STRATEGISING ROUTINES AS THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN STRATEGY PRACTICES AND PRAXIS

CÉCILE BELMONDO

IAE DE LILLE - LEM UMR CNRS 8179

CECILE.BELMONDO@IAE.UNIV-LILLE1.FR

CAROLINE SARGIS ROUSSEL

IESEG - LEM UMR CNRS 8179

Résumé :

Strategy-as-practice (S-A-P) perspective aims at complementing process and content approaches of strategy by studying how specific communities (the practitioners) engage in strategic episodes (praxis) by drawing on socially accepted strategy practices, this process in turn leading to the change or reinforcement of practices. However, no study so far has tried to uncover how strategy practices are implemented within specific organisational settings, and how individual and collective praxis affect these implementation processes. In particular, the recursive link between strategy praxis and practices remains problematic.

In this paper, we propose to answer the question of their interactions with a *theoretical discussion* of the links between praxis, and practices, by introducing strategy routines as an intermediate level between praxis and practices. In doing so, we draw on the insights provided by the micro-approaches of organisational routines to complement the S-A-P perspective. Our paper provides a conceptual model of the interactions between strategy praxis, routines and practices. It explains why and at which conditions the performative aspects of strategising routines can be associated with collective and repeated strategy praxis; and why and at which conditions their ostensive aspects can be associated with a situated understanding of a particular strategy practice. It also argue that strategy routines result from praxis' institutionalisation and from practices' appropriation, and gives insights on how those processes unfold.

This research contributes to the current debates on the search for micro-foundations in strategy (Whittington, 2006a) and routines (Felin and Foss, 2011). It also addresses the need, within the S-A-P perspective, for exploring how strategy practices are instantiated in particular organisations rather than in individual praxis.

Mots-clés : Practice, praxis, strategy, routine, appropriation

Strategising routines as the missing link between strategy practices and praxis

Introduction

Strategy-as-practice (S-A-P) perspective has been expanding since the beginning of the 2000s, complementing process and content approaches of strategy. The S-A-P perspective builds on three complementary concepts - practices, praxis and practitioners - to study how specific communities (the practitioners) engage in strategic episodes (praxis) by drawing on socially accepted strategy practices, this process in turn leading to the change or reinforcement of practices (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007; Vaara and Whittington, 2012; Whittington, 2002, 2006a). This interest for a practice approach to strategising is connected with the spreading of a "practice turn" in other areas of management theory: knowledge management (Gherardi 2000), technology appropriation and use (Orlikowski, 1992, 2000), micro-approaches of routines (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Pentland and Feldman, 2005, 2008; Becker, 2008). This practice turn has led to emphasize a particular focus on how individuals socially perform various organisational activities.

Within the SAP perspective, such a focus has so far investigated how strategists engage in certain types of actions - such as strategy meetings, strategy episodes… (Hendry and Seidl, 2003; Bowman et al., 2013; Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2011), or how they recurrently engage in similar streams of action, the so-called practices (Kaplan, 2011; Jarrat and Stiles, 2009). However there is no clue that such practices are used in the same way in all organisations. For example, Jarrat and Stiles (2009) have shown that the practice of SWOT analysis is followed differently according to local settings.

More specifically, no study has tried - to the best of our knowledge - to uncover how strategy practices are implemented within specific organisational settings, and how individual and collective praxis affect these implementation processes. In this paper, we propose to answer this question with a *theoretical discussion* of the links between praxis, practices, and strategy routines. In doing so, we draw on the insights provided by the micro-approaches of organisational routines (Pentland and Feldman, 2005). This stream of research has

emphasised the generative constitution of routines through the interactions of ostensive and performative aspects (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; 2008), using the practice perspective to explain routine change and adaptation overtime (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). Until now, however, the micro-routine approach and the S-A-P perspective have barely informed each other (Hansen and Vogel, 2011; Regnèr, 2008). This is surprising, since they both share a strong interest towards the practice and structurationist perspectives, and the individual micro-activities that shape more macro outcomes.

Moreover, the work of strategy practitioners is often part of strategising routines. Strategising routines are those sequences of activities that strategy practitioners repeatedly follow when they strategise. Paroutis and Pettigrew (2007) have shown that strategic planning routines are reinforced or adapted through intra and inter-strategic teams' activities. Hodgkinson *et al.* (2006) measured that the holding of strategic workshops is triggered by routine strategic work in 62.7% of the organisations they surveyed.

Following those remarks, we aim at building on the micro-routine approach to inform our understanding of how strategising practices and praxis influence the repeated strategising work of practitioners. By doing so, our research refines the recursive link that exists between strategic practices and praxis, and introduces strategising routines as an intermediate level of analysis. It addresses Whittington's call for exploring how strategy practices are instantiated in particular organisations rather than in individual praxis (Whittington, 2006b).

