognized contributor to business knowledge with over 14 published articles and over 30 presentations to academic and professional audiences in the areas of market share strategy, pricing, and industrial marketing communications. Publications in industrial marketing have received over 50,000 requests for reprints."*

It is noteworthy that members with more academic experience mostly prefers this way of talk. Together with this following last example, this type of self- presenters have at least an MBA degree if not PhD. Identically, a member who works in the field of education presents himself as a public hero. He brings out his idealism in his summary:

> *"*XXX *combines his passion for education with business acumen to evaluate and explore opportunities that enhance students' experience and success. He believes that despite social, economic, and educational challenges, students should have the opportunity to acquire post-secondary knowledge and skills to move our society forward."*

His last sentence reflects a social evolutionary perspective which implies that accumulation of such experiences would lead brighter future. In conclusion, presentation of the self in these texts can be categorized according to the use of pronouns. They provide a signal about their writers' motives and helps the reader to imagine who the probable audience is. Again, there are self promoters using first person singular pronoun, some of them modestly addressing employers while the rest agressively aims to attract prospective clients' attention. Second, there are neutral information providers who do not obviously promote themselves but only share personal facts. Finally, there are illeists using third person singular pronoun. Presenting themselves as celebrities, public figures or someone wanted is common in this group.

3.1.2. Rhetorical Construction: Aristo's Ethos, Pathos and Logos

The summaries taken from the data can also be seen as their writers' rhetoric. Each member of this online society, as analyzed above, constructs a set of meanings aiming specific target audiences. They bring out their special features to influence the audience in their mind. Either an employee or a future customer or a colleauge, this audience becomes a subject to this rhetoric. While veterans highlight their experiences, newcomers make their education or personal values more visible. Here, Aristo's elements of a rhetoric deserves a closer look. According to Aristo (1995), every rhetoric consists of three elements: Ethos, pathos and logos. To be specific, while logos means reasoning or argument, pathos indicates emotions. Final mode of the persuasion is the ethos which refers to the speakers' moral character and personal history. The framework provided remarkable data to develop a viewpoint from this perspective.

3.1.2.1. Ethos

Members of the community usually emphasize their personal characteristics and history. While some underline his/ her business background, some prefer to highlight his/ her academic formation. Moreover, having international experience, multiskills, diverse industry experience, hands-on experience are also commonly used to strengthen ethos mode. Finally, personal values such as trust, open-mindedness or team-work ability are stressed to make their moral character more impressive.

Though each specific element, which constructs ethos one after another, will be exemplified further below, one users' self presentation provides a general insight. An IT consultant from USA with 32 years of experience makes a self description by stressing his long, multi-skilled and multi-industrial experience:

> *"Over twenty five years experience in research and development, operations management, business development, marketing, business sector management and organizational development serving the private and government sectors, including, aerospace, defense, telecommunications, commercial electronics, medical device, and material science markets."*

Other than these features, internationality, references, academic background, hands-on experience and personal values are put forward as well to empower ethos.

3.1.2.1.1. Experience

Experience is the uppermost element in ethos construction. Whether used by self promoters, neutral informers or illeists, years of experience is strongly emphasized in personal summaries. While some users give the exact year of experience, some of them give it approximately. Descriptions like *"over my 21 year career", "with three decades experience", "… has over 25 years experience in …", "with in-depth and in-breadth knowledge of the wireless business and technology acquired over twenty-five years in industry"* or *"I am a management consultant with 25+ years experience"* are very common. The rest does not inform his/ her experience in numbers but uses adjectives such as *"vast", "broad", "high", "deep", "demonstrated",* and *"successful"*. All this representations aim to build an impressive ethos. Themessage isclear: *"I am not just an ordinary user but full of experience, be aware that I probably have already done it before what you are looking for."*

3.1.2.1.2. Diversity

Diversity is another strongly underlined element of ethos. Experience in diverse industries, areas, sectors and professions is commonly used to construct a more impressive ethos. To illustrate, a management consultant from UK with 42 years of experience and a relatively active user in the group, lists his diverse field of interests as *"health, utilities, infrastructure, energy, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, building materials and construction.*" Either pointed out in long sentences or listed in bullets, there are many more users who stress their experience in diverse environments. Expressions such as *"consulting experience in various industries", "my experience spans diverse industrial and commercial fields including energy, utilities,…", "working with the senior management of a wide range of public sector, commercial and industrial organizations, including ….", "I work primarily with companies in these industries:", "expertise areas include …"* and *"capabilities include solid experience in …"* are very prevalent. Industries from aerospace to chemicals, from manufacturing to digital marketing are specified in such phrases. However, some users do not specify which industries or sectors are experienced. For example, a president of a consultancy firm in Singapore with 50 years of experience, simply states that he has *"direct experience in more than 30 industries"*. Consequently, diversity is an indispensable tool to strengthen ethos of the speaker. The more diverse the experience is, the more attractive and persuasive the speaker becomes. Here, the connotative meaning is "I am not speaking for nothing, look how many different people bought what I sold."

3.1.2.1.3. Multiskilling

Other than experience in years and diverse fields, being multiskilled is also frequently underlined. This dimension is put into words as "roles, focuses, responsibilities and specialties". It is either expressed in a self-promoter mode (*"I provide facilitation of problem framing, advanced quantitative modeling for decision support & risk analysis, portfolio analysis & management, strategic planning, systems engineering. Other notable skills include simulation programming with Analytica"*) or in a neutral informer mode (*"Full P&L Responsibility covering Sales, Business Development, Marketing, Pre- and Post-Sales Support, Finance and Operations"*). An expression of a senior management consultant from UK illustrates how significant skillfulness is in developing an impressive talk.

> *"Armed with several specialist techniques, I can then assist them to make informed judgements of the role that technology should play in the realisation of future business objectives."*

The speaker of this quotation has more than 40 years of experience, and he is well aware that his diverse skills function as a gun in this risky environment. In other words, he presents himself as a commander who knows well when to use which armament. A senior female consultant from Vietnam and another senior consultant from USA, use multi- skillfulness to build a commander-talk, too. The former describes his ability to use them as *"by synergizing my multi- skill set of business acumen, strategy and business process expertise, leadership qualities and practical thinking"*. Similarly, the latter calls his set of skills as a *"composite"* and does not disregard his ability to use them in the right way.

Both multiskilling and diversity appear as signs of "continuity" which has an essential role in "enterprising the self" (DuGay& Salaman and Rees, 1996). To be more concrete, the self should be programmed to succeed in a changing environment and there are certain values, skills, and competencies which should be injected to the self in business life. Through this, a successful career continues without interruption. Especially, managers are expected to behave in particular ways to lead veloce fluctuations in global business environment. Likewise, participants here use their skills, and diverse experiences- together with other elements of ethos construction- to present themselves as a particular sort of people, which is self- entrepreneur.

3.1.2.1.4. Being International

Internationality is another remarkable dimension accentuated frequently in summaries. Majority of the data emphasize their global experience. A business development executive with 27 years of experience from USA, represents all aspects of internationality: *"GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE – I have helped clients establish and grow their businesses in Latin America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, and I'm fluent in both Spanish and English."* He is not only multi-lingual, but he has experience in various geographies and furthermore, his perspective, which is written with capital letters, is global. While there are many other users who specifically indicate which locations are included, some of them prefer to summarize it as *"multicultural background", "extensive international experience", "helping more than 35 global organizations", "in 36 countires worldwide", "geographical experience", "my international Professional career began", "multi- cultural, multi- lingual", "internationally recognised", "pioneered over 400 companies internationally".* Some examples indicate that it is not just a trivial expressed in watchwords but repeated again and again. Obviously, the more internationality is expressed, the more persuasive the rhetoric becomes. At the beginning of his summary, a senior manager in telecommunication industry from Australia says *"a comprehensive understanding of the Asia Pacific region, experience in working across and within cultures, leading diverse teams to add substantive value in challenging environments".* After several paragraphs, he makes another emphasis on his internationality: *"Extensive business experience in Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Japan as well as the Pacific but also with all other Asia-Pacific nations".* Furthermore, some of the users stress not just the experience but how internationally enriched their network is.

> *"My experience includes a three-year assignment starting up European operations and expanding in Asia while living in Brussels, Belgium. I maintain a personal, business and professional network throughout western Europe and the UK, and in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo, Jakarta, Sydney and Melbourne."*

By stressing international connections and avoiding localness, these participants highlight their flexibility. This reminds DuGay and Salaman's (1992) indication of "the discourse of the enterprise" which draws attention to the fact that customer-centric perspectives are inevitable to gain competitive advantage. Hereby, developing skills to increase consumer satisfaction becomes essential. Rather than undertaking roles assigned by the state or a company, the self should enterprise himself/ herself resiliently according to customer. Thus, internationality appears as a tool of self-enterprise. In conclusion, whether being temporal residents of other countries, or being multi-lingual, or being aware of cultural sensitivities, or becoming a member of a transnational corporation or finally a member of a global professional network; internationality is one of the mostly used elements in ethos construction.

3.1.2.1.5. Academic Background

Academic experience is also an essential element of personal summaries. All degrees, from MBA to PhD, are certainly underlined. It is presented like an attractive good on a display window. Sure there are academic people in the group who purely highligh their academic background. For example, an associate professor from Netherlands summarizes his profession as *"doing scientific research and teaching at university for more than 15 years".* There a few more users who simply put their academic position on their summaries. Jaquies Saint Pierre, for example, makes a list of his responsibilities at the university and adds his title- professor- while mentioning about his past experiences. His summary can be seen as a representation of an informative, objective, academic talk. He *"served as …"*, *"focused on …"*, *"conducted researchs on …"*, *"has been one of the first researchers to carry out studies on …"*. He uses a modest voice rather than ambitious.

However, those who have a graduate or post- doc degree but did not make his/ her whole career in the academy present this dimension more ambitiously. A female professor from USA who at the same time serves as a consultant describes herself as *"an extraordinary teacher who helps business leaders and business students to understand and apply leading edge marketing and strategy concepts to the solution of business and market problems".* Moreover, likewise a relatively junior business development professional from Canada does, MBA and Msc degrees can be presented as a proof of having *"in depth knowledge"*. Indeed, having an academic backround can become a tool of self- presentation. A senior management consultant from USA accentuates his academic side very enthusiastically:

> *"Twice a year, I teach at UCLA Extension's esteemed Technical Management Program. My most popular training programs are STRATEGIC THINKING AND PLANNING FOR LEADERS, STRATEGIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT, and REINVENT YOURSELF. Each summer, I teach EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE at the MIT Professional Institute. I'm founder of ManagementPro.com and the Strategic Planning Academy. My education includes a BS in aerospace engineering from the U of Washington, and an MBA from Harvard Business School, and learning daily from clients".*

Though academic value of this users' work is open to discussion, he obviously takes the advantage of academia to impress his audience. Similarly, a manager in retail industry from New Zealand highlights his academic background claiming that it *"enables him to deal with organizational challenges"*. In the same way, a senior management consultant from Germany puts his PhD degree forward and says that he has a *”consulting and research experience in academia and business in start-up, technology settings”.* Finally, he says that he promises an *“empiric approach”*. Beside promoting skills they gain after academy, this also reminds of Grey’s (2005) study on career as a project of the self. In this study, Grey draws attention to the fact that career is presented as a path to be followed for one’s own interest. Self should be sacrificed deliberately since the promise of career is worth it. In this environment where the self is enterprised step by step according to business needs, having academic degree increases the promise of this painstaking process. Though Grey’s study reveals the importance of the rating system in an audit company in specific, it also displays that evaluation in career making generally is crucial. Therefore, academic degrees, certifications and diploms help to create a comfort zone for these consultants. They ensure appreciation and satisfying ratings of potential customers. In consequence, academic skills have become frequently used tools in ethos construction. Having an academic touch increases credibility and users do not hesitate to promote this dimension.

3.1.2.1.6. Hands on Experience

All academic, multicultural and long-term experience have great value to construct an impressive ethos in this society. However, hands-on experience tends to be an important differentitation point. If the user relies on his/ her practice and believes that he/she has more than a sole theoretical mindset, then executive skills are emphasized by all means. As a director from telecommunications industry in USA states, *“hands-on technical ability, strategic analysis, industry vision, and organizational skills”* are worth to share. *“Best- practice”, “strategy practitioner”, “exceptionally hands-on”, “developing and* *implementing best strategies"* are similar phrases used frequently in summaries. Furthermore, as can be verified by the summary of a senior consultant from UK, there is a distinction between theory and practice.

> *"I am not a theorist: as a PRINCE 2 Practitioner, I am very 'hands on'. My accreditation has been recently refreshed."*

Although enthusiastically promoted academic background strengthens credibility, what is done in practice brings distinction. It drives the attention from knowledge to execution. Indeed, as will be analyzed further below, these summaries generally reproduce a talk which presupposes that mind and body are separate. It can be said that while academic degrees make mind more powerful, hands on experience empowers body. It is implied that being good at both of them makes the speaker the right choice for the audience. As a Vietnamese manager quotes, *"business mindset with hands-on experience"* makes him exceptional.

3.1.2.1.7. Being Recognized

Members usually support their promises by giving references and drawing attention to how well- recognized in certain environments they are. This tactic is preferred especially by illeists who present themselves as celebrities by using third single pronoun:

> *"Mr.* XXX *is a recognized thought leader, results oriented industry expert, published author, and sought after speaker with demonstrated experience in the areas of ..."*

Other examples like *"recognized contributor", "recognized thought leader", "member of the editorial board of …", "featured speaker", author of various articles on …", "Fortune 500 clients such as …", "trained in USA by the originators of the… concept", "award- winning leadership", "one of his studies has recently been published by… "* display how common using reputation and references is.

3.1.2.1.8. Personal Values

Final element used in ethos construction is personal values. It is very common to promote special features of their character to gain trust, attention and applause. The way they approach to their work and environment is frequently underlined. Summary of a senior business development consultant from Canada represents this motive in various dimensions:

> *"P.S. I am an innovative problem solver with effective cross functional team leadership skills, smart and creative, multitask and organized, high performer under pressure and short-notice demand, achievement-oriented, cool and friendly, and firmly committed to honesty and integrity."*

This is not the only one where values like honesty, friendliness or creativity are emphasized. Other examples like *"trusted strategy advisor", "initiating and fostering trusted relationships with decision makers"* or *"typically viewed by my clients as a trusted partner"* support the significance of trust and honesty in their values. Furthermore, speaker of the above example puts his communication skills forward through leadership and friendliness. Similar phrases like *"high standard of written and* *oral communications", "strong interpersonal skills", "ability to motivate staff to high degree of achievement", "an energetic, proactive leader with vision", "team oriented and proactive", "through coaching and facilitation help employees to become more proactive and work with a vision"* display how they are eager to have a leading role in their environment.

Being quick, effective; meeting deadlines, and working long hours are also noteworthy in personal promotion, especially when the audience is a possible employer. Members with higher hierarchical levels who do not aim employers' attention but possible clients prefer to emphasize their communication skills with customers.

Finally, discourse on some characteristics such as being *"creative", "flexible", "energetic", "entrepreneural", "proactive", "broadminded", "non- stop learner", "capable and transformational", "quick and eager learner", "passionate about exploring", suggesting "feasible solutions", "solving business dilemmas"* show that how armoured these members to environmental threats and risky processes are. In other words, they make a promise to fix uncertainties, problems, stagnation and tedium.

3.1.2.2. Pathos

Discussion hitherto has provided insight about ethos dimension in this online community's talk. Pathos- triggering audience emotion- is the second important dimension in building an impressive rhetoric as well as ethos building elements listed above.

First of all, members explain how they are good at diagnosing. In other words, they give the impression of an understanding person. What is the case? What should be done in that situation? How difficult it must be?

> *"As a senior decision support advisor, I provide guidance, deep insights, and valuable solutions for senior decision-makers facing complex, high-risk problems related to strategic planning, risk management, project valuation & planning, and project portfolio analysis & management."*

This paragraph taken from a very active member with long experience and presidential level from USA exemplifies how important it is to give a snapshot of a possible problematic situation. The environmentis constituted as full of risks, dangers, complexity and threats. As a consultant, this user attempts to charm the desperate manager by promising help. What the manager in the possible case needs, -insight, guidance, support and solution- he will bring them all. So, an insightful and helpful talk is constructed to accord audience's emotions.

"His entrepreneur skills and courage are admirable when critical tough decisions on his companies were needed from time to time". This quotation also develops pathos by underlining emotions like courage, admiration and drawing attention to a very common situation: Fluctutations in business. Many members assert that global, technological and human challenges are responsible for these breakdowns and they know what needs to be done in these times. This is the mostly used tactic to empower pathos: Promising to save the client. At this point, providing a creative and alternative perspective is very common. Assertive phrases like *"thinking out of box", "working about innovation",*

"imagining possible futures", "generating new ideas", "designing the future", "providing insight about which you probably had not thought" are unreservedly used. They emphasize their creative, imaginative, transformative, problem solving power to strengthen pathos dimension.

3.1.2.3. Logos

Final mode of persuasion is logos, according to Aristo. This refers to arguments in the talk which help the speaker to make a reasoning. At the same time, speaker shares his knowledge about the issue by giving facts, figures and explanations. Indeed, members of this online society usually explain what they understand from strategy in general and why they think this way is the most satisfying one.

A very active LinkedIn user and a consultant with long experience from USA, one of the members provides a general perspective of strategy:

> *"What is Organizational Alignment? Having all parts of an organization working toward the same result while using the same frame of reference. What is Strategic Development? Achieving alignment at the strategic level (market, vision, mission, goals, culture, structure, & people)".*

Similarly, wide group of members provide information about strategy as a basis of their further arguments and promises. While some of them make this deductively as in the above example, some of them prefer a more inductive way of logos construction:

> *"Provided expert advices to senior management team on strategy focused Organizational Development, strategy implementation using strategy map*

and balanced scorecards, business processes re-engineering, job descriptions and performance measurements development".

As illustrated in this quotation, sharing names of special techniques- strategy tools- is very common. This is a way to persuade the audience that the speaker is aware of the topics trending among strategy people. To put it another way, they support their claim of excellence is supported by widely-accepted concepts.

".... but I now advise my clients on answering the questions of why and how business transformation should be best effected, and with it change programme governance, strategy and policy. For my clients, these changes are most often forced by external legislation, Regulatory directives, technological innovation (such as 3D printing), or competitive market forces".

They make reasoning by sharing facts and past experiences to convince why they prefer which strategic approach in what way.

3.2. Positions

Findings above showed how the members of this online community embody rhetoric by developing impressive ethos, pathos and logos dimensions. A further look on these talks brings particular patterns of communication to light. Each type of talk draws the attention to different kind of audience. In addition to the tone of their speak, their profile information provides a clearer understanding of these patterns. To be specific, their location, level of education, past experiences, references, and position in the company obviously affect the way they communicate with their audience.

In this web of communication, 4 groups are identified. Each group drops a hint of its members' personal profile, target audience and self positioning. Furthermore, they are shaped according to the degree of power in global business world. Here, an elaboration is required. As will be seen further along, global world order is perceived as the domination of the West in this community. In other words, there are developed and developing countries and strategy tools are shaped in Western societies. This means that the more a strategy professional is a part of those who generate cult practices of strategy and business, the more powerful position they gain. To put it another way, transnational corporations, business giants or business schools of Western society are at the center and members position themselves in relation to this hierarchy. Thus, groups are identified according to their distance to center and periphery.

3.2.1. Center of the Center: Gatekeepers

First group is center of the center. Both profile information and way of talk display that speakers of this group are the elites of the community. They target to communicate within similar type of groups or already have several experiences with business elites. They work in high positions or own their companies in Western countries. Moreover, they are graduates of universities in UK, USA or Australia including Oxford and Harvard.

"I have enjoyed senior roles within UK Government and the European Commission including writing publications, managing projects, chairing working groups etc." says a graduate of Oxford Business School and chairman of EU Working Group on Intellectual

Capital. He clearly defines his *"extensive experience"* as available for bankers and investors. That is to say that he targets those at the center as a strategy person of the center. Likewise, a Harvard graduate with 32 years of experience describes his profession as *"strategist, master facilitator and planning pro"* and he exemplifies center of the center position with his academic degree, inhabitancy and references:

> *"Fortune 500 clients such as DirecTV, Timex, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman call me to bring fresh solutions and train their managers and engineers in best practice thinking. Government agencies like the US Department of Energy invite me to guide their strategic planning teams. The national research laboratories including Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore, and Sandia have invited me to assist with complex issues numerous times".*

Refering to high scope experiences makes center of the center communication more visible as well as highly ranked clients, international organisations or state missions. To illustrate, an executive consultant with more than 45 years of experience in Melbourne describes his previous responsibility as *"heading management consulting unit in $400 million enterprise, reforming a corporate real estate function responsible for managing $800 million of assets, identified savings of $2 million, while revenue from vulnerable Asian markets continued to rise above $60 million, in international marketing and client services"*. So, when he is speaking of management consulting, he is talking about millions of dollars and his achievements in giant corporations of Western societies.

There are many other examples of center of the center talk, graduates of well- known universites taking high level positions in from Commonwealth Bank to United States

Navy, from *"major pan- European organisations"* to *"UK- based global coaching groups"*. They are interested in high- growth business plans aiming to take attention of major investors or government fundings. They are there for big corporations to grow or to differentiate their business. Their prestigious education and experience is in the service of the business elite rather than start-ups or developing countries.

3.2.2. Periphery of the Center: Local Heroes

This position consists of those who present themselves as the hero of newcomers. To be spesific, their talk represent an attempt to communicate with start-up companies or small-scale businesses located in Western societies. They give hand to relatively modest companies to make them closer to the center. They *"lead teams penetrating many industries"* and *"help them become high performance groups"*. As many others, global experience is very valuable and they do not hesitate to promote it. However, their main concern is drawing attention of start-up companies of their countries. Unlike center of the center type of communication, periphery of the center people talk less assertively. For example, a consultant with PhD from Netherlands, summarizes his experience as *"consulting experience in various industries"*. Without any sign of ambition, he lists his specialties. One of these specialties is training which is underlined frequently by similar users of this group. A management consultant from USA describes himself as an assistant *"to develop, manage and execute strategy"* and features his training skills. He does not share his experience in other countries or he does not provide any evidence of his experience with top companies. Likewise, a management consultant with PhD degree, describes his field of interest as *"consulting and research experience in* *academia and business in start-up, technology settings"*. Furthermore, they are not there only for new companies but protecting medium-scale companies from technological challenges. To illustrate, a senior consultant from UK, promises *"extra added value"* to those who struggle with technological innovation such as academic publishing companies suffering from open access databases. In consequence, periphery of the center talk differs from center of the center talk in terms of speakers' field of interest, experience and ambition. This type of speakers have no experience with Fortune 500 companies or they have not executed huge government projects but they lead some processes of start-up companies in center.

3.2.3. Center of the Periphery: Missionaries

This type of talk is constructed by those who provide consultancy in peripheric locations. Mostly, they are not natives of these countries. Instead, they are educated and experienced in Western societies. Their strategy approach is formed in center. What is basically emphasized in this talk is internationality. To be specific, consultants from USA, UK, Australia or other Western Europe countries move to peripheric locations like Nigeria, Malaysia, Qatar or Vietnam. Some of them are multilingual. They help strategy people of that area to grow their business. At first glance, this seems as a professional relationship which becomes more common in a global business environment. However, their talk does not only provide information about this mutuality but imply an elevation. In other words, flow of information is asymmetrical and this is taken for granted. They take the burden of educating natives according to latest strategy practices and concepts. That is to say that strategy knowledge is produced in Western societies and they have the ability to bring them to the periphery.