Our argumentation is organised as follow. The first section provides an account of the definitions of praxis and practices within the S-A-P literature, and show that the recursive link between strategy praxis and practices is problematic. More specifically, we argue that their recursive interactions are also shaped by the collective strategising activities performed in a specific organisational setting. In the second section, we introduce the concept of strategising routine, and explain why the micro-routine approach may prove useful to inform our knowledge of the link between strategy praxis and practise. In the third section, we posit the concept routine at a level of analysis that is intermediate between praxis and practices. We then explain why and at which conditions the performative aspects of strategising routines can be associated with collective and repeated strategy praxis; and why and at which conditions their ostensive aspects can be associated with a situated understanding of a particular strategy practice. In the fourth section, we get deeper into the links between strategy praxis, routines,

and practices by exploring how routines result from praxis' institutionalisation and from practices' appropriation. In conclusion, we detail the contribution of our model to the current debates on the search for micro-foundations in strategy (Whittington, 2006a) and routines (Felin and Foss, 2011). We also present some managerial implications of our theoretical model. We end with areas for future research in the S-A-P and the micro-routines agenda.

I. ARTICULATING PRAXIS AND PRACTICES IN THE S-A-P PERSPECTIVE

Strategy-as-practice perspective has been developed since the beginning of 2000s complementing process and content approaches of strategy. Strategy-as-practice perspective develops three complementary characteristics: practices, praxis and practitioners (Table 1).

Characteristic	Content	Process	Practices	Praxis	Practitioners
Analytical Unit	Firm	Firm	Technologies	Activities	People
Focus	Strategies	Processes	Concepts/tools	Talk/action	Strategists
Reference Point	Competitors	Competitors	Alternatives	Past	Colleagues
Questions	What	How	What	How	Who
Explanandum	Performance	Performance	Diffusion	Type	Success
Method	Quantitative	Case	Quantitative	Ethnographic	Quantitative

Table 1: Strategy as Content, Process and Practice (Whittington, 2002)

Praxis and practices are two of the three central concepts in the S-A-P perspective. Praxis was introduced to spell out the polysemy of the word "practice". As Jarzabkowski *et al.* (2007, p. 7) point out, the word refers:

> "*both to the situated doings of the individual human beings (micro) and to the different socially defined practices (macro) that the individuals are drawing upon in these doings*".

I.1. Strategy praxis

More precisely, strategy praxis is defined as follows in the literature:

« *all the various activities involved in the deliberate formulation and implementation of strategy […] the intra-organizational work required for making strategy and getting it executed* » (Whittington, 2006a, p. 619).

"*The innumerable micro actions through which human actors organise activities so as to generate strategic results*"[1] (Seidl, Balogun et Jarzabkowski, 2006 : 1) ;

What resorts from both definitions is that strategy praxis is situated at the micro level and refers to the daily activities performed by individuals in a specific context. These activities are neither necessarily repetitive, nor formally planned (Johnson and Huff, 1997; Regnèr, 2003). In this paper, we consider that *praxis* refers to any of the actions undertaken by individuals when they engage in strategising.

I.2. Strategy practices

Whittington defines strategy practices as

"*The shared routines of behaviour, including traditions, norms and procedures for thinking, acting and using 'things', this last in the broadest sense*" (Whittington, 2006a)

"*The tools, concepts, and ideas of strategy*" (Whittington, 2002).

Strategy practices are located at a macro level of analysis, either organisational or supra organizational. For instance, strategic practices can be found into organisational procedures, industries (industrial recipes, Spender, 1989) or the inter-industrial understanding of what constitutes a strategic technique (Whittington, 2006a). Jarzabkowski (2004) indicates that strategy practices are the

"*strategy toolkit as those frameworks, techniques and practices that are the basis of many strategy textbooks and teaching*", such as Porter's five forces, strategic planning, strategic scenarios… They are a "*the repertoire of 'strategic utensils' through which strategic practitioners may display knowledge and skill in constructing strategic activity*".

---

[1] « *Innombrables micro actions à travers lesquelles les acteurs humains organisent l'activité de manière à générer des résultats stratégiques* »

However, this definition of the concept of practice is restrictive. In the practice theory (Reckwitz, 2002), its meaning is wider and encompasses both the practices available in the social context, and the situated (micro) practices (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007) that people repeatedly undertake during their daily activities, i.e.:

> *"routinized types of behaviour which consist of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (*Reckwitz, 2002)

In Bourdieu's work, practice refers to the activities undertaken by individuals and highlights their situated and social inscription (Golsorkhi and Huault, 2006) as well.

Eventually, the different approaches of the practice concept can be summed up as following:

> "*both to the situated doings of the individual human beings (micro) and to the different socially defined practices (macro) that the individuals are drawing upon in these doings* (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007).

However, it is necessary to clarify this distinction. Whittington (2002) explains that he has introduced the concept of *praxis* in order to distinguish the different meanings of practice:

> *"The distinction of practices from praxis follows Turner (1994) particularly, in his separation of the sociological heritage of traditions, norms, rules and routines from the actual events that make up practical activity. Practices are the 'done thing', in both the sense of accepted as legitimate and the sense of well-practised through repeated doing in the past. Praxis is what is actually done, here the work of strategising."*

I.3.   Praxis and practices: A not so trivial recursive link

This dual meaning of « practice » reflects the recursive link between practices and praxis as explained by Whittington (2002) :

> « *practitioners participate in many activities, but the figure highlights the particular points at which they engage in the praxis of strategising […] As they strategise, they draw upon – in a structurationist sense (Giddens, 1984) – the set of established practices available from their social context.[…] As they follow, synthesise or*

interpret these strategising practices, strategy practitioners reproduce, and occasionally amend, the stock of practices on which they will draw in their next round of strategising praxis. »

Hence, praxis and practices are recursively linked (see Figure 1). The activities performed by individuals constitute a praxis that draws from one or more specific practices (Whittington, 2002; Paroutis and Pettigrew, 2007) and some episodes of strategy praxis may induce change or adaptation in practices (see Figure 1). Williamson (2006) refers to institutional work to explain the evolution of practices.
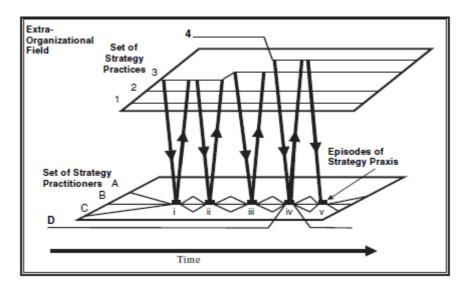

Figure 1: Integrating practices, praxis and practitioners (Whittington, 2006a, p. 621)

However, strategy activities performed by individuals are not only influenced by practices (at a macro level) but they also are the products of collective activities. Second, as noted before, strategy activities are usually repetitive, and subsumed to strategising routines. Third, strategising routines are performed collectively, in order to coordinate different individual praxis. Those arguments imply that **the link between praxis and practices is mediated by the existing routines within the organisation**. They also imply that the adoption and adaptation of strategy practices within a specific team of a specific firm depend on its particular ways of doing things, moreover since organizational routines are associated with path dependence, and organisational memory (Walsh and Ungson, 1991). Therefore, a specific strategy team will translate or understand a strategy practice (at a macro-level)

differently from another team, even in the same organisation, depending on its own objectives, organisational role, and history (March and Simon, 1958; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1970).

Those remarks lead us to assume that there is a gap in the S-A-P literature between praxis at a micro level and practices at a macro level, and that strategizing routines are central to fill this gap. In the following part, we define the concept of routine, before extending our argument for positioning strategy routines at an intermediate level of analysis between strategy practices and praxis.

II. ROUTINE AS THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN PRACTICE AND PRAXIS

II.1. The concept of routines

Routines are subject to multiple definitions. They may be defined as "*repeated behaviour patterns*" (Nelson and Winter, 1982; Becker *et al.*, 2005), as dispositions to engage in previously adopted or acquired behaviours (Hodgson & Knudsen, 2004), or as "*repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions, carried out by multiple actors*" (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). Such definitions imply that routines are performed by individuals interacting with each other and following a pattern of actions that can be identified. The recognition of such a pattern is a sine qua non condition for the routine to exist, as argued by Rerup and Feldman (2007):

> "*People have to do things for an organizational routine to exist, but simply doing things does not create the coherence that constitutes routines. The things that are done have to fit together in some pattern and the pattern needs to recur*".

Routines encompass two interactive aspects (Feldman and Pentland, 2003, 2008; Pentland and Feldman, 2005, 2008a): the performative aspect and the ostensive aspect, that both and together produce and are supported by "artifacts" (Pentland and Feldman, 2005, 2008a). The performative aspect is defined as:

"*[…] the specific actions taken by specific people at specific times when they are engaged in what they think of as an organizational routine*" (Pentland et Feldman, 2005, p. 796).

The ostensive aspect refers to the

"*abstract regularities and expectations that enable participants to guide, account for, and refer to specific performances of a routine*" (Pentland et Feldman, 2008b, p. 241).

It represents the abstraction of norms, values, and rules for action. More precisely, it is the perception by organisational actors of how they should perform an activity; ostensive aspect is inherent to every individual (Pentland and Feldman, 2005).

II.2. Rationale for linking praxis, routine and practice

Until now, little work within the S-A-P perspective has drawn from the micro-routine approach (Hansen and Vogel, 2011) and vice-versa (Regnèr, 2008). However, there is a rationale for linking them together.

First, both micro-routine and S-A-P perspectives draw on theories of social practices as elaborated by Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1972; 1980). Feldman and Pentland have used the practice perspective in their research about routines dynamics, as Feldman says in a recent article written with Orlikowski (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). On the other side, Jarrat and Stiles (2010, p.30) argues, quoting Witthington (1996, p.734):

"*As a relatively new direction, S-as-P posits alternative frameworks to capture the 'unheroic work of ordinary strateg(y) practitioners in their day-to-day routines*".