A consultant from UK who *“has worked with a wide variety of international blue chip organisations across many industries and trained over 2000 managers in system dynamics”* led projects in Nigeria and Hong Kong. Likewise, a president of a consultancy firm in USA says that he *“has helped clients establish and grow their businesses in Latin America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East”*. A similar example of how the flow of information in this type of talk is from center to periphery comes from Australia. A consultant in telecommunication industry portrays his approach as *“a comprehensive understanding of the Asia Pacific region, experience in working across and within cultures, leading diverse teams to add substantive value in challenging environments”*. Another Australian consultant mentions how he *“trained the top management teams of organizations from Russia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Bhutan, Tanzania, Nigeria, Brunei and Indonesia. Trained in Asia cities the top management teams of more than 30 organizations”*. Before listing his experience in peripheric countries, he promotes his relations with *“Fortune 500”* clients and Harvard Business School and ability to speak Spanish and Poruguese. Furthermore, a similar consultant from UK who has experience in China and MENA(Middle East North Africa) region presents himself as *“organizations searching for a capable and transformational person / manager to help them grow in uncertain and hyper-competitive markets, will find their ideal candidate in G.. B..”*. Finally, a business development consultant from USA refers to his experience in Asia countries where he helped organizations *“from their inception”*.

As illustrated above, this talk implies a taken for granted perception of strategy: It is best learned and experienced in center regions. However, communication based on this assumption is not only made by strategy people from Western societies but also those who merely studied and worked for a certain period there. For example, a Malaysian IT consultant with an MBA degree from Australia underlines his *"multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and strong inter-personal skills"*. He also declares that he has *"built and motivated teams in consulting and sales to perform at their best and reach ambitious goals*". A similar example respresents all motivations behind this talk:

> *"A Vietnamese business professional with a good academic background in Strategic Marketing (Master's degree, Melbourne Uni, Australia) and International Business (Bachelor's degree, FTU, Vietnam).*
>
> *• Have 10 year diverse work experience of Asia regional exposure in Strategic Marketing, Consumer Marketing, Planning (Demand/Supply) and International Business with Piaggio (in Italy & Vietnam), Toyota (in Singapore) and Colgate-Palmolive (in Vietnam).*
>
> *• Capable of using English, Chinese (Mandarin) and Vietnamese.*
>
> *• Possess a regional business mindset with hands-on experience in Asia environment, plus a solid understanding of the comprehensive regional (cross-border) business picture which is mainly integrated by Strategic Planning, Sales, Brand Marketing, Network Development and Supply Chain."*

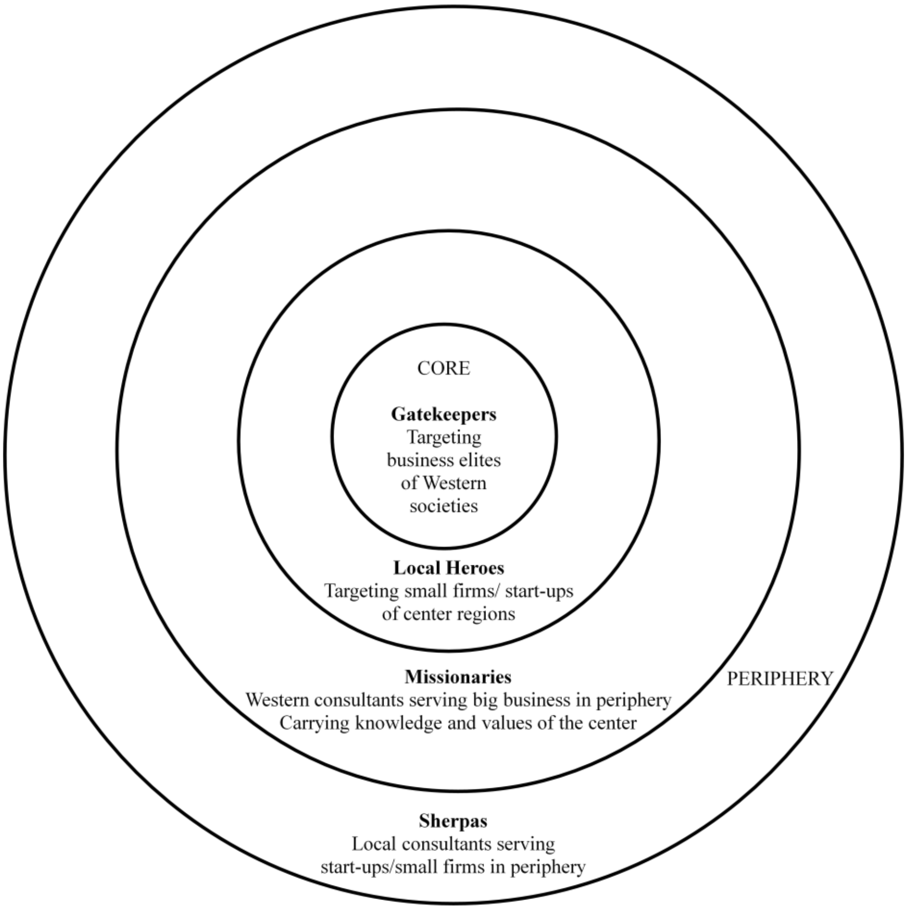
To sum up, there is no hint of mutual flow of information. Instead, strategy knowledge is produced and diffused in center regions, and disseminated from center to periphery by working for global companies or directly leading their consultancy. Moreover, there is not any sign of knowledge produced by and spread from peripheric regions to the center. By education and/ or professional experience, center is the dynamo of this flow.

3.2.4. Periphery of the Periphery: Sherpas

This final group consists of consultants who work for start-up companies or small and/ or medium scale businesses in third world countries. They are local people of periphery. Though they might have international experience or limited connection to global companies they rather speak to local companies. Though they reflect their ambition to attract the audience, their profile is not as assertive as others since their target is more modest. To illustrate, an owner of a business development company from Egypt describes himself as *"keen to develop areas of my particular expertise in strategic planning and ready to play a major role in the direction and growth of start up businesses, open a new window of opportunities for those looking into or out of the markets in MENA region and drive their businesses into new levels of profitability and success"*.

There are also less experienced strategy people in periphery who set an example to this group. They have neither international experience nor degree from center universities. While they depict their career goals enthusiastically, their background is not as impressive as others. It would not be inconvenient to assume that they use the language of the center to influence local audience. To be specific, they aim to convince the audience that they are qualified enough to actualize what they promise. For this to be possible, they use a similar code which is also commonly used in the center. For example, an Israeli marketing manager in telecommunication industry with 13 years of experience has the command of the strategy language, using concepts like *"matrix managing"* or *"value chain"*. However, his experience and audience is not in the center. Furthermore, some of them stay silent. They do not make self promotion but just provide information of their region and expertise. For instance, an Iranian manager in automotive industry with 10 years of experience just leaves comments about strategy tools such as resource based view but does not list his personal experience. Furthermore, a Brazilian professor who also offer consultancy services only puts that *"he has experience in the area of administration acting mainly in the following themes: Scenarios and business strategy; Logistics and Quality Control".* Another commonality of this group is their English is not as fluent as others with a few exceptions. It is regular to have spelling errors and sentence fragments.

Figure 1



Source: Author

3.3. Paradigms

Paradigms are observed which underlie personal summaries and comments on strategy tools. In other words, texts are based on certain worldviews. First of all, strategy in general is described on the basis of two paradigms. While the first one presupposes that it is all about competition, conflict, survival and defeat, the second paradigm is based on innovation and creativity. Second paradigm is rational modern action which reflects reliance on predictability, measurability, efficiency and determinism. Final paradigm is globalisation which embody expressions full with presupposition of the dominance of Western societies.

3.3.1. Strategy

Personal summaries and comments on strategy tools shed insight into these people's understanding of strategy. To make a depiction of their point of view, they use some pre- descriptions. The words, phrases, expressions they use indicate their taken for granted imaginaries about strategy in general. To be specific, there are two paradigms which determine the form of their speech. On the one hand, there is "strategy as war" paradigm which is based on competition and which makes the strategy person speak as a "warrior". On the other hand, market position is not the pre-assumption of those who speak from the "strategy as genesis" paradigm on which speakers embody a "motivator" talk. Each of them reflect different conventions. However, both paradigms come in the texts through specialties, strategy definitions and promises made to the audience. Here, it is necessary to note that these paradigms are not irrelevant with strategy approaches reproduced in literature before. Especially, Whittington (2001)'s models provide counterpart ideas to these paradigms. Nevertheless, it is the way they express their perception of strategy which makes a distinction between paradigms found here and models produced before.

3.3.1.1. Strategy as War

This paradigm is based on competition. This competition occurs in a market and this market is full of dangers and challenges. The most underlined challenge is uncertainty. A founder of a business development company from UK describes himself as *"manager* *to help grow in uncertain and hypercompetitive markets"*. Not only his self portrayal but his comments on strategy tools are also shaped by this view. He stresses the significance of "*predictability*" and warns his audience against "*hurt*" and "*damage*" which might be caused by uncertainty. A similar consultant from USA focuses on the *"business environment"* which forces the company *"to respond to a change"* and likens strategic planning to *"a coordinator in pro football"*. Another consultant from USA also stresses the importance of *"uncertainty, complex, high risk problems"* and makes a promise on managing all these challenges. That means that all these strategy people make similar preassumptions and construct their language according to them. In this paradigm, it is competition in the market and challenges which may ocur in this uncertain environment.

> *"It is imperitive that a full industry & competitor analysis is performed in detail, which would highlight the driving forces, competitive position, strategic approaches/predicted moves of competitors, industry key sucess factors, etc. For each competitor, one wants to establish competitive scope, strategic intent, market share objective, competitive position, strategic posture (i.e. offensive or defensive) and finally their competitive strategy. "*

Here, it is all about competition. The definition of the situation and future suggestions are based on competitive environment. Thus, strategy is nothing but fighting in this war. An Israeli marketing person defines his job as "*monitoring competitors strategy and real-time activities, analyzing it's long and short term impact and translating it to strategic and tactical initiatives"*. It is not surprising that he also makes a promotion of his ability to arrange *"business war-games and workshops for management level"*.

Likewise, a manager in Australian telecommunications industry reinforces his use of strategy tools by adding that he does not *"go to war before checking on your level of troops and supplies"*. Thus, strategy is perceived as gathering information about in and out of organisation and determining action according to them. Indeed, a director of a management consultancy firm in Germany emphasizes the significance of *"making sense of fuzzy information"* and overcoming high conflict in complex environments. In brief, the promise of the speakers of this paradigm is *"gaining competitive advantage against company's competitors"* and *"fighting off the front foot rather than than falling back"* as these citations from two different consultants from Iran and USA justify. It is a warrior's talk who knows the tactics of the enemy very well.

3.3.1.2. Strategy as Genesis

Second paradigm which reveals itself in these personal summaries is strategy as genesis. While the other paradigm -strategy as war- distinguishes itself with competitor-centric perspective, this one becomes prominent with innovation based attitude. To be specific, this type of talk is not based on concepts like competitive advantage, market share, beating the competitor, overcoming uncertainties, solving high risk problems in agressive business environment but innovation, entrepreneurship, new approaches, creating opportunities. This also means that the talk produced in this paradigm is not as agressive as in strategy as war paradigm. It would not be inappropriate to claim that this talk is more feminine while the other is more masculine. In other words, the promises have been made in this paradigm is about making a new environment from scratch while the former one commits advantage in an existing dangerous ecology.

To illustrate, an Australian consultant with 50 years of experience defines his goal as *"to help businesses and not for profit organisations to DESIGN THEIR FUTURE, through provision of information, advice and tools for improving organizational governance, corporate strategic planning, designing requisite organisational structures, and developing managerial effectiveness"*. As is seen, his approach lacks a competition based worldview. Rather, he is interested in creative dynamics. Similar approach can be seen in another management consultant's list of specialties: ***"****Developing strategic plans that work, launching new project initiatives, aligning organization goals, improving internal process, developing measurable goals, building top-performing project management teams, creating productive cultures".* Thus, this paradigm requires a talk focused on making something new, promising a development based on innovation and creating added value. Phrases like *"open a new window of opportunities", "thinking out of the box with proven record of innovation", "another viewpoint", "formulating strategies to seize the opportunities created"* are not surprising. A retail manager from New Zealand emphasizes his skills in applying *"strategic, creative and innovative tools to transform a conventional organization into one which better meets the organization's purpose; one which is more sustainable and thus more attractive to be part of".* Here, "*transform*" is a key word to understand this paradigm. It represents the basic promise in this paradigm. There are other speakers who prefer to use *"next level", "new levels of profitability","organizational transfromation for improved business outcomes", "acting beyond industry boundaries and constantly seeking new opportunities"* but making a similar promise: Taking action to create one step further. Here, "*motivation*" deserves a closer look. This paradigm is not based on competition but innovation. Therefore, speakers are producing a "*motivator talk*" to their audience. They make sure that they can set the right vision, according teams to that, and progress together. For example, an Israeli manager describes himself as *"a charismatic manager contributing to employees commitment and motivating them to excellence"*. Likewise, an IT consultant from USA asserts that *"motivating and empowering organizations comes naturally, which allows my organization to achieve business objectives aligned with a bold strategic agenda with minimal churn and maximal innovation, efficiency and effectiveness"*. Another IT consultant from USA who explains creativity as *"the art of the possible"* also stresses the significance of motivation. According to him, creative leadership is necessary to *"adapt to human situations and unforeseen problems"*.

It is also noteworthy that three of the six female members of this community speaks from this paradigm. A CFO from USA with a PhD degree promises *"providing insight about which you probably hadn't thought"*. Likewise, a market research director again from USA and with PhD degree claims that she *"helps clients think in the context of tomorrow to plan their brands, strategies, solutions, and missions for a possible world that they want to help shape, not just the world that is today"*. The last one draws attention to the power of entrepreneurship, emhasizing the importance of *"seeing new opportunities"*. All of them are concerned with defining "possible futures" by bringing "alternative viewpoints". As one of them states, *"imagining and creating how these forces might interact to generate a new reality"* is the root idea of their approach and promise.

Speaking of approach, making a distinction in strategy based on competition and innovation is nothing new in strategy literature. However, it is the way they speak about them, making promises to the audience according to these distinctions and embodying different self presentations which make these approaches worth to name as paradigms. Some users even refers to literature in explaining their attitude. A consultant from UK asks *"are we still successful without our competitors?"* as he puts *"resource based view"* forward and criticising competition based approaches. Moreover, a business development consultant from Canada also remarks the importance of *"school of thoughts"* which determine the way strategy is defined, according to him. Though these two paradigms have already been discussed in strategy literature, following citation illustrates how it is interpreted deeply:

> *I'm having difficulties to understand why businesmen always look at issues from competition view. Why competition is our default thinking method? I'm not telling let's forget everything about the competition, but we shouldn't let the concept of the competition manipulates our percetion of reality, and also I don't believe competition or competitive terminology is the only answer of our all questions. Competitive explanation of "resource" and "capability" enables us to make functional and practical explanations, and these explanations are also more feasible then their conceptual equivalents.*

3.3.2. Rational Modern Action

There are considerable amount of texts which embody a talk of rational modern human. Both personal summaries and comments on strategy tools reflect signs of controling time, space and human behaviour. According to Kant, rationality is "being guided by the ideas of reason, logic, mathematics, regularity, calculability, coherence, systemic interconnectedness, and so on" (Lash and Whimster 2006, 173). Indeed, strategy people here provide expressions of rational paradigm adequately. To be specific, "predictability and efficiency lead to the demand for formal rationality" (Lash and Whimster 2006, 30) and actions of them are characterized by these motives. In other words, it is remarkable to observe that actions can almost be calculated rationally in this community, at least, this is how they express themselves. Here, rational modern action is embodied by accentuating predictability, time management, tangibility, efficiency, separation of manageable units and distinguishing plan and action (determinism).

3.3.2.1. Predictability

Predictability becomes visible especially in defining certain strategy tools and making promise in personal summaries. Here, time is a significant component of prediction process. Thus, understanding how these people perceive time and what meaning they attribute are essential. First of all, time mostly reflects a lineer sense of evolution. As one consultant explains his competence of *"identifying a focus for continous improvement"*, time is taken as a line on which strategy determines a starting point and promises an end. A CEO of a business development company in Oman reflects a similar mindset about time: *"Resources and capabilities can be bench marked and its done periodically. This is the starting fundamental point in strategic planning"*. Thus, time is defined as something to be started, measured and organized in periods. Furthermore, an academic from UK shows a similar approach to time when he explains industry life cycle. According to him, it is all about *"recognizing the evolution through time of uses,* *applications and further developments"*. Likewise, an IT consultant from USA uses phrases like *"addressing history", "anticipating future", "existing and evolving markets"*. Therefore, it would be convenient to claim that time is related to a lineer sense, cumulation and continuity.

This portrayal of the perception of time is associated with predictability. In other words, it is usual to observe claiming a sharp vision on future, taking a part in this evolution and controlling flow of time. To illustrate, a director of a marketing research company from USA highlights her ability to predict the future while describing her specialties:

> *"I seek to help clients think in the context of tomorrow... to plan their brands, strategies, solutions, and missions for a possible world that they want to help shape, not just the world that is today. That requires being able to think outside of one's own perspective and (perhaps more difficult) to identify and acknowledge emerging themes and forces and use them to extrapolate to possible futures--imagining and creating how these forces might interact to generate a new reality".*

As can be seen, such assertions represent more than a prediction. In a way, it is an intervention in the flow of time and shaping own reality. However, creating next level is based on making predictions. Thus, it becomes a reflection of controlling time and behaviour. According to another director from USA, *"a team can build a multi-decision matrix that becomes the foundation of contingency strategic themes, initiatives, and innovations based on these alternate realties and the probability of occurrence"*. By the same token, a president of a consultancy firm in USA emphasizes his guidance, *"that* *improve the firm's ability to anticipate and manage risks associated with strategic planning, capital allocation, and project selection & management"*. Another similar consultant places his main promise on taking action to shape the future: *"This begins with future visioning, describing where they would like to be in 3 to 5 years. Then identify success measures to sharpen that vision"*. Here, "*measure*" is a keyword. It is a tool of rational thinking, albeit the promise is emotional. Indeed, it is possible to make assumptions on future however their rational approach differentiates them. A president in health industry from USA makes a distinction of belief and empirical sense and criticises those who use SWOT analysis without empiric way. In a similar way, a consultant from Germany promotes his "*making sense of fuzzy information*" ability and adds that he uses "empirical and pragmatic approach". A professor from Canada also defends a positivist approach. While he says that "*qualitative understanding*" is very important, he claims that quantitative approach is essential in "*prediction efficacy*". Although he does not see "*definitive quantitative assessments*" as a "*magic formula*", he gives a superior meaning to empirical approach.

Either quantitative or not, predictability is one of the main components which makes a rational paradigm dominant. Phrases like "I *help my clients develop and complete business planning processes that start with exploration of future market, regulatory and macroeconomic scenarios*" indicate a predictive analysis rather than an oracle statement. It assumes that time and action can be measured and explored. Though they might be overrating their skills, the way they present it is built on rational codes.

3.3.2.2. Measurability

As discussed above, strategy people of this community usually promote themselves by claiming that they "know" how to give what they need. One of the mostly given promise is knowing how to overcome uncertainties. In other words, they assert that they know how to be the winner in this competitive environment. Moreover, it is also common to promise a gainful innovation process. Apart from their commitments, what remarkably repeated is their preassumption of "knowing" what they suggest. This means that they present a key to knowledge which cannot be easily proved. Here, it is possible to observe that they set a good example of positivism which can summarized as a "sensory experience of knowable external reality" (Spender 1996) since they support their supposition with measurable, even tangible information. This does not mean that they promise the measurable but they use measurability to strengthen their image as the one who knows. For example, a director of a consultancy firm in Qatar uses strategy tools as an instrument to rationalize his claims. Here, SWOT is his favourite but only if it is prepared "*evidence-based*", then it becomes "*powerful in evaluating and formulating a strategy*". Likewise, a consultant from USA describes his ability as "*developing measurable goals and creating productive cultures*". Again, knowledge is offered as something measurable and related to productivity which is not far away from calculability. Furthermore, an owner of a business development company in Egypt portrays himself as someone who can "*offer tangible and results- oriented consulting services*". Interestingly, academic background can also be associated with this mindset. A manager from New Zealand underlines his academic skills when he promises "*delivering tangible impact in terms of bottom line business performance*". Whether supported by academic degrees or not, being able to "*make research", "evaluation",* *"feasability studies", "predictive analytics"* and *"trend monitoring*" are offered even intangible assets are in question, as a president of a business development company in USA does.

In conclusion, it is very common to relate strategy with goals and defining procedures to reach them. Here, measurability is typically used to emphasize external information about the environment and internal information about resources. Thus, strategy people make sure that their audience are convinced how they know what they know.

3.3.2.3. Efficiency

Any attempt to explain what is modern rational behaviour in organisations would indispensably include efficiency (Freeman 1999). Since strategy people mostly set profitability as a goal to their audience and because it is closely linked to efficiency and productivity, it would be convenient to claim that rational action is often put into words by the members of this community. By efficiency, one should understand "maximum potential output obtainable from the input" (Fried, Lovell and Schmidt 2009). Indeed, many consultants in this community promise to guide "*how to focus the use of their resources to gain maximum return*", as an IT consultant from UK promises. Similar to her, another IT consultant from USA promotes his skills "*achieve business objectives aligned with a bold strategic agenda with minimal churn and maximal innovation, efficiency and effectiveness*". Especially those who commented on Resource Based View warn their audience not to waste resources if the outcome is not worth pursuing. Here, their self promotion come into play. They underline their ability to manage the whole process "*efficiently*" and "*productive*" so that they can increase profits. It is not surprising for a manager who highlights his "*cost-efficiency, cost reducing, quality optimizing*" skills presenting himself this way:

> *"Disciplined in both start-up and turnaround management roles - have propelled multiple business units to #1 in sales profitability and customer satisfaction division-wide while simultaneously lowering shrinkage and staff turnover to all-time lows."*

Another president of a technology company in USA claims that he "has *always directed technology development with a solid business perspective leading to profitability and rapid commercialization of concepts into products*". Thus, they assume that their audience is keen to hear any suggestion about "profitability". It is their allegedly comprehensive knowledge of efficiency and productivity which assures this claim. Again, homo economicus (Persky 1995) talk dominates texts to display how rational they are able to behave when it comes to make profits.

3.3.2.4. Determinism

Strategy people of this community generally assume that strategy is something to be planned first and done afterwards. To be spesific, they provide themselves a role as a planner of future actions, if necessary, they can also take a part in realization of foreseen actions. However, what is taken for granted here is the idea of the separation of mind and body. In other words, they speak with a deterministic voice. Here, gaining a deeper insight about determinism is necessary. First of all, it is a lineer perspective with cause and effect relationship (Feigl and Meehl, 1974). That means action is the physical outcome of what is planned in brain. Thus, cartesian thinking prioritizes the mental to the physical. This duality of mind and body (Clegg, Carter and Kornberger 2004) becomes a representation of strategy literature where strategy people are portrayed as the brain and co-workers of other departments who implements the plan are the body (Bourgeois 1984). Indeed, this mindscape is very common inn these texts. A very active user of this group, who is a president of a technology company in USA, explains strategy with a rational choice process. He says that "*the choices of what activities and their relationships is part of strategy, the actual activities and what they are trying to do is the plan*". In a sense, strategy is defined in a duality of "*actual activities"* and *"choices of what activities*". A similar mindset is reflected by an Omanese president of a business development company, who prioritizes "*setting the objectives*" and then puts "*implementing the best strategies*" in explanation of his approach. A finance director from UK explains strategy in the same manner. According to him, strategy is first "*clarifying goals and enhanced decision making, identification of critical success factors, prioritizing what needs to be done*" and then implementing them.