The S-A-P perspective strongly emphasizes practitioners and their daily, mundane activities. Similarly, the micro-level approaches on routine take a strong stand for focusing on micro-actions.

Second, the aims of both perspectives are coherent, if not similar. The micro-routine perspective aims at investigating new micro foundations for organisational routines and dynamic capabilities (Becker, 2008; Foss, 2011), and at focusing on internal antecedents (Felin and Foss, 2011; Salvato and Rerup, 2011) such as agency (Pentland and Feldman, 2005; Howard-Grenville, 2005). This aim meets the S-A-P call to get back to the "*human*

being" and "*human agency*" (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007, p. 6) in explaining strategy formulation and implementation.

Finally, the conceptualisation of routine lies at a meso level of analysis (between individual and organization), which allows developing a theoretical articulation between organizational practices and individual praxis. Routines indeed are defined at a more macro level than praxis: praxis is individual by essence whereas routines are defined as collective (Fredette and Branzei, 2007; Feldman and Rafaeli, 2002) and are defined by interdependencies (Truijen *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, routines are defined at a more micro level than practice. For Whittington, practices are organisational or inter-organisational and feed individual or collectives praxis, whereas performative and ostensive aspects are both at the same level of analysis[2]. Moreover, ostensive aspect is the perception of what should be done (what is acceptable) by each participant in the routine. Ostensive aspect reflects the perception of macro-practices by each participant (professional practices, organizational practices) but this ostensive aspect is also collectively negotiated when routines are performed. Eventually, the ostensive aspect refers to the individual perceptions/translations of practices.

Ultimately, routines can also be viewed as a disposition (Hodgson and Knudsen, 2004), or as a collective habitus (Reynaud, 2004, 2005, 2011), and therefore as a pivotal concept between praxis and practices in the field of strategy (Vaara and Whittington, 2012). Indeed, habitus, in Bourdieu's (1980) work, represents a predisposition to praxis (practice in Bourdieu's words, the field designing a set of practices as defined by Whittington). It is also the product of a process of the individual interiorisation of a set of practices specific to a field. Viewing routines as being both habitus and recurrent sequences of actions may seem incongruous. However, as recently argued by Pentland *et al.* (2012), routines embody memory of past sequences of actions and, as such, encompass both a dispositional aspect to carry out certain sequences of actions rather than others and the actual performance of such sequences.

---

[2] In his 2002's paper, Whittington explicitly posits routines at an intermediary level between praxis and practices, and consider them as practices: "*At the enterprise level, [the set of established practices]might be the routines and formulae of the formal strategy process, laid down in corporate cultures and systems; at the wider societal level, these strategy practices might be the working through of accepted analytical tools, or even simply due notions of appropriate strategy-making behaviour.*" In his subsequent work, however, routines are not explicitly addressed anymore.

Those arguments lead us to consider routines (in Feldman and Pentland's meaning) as an intermediate and pivotal level between individual praxis and organisational practices. In the following paragraphs, we explore how they are related to each concept.

III. LINKING STRATEGY ROUTINES, PRAXIS AND PRACTICES

In this section, we argue that routines are the collective outcome, at an intermediate level, of repetitive confrontations between practices and individual situated praxis. Routines are a pivotal concept allowing us to understand the transformation of individual praxis into sequences of repetitive activities (performative aspect of a routine, upward red arrow) and to understand the influence of practices on the understanding of what must be done collectively by an organisational group (ostensive aspect of a routine, downward red arrow). Routines - both as disposition and as patterns of repetitive actions - emerge from the interactions between practices and praxis, between structures and activities (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Hodgson and Knudsen, 2004; Becker, 2008; Salvato and Rerup, 2011; Rerup and Feldman, 2011).

Macro	Practices
Meso	Routines
Micro	Praxis

Table 2: Routine as an intermediate level between praxis and practices

III.1. Praxis and performative aspects of routines

Individual activities are at the heart of routines. They are central in their definition ("*pattern of _interdependent actions _that involve multiple _actors_*[3]", Feldman and Pentland, 2003, p. 95). This definition is largely accepted and used, e.g. Becker, 2008; Bresnen *et al.*, 2005).

---

[3] Underline added.

Recurrence of individual activities signals the existence of the performative aspect of a routine (Pentland and Feldman, 2005), hence of a routine itself (Pentland *et al.*, 2010).

Performative aspect of routines is close to the concept of praxis, defined as the group of activities really "done" (performed) by individual actors (Whittington, 2006a), even if praxis encompasses both repetitive activities and non-repetitive activities. Brundin *et al.* (2008) have already established such a link between praxis and routine:

> "*[praxis] also emphasizes what people actually do, the every-day activities in its specific context (the 'praxis', Whittington, 2006) that also allow for non-routinized behavior (Johnson et al., 2007: 27). This is close to the meaning of performative routines, i.e. 'specific actions, by specific people in specific places and time*s' *(Feldman and Pentland, 2003, p.101)*".