It can be typically observed that people of this community put themselves for a "*design", "resedign", "architecture", "planning", "review", "determination", "formulation", "visioning*" of strategy. "*Actualization", "execution", "executive coaching", "implementation", "use*" of strategy is presented as side benefit. For example, a financial consultant from South Africa lists his "*key competencies*" as "business strategy architecture and design, solutions design and implementation, data architecture and application management**, v**ision to architecture and execution". According to another consultant, who works in Singapore; quickness and efficiency only comes when "*strategy is used to determine how to meet the objectives of a business case*". In addition to this duality of mind and body, strategy is defined by phase by phase. First step is identifying the environment and internal structure, then comes formulating the strategy and final step is the execution. Otherwise, it hard "*to seize the opoortunities*", as a consultant from UK proposes. A very senior consultant from USA defines strategy as "*the same frame of reference*" while "*all parts of organization working toward the same result*". Moreover, they might also present themselves as checkers of these references. Other than creating the formula as an "*initial step*" and coaching its execution, they promise a monitoring role to "*ensure that strategies are planned, controlled and executed properly*", as a senior marketing director from UK asserts.

In conclusion, strategy is generally reflected as something to be planned, determined, designed first and implemented or executed afterwards. This determinism related to other points discussed above- efficiency, measurability and predictability- conjures up a mindset of rational modern paradigm.

3.3.3. Globalisation

It is hard to bring a reductive definition to globalisation which has been defined and redefined too many times especially after the second half of the twentieth century. It has even be stated that the phenomenon itself has a longer history than the popular use of the term (Bhagwati, 2004). However, it has often been discussed that it might appear as something imposed from West to East, from developed to developing countries (Curran and Myung 2000; Scholte 2000) and it becomes a dependence relationship rather than interdependence (Petras 1999; Bhagwati 2004) . In other words, it connotes more than pure cross- border transactions, or internationalization of information, transportation, finance and political institutions in general. Sure, this emphasis on Western societies' dominance is only one dimension in criticising globalisation. However, expressions of people in this strategy community commonly reflect this dimension.

As a matter of fact, this community is global because it is on the web and it is open to every strategy person around the world. Thus, due to the nature of this medium, which has been deeply analyzed in the literature review section, this group itself is an outcome of the technological aspect of the globalisation. Of course, texts used in this analysis are a result of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is hard to claim that each member is as advantaged as the other especially when MBA degrees taken in Australia or relationship with a UK company is promoted more eagerly. To illustrate, a Malaysian investor who especially highlights his "*internationality*" fills his summary with past experiences in Western companies such as New Balance, Carrefour and Giant. He also says that he works with a "*French partner*" in his company which signifies Western investments in Malaysia. In other words, globalisation appears as a flow of information and investment from West to East. Likewise, a Vietnamese marketing person who has a master degree from Australia shares a list of companies he has worked- full with some global firms originated in USA, Italy and Japan- to take attention to his internationality. Though locations has been Vietnam and Singapore- and temporarily Italy- labour is devoted to developed countries. Therefore, a considerable strategy knowledge and experience are processed in global companies.

It is also considerable how members from Western countries take a role in strategy consultancy in periphery countries. A founder of a business development company from UK shares his experience with start up companies in China and MENA. There are many other examples showing consultancy brought from center to the periphery. Practices in Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, Nigeria, Tanzania, Brunei, Kazakhstan and Philippines are mentioned by consultants from Western societies. Other than work experience, they also tell that they are visiting these countries as speakers of certain conferences or as trainers of particular projects. On the other hand, there is only one consultant who is from Qatar and saying that he attends conferences in Australia and Canada other than Iran, Thailand and Mongolia.

In conclusion, globalisation appears as a lineer relationship between developed and developing. Though this community consists of strategy people from many different regions, majority of the educational background and work experience indicates globalisation as a Westernization. No success story of establishing business in a developed country by a strategy person of developing country is mentioned. Furthermore, transferring academic experience from developed to developing is common while there is no evidence of the reverse. These facts indicate that communication in this community is based on a strategy knowledge-both theoretically and practically-shaped by the developed countries.

3.4. Binary Oppositions

Texts circulating among this community include remarkable binary oppositions which mean “systems of pairs come into opposition to create meaning”, according to Derrida

(Stohl and Mumby 1991). Focusing binary oppositions make it possible to infer dominant meanings used with its opposite. Furthermore, it is also possible to find out which contradistinctions are articulated together apart from detecting which one is privileged (Cooper 1989). Thus, hierarchy or joint use of opposite meanings have been revealed. First of all, the tension between theory and practice have typically been expressed. Especially, which tool is presented as useful and which one is seen unpractical could be traced further by examining the duality between theory and practice. Moreover, newness and oldness of strategy tools have also been emphasized frequently. This also connotes relevancy of tools and ability to defy time. In this sense, examining agent and patient relationships is also possible. While some subjects are glorified in explaining certain actions, dicredited ones also become apparent. This duality is important in understanding meaning attribution in this community. Finally, as a consequence, the way these people present themselves and evaluate strategy tools will become more prominent.

3.4.1. Theory and Practice

Both theory and practice are often used in this community either in self-presentations or defining strategy tools. In general, these two oppositions are used as complimentaries to strengthen personal capabilities in personal summaries. As stated above, academic knowledge is very valuable and it is enthusiastically shared if there is any academic degree and/ or award. At the same time, "*hands on*" experience is promoted keenly and used as a differentiation point. However, when they speak about strategy tools, they glorify practice and interpret theory as insufficient and absent. In other words, the more practical knowledge the tool covers, the more valuable it becomes. Otherwise, they label it as weak and unsatisfactory. Thuse, there are not only one use of binary oppositions: On the one hand, they articulate them together without constructing any hierarchy especially in their summaries. On the other hand, they prioritize practice in evaluating tools.

To give an example of coherent use of theory and practice in personal summaries, a founder of a consulting company in USA concludes his statement with emphasis on "an *MBA from Harvard Business School and learning daily from clients*". Here, both academic degree and everyday knwoledge are glorirified coherently. It connotes that without former or latter, he would not be as competent as he asserts. More interestingly, a Malaysian investment consultant declares that he is "*always in ready mode to reflect on all the received and experiential wisdoms painfully acquired during his career for the best possible solution*" but also drawing attention to his MBA degree. At this point, wisdom is taken as something to be gained by theory and practice, though difficulties during practices are favoured more. A similar consultant from Israel who also underlines his MBA degree says presents himself as a "*manager with over 12 years of successful experience, bringing to the table diverse experience in marketing and strategic planning*". Like him, a CFO from USA stresses her "*exceptionally hands-on*" experience while she also informs her audience about her PhD degree. It is also possible to observe that theory and practice can be used as "*academia and business*" as a consultant also with a PhD degree from Germany declares in defining his experience. In the same way, a Vietnamese marketing manager defines himself as a "*business professional with a good academic background*" and adds that he "*possesses a regonal business mindset with hands-on experience in Asia environment*". There is only one exception who use this binary opposition in favour of practice. A senior consultant from UK –with an MBA degree- states that "*he is not a theorist"* but *"very hands on*". However, this is the one and only favourited use of practice in personal summaries. Thereby, theory and practice appear as a commonly used binary opposition with no dominance one over another in personal summaries.

In evaluation of strategy tools, though, practice is obviously favoured over theory. In other words, the more a strategy tool has a practical use, the more it is favourited. Theory even can become pejorative since they imply that it is always different in real life. For example, a president of a technology company from USA separates planning of strategy and execution of it:

> *"It is essential to distinguish between the Strategic Plan or Execution Plan and the Strategy itself. Thus, the choices of what activities and their relationships is part of Strategy, the actual activities and what they are trying to do is the plan".*

He claims that Value Chain is a useful tool in managing all these processes. In a similar way, a financial consultant from South Africa favourites SWOT claiming that it helps in closing the gap between what is planned to do and what has already been done. Thus, SWOT is favourited because it is "*actionable*" or "*useful*" as other consultants label. Similarly, Core Competences are told by a senior consultant that "*for some high performing companies their core competences are making money!*". Furthermore, a Malaysian tourism consultant says that "strategies should be translated in to actual working". He adds that only tools like Value Chain, Balance Scorecard and KPI contribute remarkable since they are "*useful*" and "*workable*". In all these examples, it is convenience in practice which is underlined rather than the tool itself. SWOT, for example, can also be evaluated negatively when it is not "*actionable*" enough. Furthermore, there is a distinction of popular use of the tool and usefulness of the tool in real performance.

> *"Not all approaches to formal strategic planning are useful. Considering 'tools' like Porter's Five Forces, experience curves, mission statements, SWOT, scenarios, and portfolio matrix methods like BCG, and all the other things listed in the AIM study certainly may be popular. I have found scant evidence of the value of these 'tools' as techniques separate from a coherent process or system for guiding managers in their deliberation on decisions about the future of their organizations. On the contrary, I believe some of these procedures may be harmful to performance".*

These are words of a management consultancy executive who has been in the business since 50 years. A similar emphasis is made by a professor from Netherlands:

> *"Quite prototypical reinforcing loop: I use a method because many people already use it, my usage is increasing the number even further, attracting others to also use it... But there are limits to growth even for the usage of strategic methods: either at one point everyone uses a method (happily) or there is a collapse in its use... Reasons: fashion, inadequateness, better methods becoming available. Seems to be a rather "sticky" process though...*

> *(so, strategists are still using the "good-old" SWOT without much reflecting on it)".*

In short, strategy tools are criticised if they are too "abstract" but favourited if "*applicable in practice of operations*". Sure, users of the tools are also play a great role in deciding whether it is applicable to practice or not. To illustrate, an Omanese CEO of a business development company questions the implementer rather than the strategy tool itself:

> *"Again managers and academics blame the five forces theory (P5F"s) theory. I am also one of those people who blame the SWOT analysis. Its not that P5F's or SWOT analysis is bad or ineffective. I know senior managers who don't know how to use these theories so what you say now?"*

In sum, theory and practice appear as the main binary opposition in such texts. Though it might become a complimentary duality in self-expressions, it becomes a reflection of a conflict in evaluation of tools. This means that theoretical knowledge of strategy is only valuable if supplied with practice. In the field, the more practical knowledge one has or the more applicability a tool offers, the more valuable it is in this community.

3.4.2. The New and The Old

Another outstanding binary opposition frequently used in texts is new and old. Unlike theory and practice, which are used both in personal summaries and in defining strategy tools, this opposition is only used in comments on the tools. To be specific, the tension between new and old is based on time. Neither being outdated nor being brand new is meaningful. It is a strategy tool's relevancy, toughness and resistance which brings success. This means that tools are evaluated according to a time- sensitive context. For example, SWOT, which is the most circulated strategy tool among this community, is widely respected since it is claimed to be resistant to time. No matter how applicable or useful it is, most users appreciate SWOT analysis for always being relevant in strategy societies. A professor from Netherlands, who warns his audience about "*fashionable tools*" which may "*collapse*" in future, labels SWOT as "*good-old*". He implies that it is not as risky as many other tools which may already become obsolete during implementation. On the other hand, SWOT analysis will always be there. Similarly, a management consultant from UK gives credit for tools which are still "*valid and useful*", exemplifying Porter's work and SWOT. "*Even SWOT has a place!*" he says, while describing recently risen tools as "*abstract, fluffy and ultimately irrelevant*". Accordingly, one consultant from USA with an MBA degree and 30 years of experience and another one from UK also with an MBA degree and 30 years of experience, label SWOT as "*traditional*" and recommend its use. Thus, SWOT is usually seen as a timeless tool. Though it is not taken as a sceleton key which can open every door, its advantages are typically expressed time- independantly. As the point of view of a president of a technology company in USA indicates, SWOT gives the opportunity to realize what elements of the strategy may become irrelevant in recent future. Therefore, SWOT is vigorously qualified with its relevancy.

It is also possible to extract another binary opposition from time-based perspectives. As some users emphasize relevancy and "*sustainability*", binary use of time also represents a conflict between essence and form.

> *"I would talk about the dynamic nature of Strategy and that contrary to widespread belief, Porter's market forces are not "dead", you just need a newer concept of how to apply them, how to use them to look at future scenarios (relative to the scenario planning comments above) and especially how to reset what "sustainable" means for a particular market. Meet the new Guru, same as the old Guru".*

As this example indicates, they favour the essence of the tool. This is sustainable, according to them. The writer of this phrase implicates that labels, namings, representatives may change but core ideas maintain. However, sometimes "*new*" is glorified contrary to the "*old*". Independently of sustainability or relevant essences; new tools, concepts, implementations, technologies, perspectives may be favoured. To illustrate, a senior consultant from UK criticises Value Chain while also speaking highly of it. He praises the point of origin of this tool, however there are better tools nowadays.