Hence, the performative aspect of a routine refers to those sequences of activities of individual praxis that are repetitive and interconnected with other individuals' repetitive activities. The performative aspect is the recurrent distributed praxis that is generated from habitus. It is a particular instantiation of a routine.

However, as close as they may look, there still is a difference between praxis and performative aspects of routines: the nature of the context they are situated in. Praxis is informally influenced by the general context in which it takes place and by the way practitioners interiorised it. The description of this general context is made difficult by its intangibility. The 'performance' of routines is framed by contextual elements too. However, those elements are stabilised into the ostensive aspect, and are constitutive components of the routine.

III.2. Practices and ostensive aspects of routines

Within the S-A-P perspective, the link between praxis and practices is recursive in a structurationist meaning, which is reflected in the dual meaning of "practices". As Whittington (2002) puts it:

> "*As they [practitioners] strategize, they draw upon – in a structurationist sense (Giddens, 1984) – the set of established practices available from their social context.*

[…] As they follow, synthesise or interpret these strategising practices, strategy practitioners reproduce, and occasionally amend, the stock of practices on which they will draw in their next round of strategising praxis" (p. 3).

There is a similar recursive process of interactions between the performative and ostensive aspects of routine defined as generative system by Feldman and Pentland (2003). The dynamic of interactions between repetitive activities (performative aspect) and the rule (ostensive aspect) is similar to the dynamic existing between agency and structure. Thus, performing activities is both constrained by ostensive aspect of routines and contribute to make it evolve. Moreover, this dynamic recursive relationship between action and structure refers to the practice approach (Orlikowski and Feldman, 2011).

Such a similarity between the micro routine approach and the S-A-P perspective leads us to link practices with the ostensive aspects of routines. However, in the S-A-P field, practices possess an ontological reality, whereas the ostensive aspects encompass individual perceptual visions of what the routine is and cannot be "conceptualized as a single, unified entity" since it is context dependent (Pentland and Feldman, 2005, p. 797). Therefore, we argue that practices inform routines and that the ostensive aspect can be conceived as the appropriation - i.e. the perception, interiorisation, and contextual adaptation - of a specific practice. Conversely, practices are the result of the legitimation of multiple perceptions of what constitutes an adequate way of doing, i.e. ostensive aspects of routines. This view is consistent with Whittington (2002, p. 3) argument that:

"*Practices are the 'done thing', in both the sense of accepted as legitimate and the sense of well-practised through repeated doing in the past*".

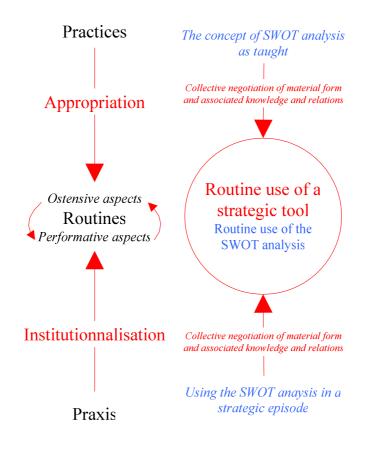# IV. STRATEGY ROUTINES AS A RESULT OF PRAXIS' INSTITUTIONALISATION AND PRACTICES' APPROPRIATION

Figure 2: Conceptual framework for understanding the emergence of strategising routines

Figure 2 represents the main elements of our conceptual framework. It proposes an integrative view of praxis, practices, and routines theorizing routines as an intermediate level between praxis and practices. More precisely, we argue that strategizing routines are the result of the appropriation of strategy practices in the wider context, and of the repetition of situated strategy praxis.

To illustrate our argument, let us consider how routines of doing SWOT analyses emerge. Practitioners have a general knowledge of what is a SWOT analysis, due to their background and education (Stenfors *et al.*, 2004; Jarzabkowski and Wilson 2006; Gunn and Williams, 2007; Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2013b; Wright *et al.*, 2013). Practices give a give a general set of concepts, models, methods that can be used. Their effective use, however, is subjected to processes of collective negotiation of both the meaning and the procedural way of repeatedly

engaging in SWOT analyses in a particular organisational context. On the performative side, the repetition of successive SWOT analyses, using different templates and methods, are also the locus and stake of negotiations to institutionalise those ways of doing.

IV.1. Institutionalisation of praxis

Interactions between the recurring praxis of a team's interdependent members constitute the performative part of what could be a routine. Hence, stabilisation of strategy praxis leads to the emergence of the performative aspect of a strategising routine.

However, how to obtain such a stabilisation is not straightforward. When people act, they do so according to their perception of the organizational and environmental contexts they are situated in. So strategy praxis is associated with the practitioner's individual goals and perception of his/her local context.

Part of this praxis may be selected and retained for further sequences of actions, so that they become "part" of a strategising routine, in an institutionalisation process. If a specific action is to be institutionalised as a part of a strategy routines- i.e. done repeatedly during successive sequences of a routine - then the perception of the organisation it conveys need to be collectively accepted by the participants to the routine.

Hence, the stabilisation of interdependent sequences of actions implies that there is a shared and stable agreement on the **compatibility** and the **legitimacy** of the respective individual praxis' goals and perception. The building of such an agreement necessitates some decontextualisation (Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2011) that occurs when practitioners acknowledge and reflect upon the context that implicitly influences their doings.

When people perform routines, indeed, they refer to and interplay with the (implicit) rules that constitute the ostensive part of routines (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). Therefore, routines are reflexive. People use feedbacks for continuously improving routines (Truijen & al. 2007). Routines continuously change under the pressure of such feedback. When performing routines, people build expectations for the outcomes of such performances. Outcomes and performances' analysis lead to the modification of the routine's ostensive aspect that in turn will affect future performances. So there is a need for a reflexive evaluation by performing people towards their own activities if their praxis is to turn into routine.

IV.2.   Appropriation of strategy practices into strategy routines:

Strategic practices provide practitioners with tools and techniques that they can use to formulate and implement strategy. As noted by Spee and Jarzabkowski (2009), those tools and techniques need to be appropriated in order to be used effectively. When a new management technique - such as a standard operating procedure - is introduced, it indeed needs to be appropriated by its future users: "*a management technique is implemented through an intense process of contextualization*" (Hatchuel and Weil, 1995, p. 100). Information system management research has extensively studied, and theories of appropriation (e.g. Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003, Orlikowski, 1992, 2000; Cecez-Kecmanovic *et al.*, 2008) may be useful to understand how strategic practices are collectively appropriated in strategising routines.

Actually, the appropriation of a specific strategy practice into a strategising routine is not deterministic. Jarrat and Stiles (2010) note that, in routinised practices of strategising, the use of SWOT analysis followed different rationales and took place at different moments of the routine. The special issue on strategic planning (Whittington and Cailluet, 2008) brought out similar findings and emphasised the different routines that characterised the use of this practice. Such variations mean that strategic practitioners will need to negotiate the settlement of an (maybe ambiguous) agreement about the way the strategy practice is to be used.

Although this process may process smoothly through socialisation and mutual coordination (Orlikowski, 2000) of a community of practitioners who share similar experiences (Whittington, 2006b), it nevertheless leaves room for agency and power relations (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Hodgkinson and Wright (2002) describe how a change in a CEO's agenda jeopardised the appropriation of scenarios approach, although other practitioners expressed that they found it potentially useful. They explain the brutal withdrawal of the CEO from the process with two arguments. First, the strategic views that had emerged from the first phases of the approach were inconsistent with her perceptions of the firm. Second, "*the fact that all of her immediate subordinates were also involved in the strategy consultation process meant that her projected image, as one who was in control of the longer-term destiny of the organization, was severely threatened by the continuation of our process intervention* » (p. 962).

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, we attempt to integrate the routines and S-A-P approaches by proposing a conceptual model linking strategy praxis, practices, and routines. We first show that the recursive link between strategy praxis and practices is not as straightforward as it appears in the S-A-P literature. We then assert that it is useful to posit strategising routines at an intermediate level between strategy praxis and practices and give three arguments to do so. We then propose a conceptual framework linking the concepts of strategy practices, routines and praxis. In this model, individual praxis informs the performative aspects of strategising routines, while institutionalised practices inform their ostensive aspects. Finally, we show that strategising routines are the result of two processes of practices' appropriation and praxis' institutionalisation.

Our paper thus provides a unified conceptual framework to understand the roles of praxis and practices in informing strategising routines. It goes one step further in the strategy-as-practice approach by linking it to the micro-routines' literature, as advocated by Hansen and Vogel in a recent paper (2011). Our research answers to two gaps in the literature: the first one concerns the articulation of praxis and practices in the practice turn in strategy research (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007; Witthington, 2006a) and the second one is to better understand the micro-foundations of routines (Felin and Foss, 2011). In particular, regarding this latter point, our research proposes an original conceptualisation of the link between praxis, routines and practices, which positions routines at an intermediate level of analysis. This positioning offers new insights about how routines unfold from individual activities and relates to more macro level of analysis (Salvato and Rerup, 2011).

Based upon the developments above, and in line with the S-A-P approach, several managerial implications derive from our findings. First, some strategy practices may be more fashionable than others, but this does not mean that they will be more easily appropriated into strategising routines. Consequently, the emergence of routines could take more time if strategy practices are not properly acculturated to the specific context of the group. An organization's dynamic capabilities lie in its ability to create and adapt new practices to its own context. Eventually, it implies that we (as teachers) have to take it into account in the way we transfer knowledge to practitioners and to students, as underlined by Witthington (2006a). Moreover, it is important for managers to be able to draw on the social and political landscape of their own organisation

and of their understanding of power relationships to support processes of praxis stabilisation and practices appropriation.