> *"Porter's Value Chain was never designed to solve everything, but in today's world there are better tools : one I was exploring a few years ago*

was a Value Network, based on a systems thinking approach.. But that is worthy of another thread altogether".

Therefore, tools are tested with "*today's world*" point of view. Likewise, a professor from USA disapproves Scenario Planning and adds that she "*agrees that scenario analysis is important, but it fails the 'new' test*". She exemplifies a failure story of USA in oil industry which is caused by inadequacy of scenario planning. Furthermore, an IT consultant from USA defines his distinction as "*seizing new technologies and delivering innovative new software products that exploit the technologies to competitive advantage in the market*".

A senior marketing consultant from the UK informs his audience that he had *"achieved a great deal by using tools such as: Ansoff Growth Matrix, PESTLE, Porter's 5 Forces, Directional Policy Matrix, SWOT, 7Ps, Value Curve, Balanced Scorecard, NPD, Value Chain etc etc."*. He adds that none of these tools can be labeled as "*outdated*". This indicates a presupposition that tools may become obsolete. Moreover, it is their relevancy which makes them more valuable. In other words, a strategy tool is approved only if it can response to newer order of any market, business and environment. Thus, use of time in the form of binary oppositions very common in leaving comments on strategy tools.

3.4.3. Agent and Patient

All these summaries and comments on strategy tools allow the reader to infer a binary opposition based on agent and patient relationship. While some expressions are made by an active voice who sets himself/ herself as an agent, some are made with a passive voice where a passive voice can be heard. Moreover, a tool can be presented as an agent especially when they cause success stories. As Huckin points out, *"many texts will describe things so that certain persons are consistently depicted as initiating actions (and thus exerting power) while others are depicted as being (often passive) recipients of those actions"* (1997, 83). Indeed, this relation between agent and patient is noticeable among this community. First of all, personal summaries where these people usually present themselves as strong strategizers embodyagent speak. For example, a president of a technology company in USA says that he has *"always directed technology development with a solid business perspective leading to profitability and rapid commercialization of concepts into products"*. Hereby, he is the agent of several past successes and is going to lead future progress. On the other hand, other workers who will follow his strategy are positioned as patients. A similar speak is noticeable in the sentences of a consultant from USA who says that *"he is the principle solution architect of WBB's organizational informatics solution who brings years of experience helping more than 35 large global organizations navigate major transformations, realignments, and strategic resource staffing plans"*. He actively puts himself for a leading role to affect course of events successfully. In this speak, the organisation he offers service is the patient since heis the one who knows how to succeed. Actually, this attitude is very common in personal summaries. It is even possible to claim that most of the strategy people in this community set themselves as agents and position companies, co- workers and competitors as patients. As a matter of fact, the more actively they talk, the more leading role they desire. Sure there are passive speakers whose target audience obviously are employers, as stated in previous chapters. However, as also noticed earlier, strategizers see themselves as the brain and the rest is patients to follow their instructions.

Of course, there are also opinion leaders who are followed by these people. First of all, Michael Porter whose concepts are cited frequently, appears to be a common reference. Examples like *“using pertinent models like Porter’s Five Forces to gain more assurance”* or *“using generic strategies like Michael Porter’s low cost, differentitation and niche strategies”* conveys a patient role. Unlike their assertive personal summaries, discussions about strategy tools show that they also speak as patients. To illustrate, *“managers and academics blame the five forces theory, I am also one of these people who blame SWOT analysis”* says a CEO of a business development company based in Oman. Here, tools are blamed because of past failure stories and they portray themselves as victims of these instructions. Similarly, in one of the discussions made by a professor from USA, scenario planning is considered to be the reason of many unsuccessful inferences during oil crisis between USA and Arab countries. She implies that many strategy people looked ridiculous because of this tool. Again, tools are taken as agents and strategy community are the patients of these concepts. In consequence, self- presentations cover an agent talk while discussions about strategy tools embody a patient talk.

3.5. Set of Expressions

Both personal summaries and comments on strategy tools include certain set of expressions which make the discourse more visible. Use of nouns, nominalizations and representations of actions had been analyzed above. As a matter of fact, there are other hints such as metaphors, citations, references, rewordings, patterns of phrases which embody discourse.

3.5.1. Rewordings and Metaphors

First of all, metaphors are commonly used to underline their point of view about a specific strategy tool or strategy in general. For example, a comment of a president of a technology company in USA on scenario planning reveals loops of tools:

> *"I would talk about the dynamic nature of Strategy and that contrary to widespread belief, Porter's market forces are not "dead", you just need a newer concept of how to apply them, how to use them to look at future scenarios (relative to the scenario planning comments above) and especially how to reset what "sustainable" means for a particular market. Meet the new Guru, same as the old Guru".*

Here, strategy tools are evaluated on the basis of sustainability and applicability. To be specific, a decline of a tool does not necessarily mean that it is "*dead*". Especially, the last metaphor supports this point of view. It allegorically underestimate the role of opinion leaders in strategy field but emphasizes implementations reviewed in time. An agent talk is also apparent since the application of a tool is glorified rather than instructions of Gurus.

Another agent talk of a consultant from Qatar is reinforced by using a verbal phrase where he evaluates Porter's Five Forces.

> *"When we use "generic" strategies (e.g. Michael Porter's low cost, differentiation and niche strategies) we use the Five Forces model to identify situations in which one of these "generic" strategies is a "best fit". That's like "solving a puzzle". It's pattern recognition".*

Here, he defines the process as "*solving a puzzle*". It is also remarkable that this process is managed effectively by a group of people, that is no one else but strategy community. It is noteworthy that this consultant is a director, and he has a 40 years of experience and also has a PhD degree. Thus, it would be convenient to claim that very qualified people of strategy consultancy are glorified.

Though underlining the role of opinion leaders and using remarkable idioms and rewordings, following example does not offer an agent talk.

> *"… all relevant managers deeply involved in preparing for implementation, then the chances of success are not preordained by the 'conventional*

wisdom' of 'sticking to your knitting' or 'core competencies'. For some high performing companies their 'core competence ' is making money!"

This consultant, who is an executive with a 50 years of experience, names strategic approach as "*conventional wisdom*". Here, it is common beliefs which causes the action in strategy society. Thus, strategy people are merely conveyers of this wisdom. Moreover, core competence is described as a "*sticking to your knitting*" process. Finally, success of a tool is named as "*making money*". As a matter of fact, this seems like a portray of an everyday talk. Indeed, comments on strategy tools and discussions are full of similar phrases, metaphors, sentences. To illustrate, an academic from UK glorifies industry life cycle while criticising a newer review about that tool. He says that such reviews are nothing but "*old wine in new bottles*". Similarly, a tourism consultant from Malaysia also brings a critique to a review of value chain. While he glorifies value chain as a successful strategy tool, he inveighs against "*remote understanding of business*" which is like commenting from "*50 thousand miles above the clouds*". Same strategy tool is also reviewed by a manager from Israel. According to him, "*value chain and business model are two sides of the same coin*". Here, he stresses the importance of both theory and practice. Like many others, he also praises himself for having "*thinking out of box*" abilities. (Another self- appraisal uses "open *a new window of opportunities*".) In this way, claims are supported and talk becomes more concrete. Similarly, an IT consultant from UK defines competition based strategies as "*beating your opponent*" and he glorifies resource based view. He claims that "*modern business is more and more looking like box matches*" and suggests focusing on internal dynamics. However, another consultant stresses the importance of Five Forces by playing on words. He says that "*what you don't know that can hurt you*". Thus, he draws attention to the significance of external dynamics.

The meaning attibution to SWOT in specific had been discussed above. Indeed, phrases on SWOT reinforce its reputation of its widespread and long use. Phrases like "*good-old*", "*heart of the process*" common, though "*pie in the sky*", "*fuzzy snapshot*" and "*magic formula*" are also used to describe expectations from SWOT. On the other hand, value chain is seen as a "*key*", a "*missing link*", and a "*helicopter view*" . One consultant even assertively glorifies value chain by saying that it "*can take care of the rest quite well*".

Until this point, phrases and metaphors about strategy tools have been showed. All of them can be seen as attempts to concretize their explanations. Furthermore, they function as instruments of a more informal and open talk. There are also rewordings in personal summaries which glorify qualifications. Especially, specialties can include personal choices of namings. For example, a management consultant gives a special place to his training skills, one of them is named as "*Reinvent Yourself*". Unlike "*Strategic Planning for Leaders*", this is a very unique name of a training program. It is complementing his assertive talk. There are other examples in specialties part such as "*succession planning*", and "*business model generation*".

3.5.2. Patterns

There are certain patterns in strategy interpretation. Although expressed with different words and phrases, logical array may show commonalities. In other words, some paragraphs explaining a certain strategy tool consist of the same cohesive elements. First of all, there is "vision- sharp-shape" conjoining. Here, lexical linking display a similar way. Below are two comments of two different consultants, one explaining SWOT and the other Value Chain:

> *"This begins with future visioning, describing where they would like to be in 3 to 5 years. Then identify success measures to sharpen that vision. Next, scan the environment for factors which will shape that future".*

> *"My view is that it is worthwhile to spend a little time on the long-range "helicopter view" of the alternative future before investing any time at all on strategy. The point here is that strategy is used to determine how to meet the objectives of a business case. The long-range view helps to decide quickly and efficiently whether or not we should be considering the particular business case at all. This involves Environmental Scan Research plus Scenario Planning as a tool. We want a "Go / No go" decision at this point".*

Two different tools commented by two different actors reflect similar perception of strategy. Both of them offer similar array of actions. As a matter of fact, it is a reflection of "mind/body" duality discussed above. Here, they explain the phase of mind in detail. First comes the idea, then the analysis and evaluation of that idea, and finally comes the decision. Other than SWOT and Value Chain, a comment on Resource Based View proposes a similar array("*reviewing, evaluating, and updating the existing strategy, then establish strategic objectives*").

Likewise, a consultant from Germany uses the same arrangement of ideas to emphasize his specialties.

> "*Developing vision and providing leadership to team, breaking down complex issues into manageable parts, solving complex challenges, making sense of fuzzy information*".

Again, first phase of "mind and body" duality is described in detail. It is also a deductive approach. Inferences are made from general to particular. In other words, first they make abstractions and more concrete results are found out. Moreover, the more a strategy tool is in harmony with this logic, the more valuable they are.

In some paragprahs, there is another pattern built by the agent's knowledge and future. Here, agent is the consultant himself/ herself. The "*thinking out of box*" schema discussed above is also used in this pattern.

> *"I seek to help clients think in the context of tomorrow... to plan their brands, strategies, solutions, and missions for a possible world that they want to help shape, not just the world that is today. That requires being able to think outside of one's own perspective and (perhaps more difficult) to identify and acknowledge emerging themes and forces and use them to*

extrapolate to possible futures--imagining and creating how these forces might interact to generate a new reality".

In this paragraph, the client and his/ her future is the patient and the consultant is the agent. She is there to move them beyond their own perspectives. Then, the action will be done which will be the "*new reality*". Here is a similar pattern:

> *"If you want another viewpoint, a successful solution, a problem to be identified, or strategic development assistance, then one meeting with Andie can provide you with insight about which you probably hadn't thought(SSD provides free initial consultations...)".*

Another consultant offers claims that only after his service his client "*can act beyond industry borders and boundaries*". He asserts that "*you can think out of the box and constantly seek opportunities*" in his leadership. All of them connote that there is an external world which the patient is not able to analyze. She/ he is there to show this environment because only she/ he is able to "*think out of the box*". Thus, this pattern consists of now and then duality. First, there is an existing reality and after that comes the unknown future or possible realities. The gap is promised to be filled by the consultant. In other words, cohesion is built by opposite dimensions of time. This means that there is a tension between vision and reality, creativity and constraints. Here, reality can be generated through deliberate action and this linkage requires a creative perspective. The consultant links situation to the vision.