Our research identifies two processes of strategy routines' emergence and discusses the nature of these processes. They are depending on the stabilisation of praxis and on the appropriation of practices. However, we still have to explore <u>how</u> these processes take place. Depending on the path and degree of praxis stabilisation and of practices' appropriation, the emergence of strategy routines could follow different trajectories.

Finally, failures to routinise strategy activities may take different forms. Praxis may keep varying, practices may be explicitly rejected, or intermediate forms of failures may happen. In particular, practices may be adopted as institutional facades (Meyer and Rowan, 1977), and such a form may explain why the results of the use of some strategy practices are not incorporated into subsequent strategy processes (Hill and Westbrook, 1997; Macpherson and Jones, 2008). Exploring how groups fail to properly appropriate strategy practices may hence bring additional insights on some surprising results of past studies.

VI.   REFERENCES

Becker M. C. (2008) (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational routines*, Edward Elgar

Becker M. C., Salvatore, P. & Zirpoli, F., 2005, "Applying Organizational Routines in Analyzing Organizations: Methodological Issues and Analytical Contributions", *Second Routines Workshop*, Sophia-Antipolis

Bourdieu P. (1972), *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Droz, Genève

Bourdieu P. (1980) *Le sens pratique*, Minuit, Paris

Bowman, G., Bradley MacKay, R., Masrani, S,. and P. McKiernan (2013). 'Storytelling and the scenario process: Understanding success and failure', Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 80, pp. 735-748.

Bresnen, M., Goussevskaia, A. and Swan, J. (2005), "Organizational Routines, Situated Learning and Processes of Change in Project-based Organizations", *Project Management Journal*, Vol.36, n°3, p. 27-41

Brundin E., Melin L. and Nordqvist M., 2008, "Strategic Dialogue as an Important Practice of Strategizing", 24th *European Group of Organization Studies annual colloquium, Amsterdam, July*

Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., M. Janson and J. Zupancic (2008). 'Transition to market economy through information systems and organizational learning: a case of Sava company', Journal of Global Information Technology Management, 11, 4, pp. 10-32.

Feldman, M. S. and Orlikowski, W. J. (2011), "Theorizing Practice and Practicing Theory" *Organization Science*, Vol.22, p. 1240-1253

Feldman M. S. and Rafaeli A. (2002), "Organizational Routines as Sources of Connections and Understandings", *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(3), p. 309-331

Feldman, M.S. and Pentland, B.T. (2003), "Reconceptualizing Organizational Routines as a Source of Flexibility and Change", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol.48, p. 94-118

Feldman, M.S. and Pentland, B.T. (2008), "*Routine Dynamics*", in Barry D. et Hansen H. (Eds.), The Sage Handbook of New Approaches in Management and Organization, Sage, p. 302-315

Felin T. and Foss N.J. (2011), "The endogenous origins of experience, routines, and organizational capabilities: The poverty of stimulus", *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 7, 2, pp. 231-256

Foss N. J., (2011), "Why micro-foundations for resource-based theory are needed and what they may look like", *Journal of Management*, 37, 5, pp. 1413-1428

Fredette C. and Branzei O., 2007, "Routine performativity in groups: Socio-emotional contextualizing of individual practice", *Third International Conference on Organizational Routines*, Strasbourg, 25-26 May

Gherardi, S., (2000), "Practice-based Theorizing on Learning and Knowing in Organizations", *Organization*, 7, 2, pp. 211-223

Giddens, A., 1984, *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity.

Golsorkhi D. and Huault I., 2006, "Pierre Bourdieu : critique et réflexivité comme attitude analytique", *Revue Française de Gestion*, n°165, pp. 15-34

Gunn, R., and W. Williams (2007). 'Strategic tools: an empirical investigation into strategy in practice in the UK', Strategic Change, 16, pp. 201-2016.

Hansen N.K. and Vogel R., (2011) "Organizational Routines: A Review and Outlook on Practice-Based Micro-Foundations", *Economics, Management & Financial Markets*, Vol. 6 Issue 3, pp. 86-111

Hatchuel A. and Weil B., 1995, *Experts in Organizations: A Knowledge-based Perspective on Organisational Change*, Walter de Gruyter

Hendry J. and Seidl D., 2003, "The structure and significance of strategic episodes: Social systems theory and the routine practices of strategic change", *Journal of Management Studies*, 40, 1, pp. 175-196

Hill, T., and R. Westbrook (1997). 'SWOT analysis: it's time for a product recall', Long Range Planning, 30, 1, pp. 46-52.