3.5.3. References

There are many references used in both discussions and personal summaries. It does not only appear as grounding certain arguments but also positioning themselves with remarkable personalities. In other words, they present themselves in the way whom they identify with. Nevertheless, there are also opposite positionings when they do not approve with the name they refer. However, in both cases, someone else's voice is represented.

Michael Porter seems to be a very common reference. Rather, his citations usually function as grounding the argument. For example, a consultant explaining value chain in a discussion refers to Porter:

> *"Joan Magretta in her book "Understanding Michael Porter" said "A company's value chain is the collection of all its value-creating and cost-generating activities. The activities, and the overall value chain in which the activities are embedded, are the basic units of competitive advantage." (Emphasis added.) Thus, the planning and carrying out of a tightly woven set of activities is essential to a successful execution of the strategy".*

As the array of sentences shows, Porter corroborates what is argued in the text. After the citation, he continues with a conjuntion-thus- to support his opinion. Another consultant uses Porter to make his other reference seem more impressive: "*The best description of this approach I have seen, which recognises Professor Michael Porter's exceptional work, is 'The Definitive Business Plan' by Stutely*", he says where he explains Value Chain. There is a different consultant who argues that not all studies on strategy should be respected but there are some certain exceptions like Porter's works. He says that "*Porter's work is still valid and useful*". A CEO from Oman brings harsh critigue to the implementers of such studies. He claims that not the theorists but the practitioners should be "*blamed*" in case of failure.

> *"Again managers and academics blame the five forces theory (P5F''s) theory. I am also one of those people who blame the SWOT analysis. Its not that P5F's or SWOT analysis is bad or ineffective. I know senior managers who don't know how to use these theories so what you say now?"*

He codes Porter as "*P*" and attempts to justify his work. A similar attempt has been made by a founder of a business development company from USA, who claims that "*Porter is dynamic*" in contrast to what his respondent claims. Below is a further example:

> *"I have read this Ivey paper and am unimpressed. In particular the criticism that Porter's Five Forces model ignores the capital markets is unsound, or reflects an inadequate understanding of the model".*

All these examples display that Porter has become a code in communication. Whether a positive meaning is attributed or not, Porter makes the communication clearer and more efficient. Sure there are other references like Barney, Christensen and Kaplan, however, their names are used only once and they function as supporters of their arguments. To illustrate:

> *"One of my business heroes is Lou Gerstner, who turned around IBM and other firms. He said that fundamentally strategy is rooted in analysis. Market, finance, economic, value chains, technology, process, ... which serve to highlight performance and opportunity gaps".*

The consultant in this example refers to a name who he identifies with. Here, the reference becomes a tool of self- presentation. It refreshes the impression he aims to leave. However, Porter's name has been used to make general issues in strategy more comprehensible.

In conclusion, use of references validates Czarniawaska (1998)'s view that references might be tools of persuasion. They are not just tools of formal academic concerns or paying tribute to originality of an idea but self positioning. One relates himself/ herself with another who already gained acceptance with his/ her views. As a result of this, the argument becomes more powerful and persuasive.

DISCUSSION

This research has focused on strategy people who continously interact on LinkedIn, one of the most frequently used social network sites. It has dealt with online texts which consist of personal summaries and certain comments of 62 strategy people, all junior and senior, male and female, local and international, practitioner or academic from 20 different regions. It has been an attempt to understand those who speak about strategy tools, leaving comments about them, develop relationships around discussions about strategy, promoting their work to each other. Beyond gaining a deeper understanding about their personal profiles, it has been a pursuit of the way they present themselves. Not only the agenda they set in their interactions and personal summaries have been examined but also the way they express themselves, the tone of the voice they prefer to rise and the path they follow in their narrations have been investigated. Moreover, it has been a portrayal of how strategy knowledge is communicated and interpreted.

First of all, the concern of the presentation of the self is very dramatic. Both form and abstract of the texts reflect a consideration of self promotion. This motivation influences the modality used in the texts. There are three different uses of pronouns in the texts. To begin with, first person singular pronoun appears to be a common form of self promoters. Here, the object of promotion is either a client or an employer. While the former is heavily assertive, the latter is relatively modest since it aims to get in a future employer’s book. The second group consists of those who use both first and third singular pronouns but they are not as assertive as the first group. They seem to be neutral informers who avoid self praisal. The final group comprises of those who use third singular pronoun to make their self promotion more influentially. They present themselves like a celebrity being introduced by a columnist or a publicist. The different use of the pronoun generally is only a matter of fine adjustment in rhetoric building. Though an illeist using a third singular as a publicist who presents himself/ herself as a celebrity and a self-promoter uses a first singular, their motivations are identical. Speaking of rhetoric, the abstract of their talk consists of ethos, pathos and logos elements. First, they eagerly emphasize their academic background, hands on experience in diverse industries, multiskills, internationality and reputation. Second, they trigger the emotions of the audience by assuring that they know the difficulties they face and they are able to supply what they long for. In other words, they hang a pendulum which inclines first what the audience tries to escape from and then turns into where they wish to be. In this way, they manage an approach-avoidance conflict. Finally, they provide intellectual support to ensure that they are able to overcome these difficulties in a consistent and planned way. As findings display, this motivation is shared by people in different positions. While some of them speak from a center of the center position, which means senior consultants with impressive educational background and success stories in huge companies in Western societies; the rest speaks from three different positions: Periphery of the center, where start-up's and small companies in Western societies are targeted; center of the periphery where experts improved themselves in developed countries serve for transnational companies in developing countries; and finally periphery of the periphery which is a scene of the relationship between relatively modest consultants with non- assertive companies of developing countries. Here, it is remarkable that some regions are labeled as developed and the others are seen as developing. This is an outcome of the discourse hidden in the texts. Communicating with codes and categories of a modernist perspective is very common in these texts. A company from Forbes 500 list certainly gives a higher voice to those who have any experience with it. This also indicates the way strategy knowledge flows among its community. The majority of this group have a degree- undergraduate or MBA or PhD or certificate- in Western universities. Having an experience in Western-originated transnational companies is very common. Moreover, the references they share, from (and mostly) Porter to Kaplan, are from Western scholars, too. Thus, the flow of information mainly reflects a Western- centric order. Although there are many members in this community from different regions of the world, emphasis on cultural relativities are rarely made. Certainly, there are some stress on cultural sensitivities as a difficulty in implementation of strategy. However, it is generally a way to promote hands-on experience. It implies a power in his/ her own region but does not defy prescriptive codes and categories of strategy literature. Contrarywise, mainstream strategy knowledge itself appears as an arm to struggle with such local difficulties. Here, it is hard not to mention from strategy's historical evolution. First, as Whittington, Cailluet and Yakis- Douglas (2011) note, since its origins in America in the 1950's, all leading consultancy firms like BCG, McKinsey and Bain are originated in Western societies. Strategy has become an independent profession and department in organization charts there again. Thus, it can be claimed that strategy knowledge has spread from center to the periphery. As Jarzabkowski (2010) points out, MBA's have close encounter with business and this also supports Western-centric production of strategy knowledge. "Williamson's faith in a planning elite reflects this modernist ethos. The early strategy planning models, with their linear, rationalistic flowcharts (e.g. Ansoff, 1965), were modernist to the core as well"

(Whittington, Cailluet and Yakis- Douglas 2011, 538). Speaking of Western-centric perspective, rational modern action appears as a paradigm in texts. Predictability, measurability, efficiency and determinism are strictly highlighted. This is based on a view of dual opposition of mind and body. Mind predicts, calculates, measures, determines and then the body efficiently implements. According to the majority of this community, time, place and action can be managed and organized. The more they are able to calculate the future action and the more efficiently they practice what they plan, the more attractive they become in the eyes of the audience.

In certain texts, discourse of rationality appears naturally. On the other hand, rationality can be used deliberately to make their promise more convincing. In other words, logos element of their rhetoric is empowered by using rational codes. However, the promise itself is not that rational. It becomes a skeleton key which can open every door the audience-here probably a future client- would like to enter. Here, Weber's definition of rationality could be useful to gain a deeper perspective. According to Weber, rationality has not generated after enlightenment but it has always been a "value" behind human action (Kalberg 1980). Moreover, rationalization process can emerge in different aspects of life independent from modernization degree. Here, instrumental rationality deserves attention which serves to the person's "egoist and pragmatic interests" (Kalberg 1980, 1152). This type of rationality refers to the deliberate human action by using convenient means to gain an end. Indeed, frequently underlined abilities of prediction, efficiency, calculation, evidence- based formulation, empiric reasoning, data analysis indicate that instrumental rationality is very distinct. All these elements of rationality as means and promise to success as an end reminds of Ritzer's (1993)

”irrationality of rationality”. That is to say that it is all about to overcome uncertainties, to control the environment and to manipulate the external reality in favour of the manager. However, success is indexed to the quantitative aspect of business life. It ignores an organisation as a whole. Its cultural sensitivity is very weak. Moreover, it does not include all parts of the organisation, it only aims to fulfill the manager’s interests as a prospect client. In brief, rationality is brought forward to satisfy irrational expectations. It is like giving a mushroom in Alice in Wonderland. Managers are promised to be brought to the land they wish to be. Here, it is not implied that people in this community use rationality as a trick. It is an intrinsic code in their communication. It is a prerequisite for turning the awareness to desire and action.

Speaking of the irrationality in terms of the manager-oriented interests rather than an organisation as a whole, it is remarkable to observe that how lower hierarchical levels are kept in silence. Of course, this is a community of strategy people, consultants, academics, senior managers, and their definition of success has commonalities. It could be profitability-which is cited again and again-, copying with changing environment or crisis, beating the competitor, and making innovations. Nevertheless, it is never a happiness of a worker. They never mention from the rights of workers, their psychology, their role in creating value, avoiding alienation, etc. Sure “motivation” is repeatedly used. Instead of questioning what could really motivate subordinates, they deal with it as a leadership skills. They give voice to a leader but not the worker. This indicates a preassumption of chain of command in a top- down hierarchy. They appeal to the manager on the top. The rest is only a matter of efficiency and productivity. A member of the community says that he is a “charismatic manager contributing to the employees commitment and motivating them to excellence". Hereby, employees are an object to be motivated. As another member adds, they are there to "apply leadership skills that maximize motivation and engagement, and deliver tangible impact - in terms of bottom-line business performance". Thus, the "staff" (as another member names) is the object of efficiency. Neither a suggestion based on their work conditions nor any implicity about their social rights has been made. Though personal summaries commonly provide words such as "flexibility", "innovation", "teamwork", "creativity", "friendliness", "cool", "synergy", their main concern is satisfying profit-seeking top management. It is interesting to see that there are many members with further academic degrees in this community. However, their discourse is still based on scientific management and it is almost impossible to find any hint from the Critical School. To illustrate, frequently underlined creative teamwork is not taken as a deliberative action of human but an enslavery in disguise. This reminds of Habermas' (1985) warning that all this modernity and rationality is in the service of dominant elite rather than the individual himself/ herself.

Taking a closer look at the influencers tagged by the members of the community on their profile pages provide also remarkable inference about their Weltanschauung. Majority of the group tags politicians like Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ban Ki Moon; entrepreneurs like Bill Gates, Richard Branson, Mike Bloomberg, gurus like Deepak Chopra, Michael Porter, Guy Kawasaki, Gary Vaynerchuk and CEO's like Jack Welsh. Except the only female role model Arianna Huffington, all influencers are male. They are powerful leaders in their own fields. Moreover, all of them have transitive careers based on their multi skills and various experiences. All these figures embody a strong, successful, innovative and entrepreneur man. Why is identification only limited with such public figures? Why do not they tag any artist, philosopher or local figures? This also seems like a hint of their instrumental rationality. They promise quantitative success and all these figures embody this. In other words, these celebrities represent their pragmatical worldview.

Finally, production of strategy knowledge in this medium is worth to discuss. As analyzed above, all personal summaries and discussions around strategy are full of information which embody certain strategic approaches. Claims and arguments are exemplified with personal experiences. Some of them are borrowed from well known figures in strategy literature- though attaching oneself to someone well accepted might be a tool of persuasion as Czarniawska (1998) puts-. They might come into view in references or citations. Here, the issue of the originality of a strategy knowledge becomes important. Who is the originator of the idea? Is it borrowed from an already published book or is it a natural outcome of personal practices? In other words, intellectual property appears to be a critical issue. Czarniawska (1998) places a very notable question after discussing the copyright issue in organization studies: “When all organization studies journals are accessible on Netscape, the possibilities for plagiarism and for checks against it will multiply incredibly. What is going to be next?” This question implies more than a copyright issue. The way strategy knowledge is produced and diffused is very different from conventional forms. She puts that “information society will witness more democratic distribution of this good” (1998, 58) although she also refers to Boyle’s warning of “information pollution”. Of course it is not possible to decide which one it will cause, but it is remarkable that strategy becomes more democratized. This issue has also been mentioned by Whittington, Cailluet and Yakis-Douglas (2011) who revealed strategy as a profession in their study. They took attention to the fact that there is “a shift towards more open forms of strategy-making, with more transparency inside and outside organizations and more inclusion of different actors internally and externally”. Technology has been labeled as a very important factor in this shift. Indeed, Strategic Planning Society on LinkedIn made various strategy people come together. It has become possible to exchange ideas, to benefit from each other’s experiences, to become familiar with new strategy approaches and theorists. Unlike conventional forms of strategic planning behind the doors of top management departments, strategy appears to be a central issue of an open discussion online forum. In other words, it becomes “less elitist, more mundane” as this triple claims. They also propose that “diffusion rather than exclusion remains the likely future of the strategy profession”. Here, the utilities Internet in general, Web 2.0 and social media in specific are essential. This democratization of strategic planning and diffusion of its knowledge would not become that remarkable without technological facilities. Of course, technodeterminism would be reductive. However, the role of the interaction between social media and its users could not be ignored in understanding this process. Indeed, Whittington (2015) uses the term of “the massification of strategy” which is an outcome of certain material artefacts such as social media which made mass participation possible. Here, remembering Latour’s concept (1992) of “missing masses” would be meaningful. According to Latour, human can be understood with non- human. For example, technology is not only a material artefact external to human but it gains a meaning with its usage. That means that the way it is used by people and the meaning attributed to the object co-determine each other. As a result, computer networks in general and social media in specific are not accidental effects of technological developments. They are outcomes of the interplay between human and the machine. Without a need of more participative, open and interactive communication, technological infrastructure would be meaningless. Therefore, a global community about strategy on social media is a consequence of search of further social communication via technology.

CONCLUSION

This study has been an attempt to understand strategy practitioners interacting on social media. Discourse of their personal profile pages and comments on strategy have been analyzed. First of all, this analysis provided an insight to one of the research questions which aimed to understand the presentation of the self in this community, use of language and characteristics of their talk. Presentation of the self in this community takes shape in different use of pronouns and rhetorical construction. To be specific, use of first single pronoun appears as either “self promoter” talk or “neutral informer” talk. Self promoter talk is embodied by two different clusters. While the first cluster consists of enthusiastic employees addressing future employers, the second is formed by those who targets prospect clients. On the other hand, there are “neutral informers” who list their skills in bullets in a more academic manner rather than talking as assertive as self promoters. Final cluster comprises of “illeists” who portray themselves as celebrities in third singular pronoun. They use someone else’s voice to introduce themselves as in a book review or TV program.

Second theme in self- presentation appears as rhetoric construction. Here, Aristo's array of rhetoric- ethos, pathos, and logos- draws attention. Participants generally use their moral character and personal history to corroborate their ethos. To be specific, experience in different industries and regions, multiskills, academic backround, hands-on experience, being recognized by certain communities, and personal values like trust, honesty, proactivity are common elements used in ethos construction. Here, Giddens' (1991) "self as a reflexive project" and Grey's (2005) "career as a project of the self" gain significance. This presentations are an outcome of making the self, according it to the expectations of the capital and putting it into service of the "customer" (DuGay& Salaman, 1992). Pathos is another element typically highlighted by the participants. This is an attempt to ensure that they are able to understand their emotions: Fear of unsuccess, worrying about risks, anxiety of threats, desire to succeed, and/or appetite for prestige, and so on. They put a diagnosis which might cause these emotions and then put their insight forward. They make the audience feel that there is a solution out there and the participant knows how to find it. Finally, they use strategy tools, concepts, past stories of success or failure to show logos. Using academic knowledge is very common to reason arguments. In general, presentation of the self in this community overlaps with strategy narration process of consultants and gurus discussed in literature review. As argued by Grey (2005), the self is disciplined to satisfy the customer and presentations of the self reflect highlighting appropriate manners in terms of professionalism. In other words, Moreover, value setting (Clark and Salaman 1998), telling stories about "triumphs and disasters" (Linde 2001), defining situation and offering solutions with empathy (Czarniawska and Jorges 1990), highlighting academic background to make the talk more sophisticated (Benders and Heusinkveld 2006) embody Aristo's elements of rhetoric construction (Özen 2009).

Another research question has been to understand context-sensitivity of the texts. This concern also included an interest to comprehend worldviews hidden in self-expressions. First of all, Western-centric paradigm appears as a very strong determinant in self-positioning. To be specific, a group of participants speak from center of the center. This group, namely "gatekeepers", comprises of strategy practitioners from Western countries. They have degrees from well known universities and have work experience in huge global companies. They target to communicate with business elites. On the other hand, periphery of the center, namely "local heroes", present themselves as the hero of newcomers. Their target audience is start-up companies and small business owners in Western societies. They do not talk as assertive as gatekeepers. Third position of the participants is center of the periphery who are named as "missioneries". This group provides consultancy in regions like Far East, Middle East, Africa and Asia. Their talk reflects a tone of missionary since they mostly have academic degrees or experiences in Western countries. They proudly present their multilingual skills and internationality. They emphasize their ability to comply with native culture. As a matter of fact, this relationship is asymmetrical, they do not attribute any meaning to local concepts but they carry Western-originated knowledge and approach to these native professionals. Final position is periphery of the periphery, namely "sherpas", which is represented by strategy practitioners working in/ with small size companies in third world countries. Their talk is less ambitious, even their English is not as fluent as the participants in other positions. Likewise, strategy is expressed with Western concepts. In other words, the talk of this position does not reflect local approaches either. In sum, this positioning connotes a hierarchy among different regions of the world which overlaps with Kurt and Görmüş's (2010), Bamber's (1999) and Sturdy's (2004) emphasis on Western- centric flow of information in strategy literature. In other words, adoption of capitalist Western societies' concepts dominate the interaction among strategy practitioners from different regions. Speaking of Western domination, globalisation appears as one of the main paradigms reflecting participants' worldviews. Similarly, it pictures a developed-developing duality. Globalisation is coded with a talk in which academic or professional background in Western countries are preferable. It would not be inconvenient to claim that this paradigm is intertwined one another: Rational modern action paradigm. Indeed, participants usually make emphasis on tangibility, efficiency, separation of manageable units, time management and predictability. In other words, they preassume that time, space and action are not difficult to manage with their skills, experience and vision. Especially, determinism appears as a very strong attitude of mind. This reminds of the critics of lineer thinking as argued by Mazza and Alvarez (2001). As discussed in literature review, this "first knowledge, then action" approach might not overlap with reality. In other words, implementation phase is hard to predict. However, participants are mostly assertive in proper planning and realization.

To understand how strategy is interpreted in this community has been another concern of this study. Every participant has a different starting point in explaining what strategy is. In general, there are two different paradigms in strategy explanation. While one group of participants construct a definition originated from competition, the other group explains strategy on the basis of innovation. Participants of the former group, namely “strategy as war”, assume that there is an environment full of threat, danger and uncertainty. Therefore, a strategy team should be prepared like a warrior getting ready for a war. Their main promise is to make their clients gain competitive advantage. As discussed in literature review, Eisenhardt’s (1989) stress on the anxiety in high- velocity environments appears as a common attribute of this paradigm. On the other hand, participants of the latter group, namely “strategy as genesis”, do not define strategy with a competitor- centric perspective. Rather, they identify strategy with innovation, entrepreneurship and creating opportunities. Their talk is not as agressive as the talk of former group of participants. Despite these two different perspectives, all participants characterise strategy as something that can be rationally formulated. In other words, strategy becomes a rational tool with an irrational promise: Bringing all complexities, uncertainties, enemies, threats, opportunities, - time, place and action in brief-under control. Here, tools gain importance. Participants usually mention tools to corroborate their arguments. As a matter of fact, tools gain a meaning of practicality, rationality, technical knowledge, expertise and control. In other words, they prove that the promise has been made deliberately. They exclude those who are not aware of them, and construct a code of communication between the participant and the audience who has an idea about it. Consequently, this finding supports Jarzabkowski and Seidl’s (2008), Jarzabkowski and Kaplan’s (2006), Baecklund and Werr’s (2001) and Sturdy’s (2004) views discussed in the given literature. More precisely, strategy tools provide rational, persuasive, specialistic and powerful tone to their language. In other words, they highlight logos element of the rhetoric. Indeed, they mention about strategy tools to reinforce their arguments. Tools are appraised due to allowing efficient use of time and resources, sustainability, systematical thinking, comprehensive sensemaking, definition of the situation, identifying reality, dividing manageable units. However, they might not agree with all tools. Some tools might be described as useless, obsolete, redundant, inadequate, prevalent, irrelevant and abstract. Here, theory and practise opposition deserves attention. It is very common to criticise tools in terms of practicality. Knowing how to use them and difficulties in implementation phase can be remarked in evaluation. Furthermore, binary oppositions are widely used in meaning attribution to strategy tools. To illustrate, old and new, plan and action, valid and obsolete, relevant and irrelevant, transient and lasting, and evidence-based and intangible are main oppositions typicallyused by participants to value strategy tools.

Final concern of this study has been massification of strategy. In other words, this online community's ability to make strategy a ground for a public sphere has been an object of interest. As discussed in the literature review section, researchers such as Dahlberg (2001), Dahlgreen (2005), Jenkins and Thorburn (2003) and Kellner (2000) defended the idea that Internet has a high potential to actualize Habermas' concept of public sphere. Due to its interactive, participative, borderless and asynchronous form, many to many communication is possible among strategy society. Unlike traditional media which paved a one way communication from the information source to the audience, social media facilitates feedback, continous discussion and content generation. Indeed, this community interacts around topics about strategy. Moreover, Luhmann's (1996) concepts of self reference and external reference can be seen in each interaction in this community. Strategy practitioners share their own experiences while also commenting on others' or citing a celebrity's opinions. It is a system that shapes and is shaped by users. Participants, in specific, use their membership with different motivations as discussed above. To illustrate further, some communicative action represents seeking career opportunities while some display traces of self promotion. Furthermore, some participants are more active, open topics, lead discussions, create content like Powerpoint presentations, sharing a late article froma researcher and giving feedbacks on some comments; on the other hand, some participants state that they are only there as observers to gain insight about the field. In addition, this community also brings academicians and practitioners together. In other words, theory and practice of strategy have been revealed by thousands of strategy people. Thus, it would be convenient to claim that Latour's (1992) missing masses in understanding strategy society could be found here. This means that social media is an outcome of a relationship between technology and human. To be more specific, Strategic Planning Society makes it possible to represent various approaches on the given field. It is one of the first attempts to elaborate strategy by many practitioners in equal conditions. Therefore, it would also be convenient to claim that strategy is getting massified.

Limitations

Documents extracted from aforementioned LinkedIn forum have been the only data source. There is not additional data collected. Perhaps, interview with participants would be supplementary. Therefore, this study lacks triangulation. Further studies could include additional data collection such as interview, survey, and videos. It would also be meaningful to compare the agenda of traditional business media with practitoners' agenda on social media. In this way, the concern of massification of strategy could gain a deeper perspective. Finally, literature on social media and strategy used in this research rarely overlap. Studies, which have already investigated similar concerns, could have an encouraging role in arranging and binding different topics reviewed in this study.

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