Hodgkinson G. P., Whittington R., Johnson G. and Schwarz M. (2006), "The Role of Strategy Workshops in Strategy Development Processes: Formality, Communication, Co-ordination and Inclusion", *Long Range Planning*, 39, 5, pp. 479-496

Hodgkinson G. P. and Wright G., 2002, "Confronting strategic inertia in a top management team: learning from failure", *Organization Studies*, 23, 6, pp. 949-977

Hodgson G. M. and Knudsen T., 2004, "The firm as an interactor: firms as vehicles for habits and routines", *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 14, 3, pp 281-307

Howard-Grenville J. A., (2005), "The persistence of flexible organizational routines: The role of agency and organizational context", *Organization Science*, 16, 6, pp. 618-636

Jarrat D. and Stiles D., (2010), "How are Methodologies and Tools Framing Managers' Strategizing Practice in Competitive Strategy Development?", *British Journal of Management*, 21, 1, pp. 28-43

Jarzabkowski P., 2004, « Strategy as practice: Recursiveness, adaptation and practices-in-use », *Organization Studies,* 24, 3, pp. 489–520

Jarzabkowski P., Balogun J. and Seidl D., 2007, "Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective", *Human Relations*, 60, 1: 5-27

Jarzabkowski P., Giulietti M., Oliveira B. and Ammo N., 2013, "'We Don't Need No Education' - Or Do We? Management Education and Alumni Adoption of Strategy Tools", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 22, 1, pp. 4-24

Jarzabkowski, P. and Wilson D. C., 2006, "Actionable strategy knowledge: A practice perspective", *European Management Journal*, 24, 3, pp. 348-367

Johnson, G., and Huff A., 1997, "Everyday innovation/Everyday strategy" in Hamel G. et Prahalad C. K., Thomas H. et O'Neal D. (Eds.), *Strategic flexibility*, London: Wiley.

Johnson, G., Langley, A., Melin, L. & Whittington, R., 2007. *Strategy as Practice. Research Directions and Resources*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Kaplan, S. (2011). 'Strategy and PowerPoint: an inquiry into the epistemic culture and machinery of strategy making', *Organization Science*, 22, 2, pp. 320-346.

Lawrence, P.R, Lorsch, J.W (1970), *Studies in Organization Design*, Irwin, Homewood, IL

March J.G. and Simon H.A., (1958), *Organizations*, Wiley, New-York.

Macpherson, A., and O. Jones (2008). 'Object-mediated learning and strategic renewal in a mature organization', Management Learning, 39, 2, pp. 177-201.

Meyer J. W. and Rowan B. (1977), "Institutionalized organizations: formal structure as myth and ceremony", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 83, p. 340-363.

Nelson, R. R. and Winter, S. G. (1982), *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change*, Cambridge MA: Belknap Press

Orlikowski, W. (1992), "The Duality of Technology: Rethinking the Concept of Technology in Organizations", *Organization Science*, Vol.3, n°3, p. 398-427.

Orlikowski W. J., 2000, "Using Technology and Constituting Structures: A Practice Lens for Studying Technology in Organizations", *Organization Science*, 11, 4, pp. 404-428

Paroutis S. & Pettigrew A., 2007, "Strategizing in the Multi-business Firm: Strategy Teams at Multiple Levels over Time", *Human Relations*, 60, 1: 99-135

Pentland, B.T. and Feldman, M.S. (2005), "Organizational Routines as a Unit of Analysis", *Industrial and Corporate Change*, Vol.14, n°5, p. 793-815.

Pentland, B.T. et Feldman, M.S. (2008a), "Designing Routines: On the Folly of Designing Artifacts while Hoping for Pattern of Actions", *Information and Organization*, vol.18, p. 235-250

Pentland B. and Feldman, 2008b, "Issues in empirical field studies of organizational routines", in Becker M. C. (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational routines*, Edward Elgar, pp. 281-300

Pentland B.T., Feldman M.S., Becker M.C. and Liu P. (2012), "Dynamics of organizational routines: A Generative Model", *Journal of Management Studies*, 49, 8, pp. 1484-1508

Pentland, B.T., Haerem, T. and Hillison, D. (2010), "Comparing Organizational Routines as Recurrent Patterns of Action", *Organization Studies*, Vol.31, n°7, p. 917-940.

Reckwitz, A. 2002 'Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Cultural Theorizing'. *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol.5, n°2, p.243–263.

Regnèr, P., 2003, « Strategy Creation in the Periphery: Inductive versus Deductive Strategy Making'. *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol.40, n°1, p. 57–82

Regnèr P., 2008, "Strategy-as-practice and dynamic capabilities: Steps towards a dynamic view of strategy", Human Relations, 61, 4, pp. 565-588

Rerup C. and Feldman M. (2011) "Routines as a source of change in organizational schemata: The role of trial-and-error learning." *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 3, pp. 577-610

Rerup C. and Feldman M. (2007) "Creating an organization by enacting routines", *23rd European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) Colloquium*, Vienna, Austria

Reynaud B., 2004, *Les règles économiques et leurs usages*, Paris : O. Jacob

Reynaud B., 2005, "The void at the heart of rules: Routines in the context of rule-following. The case of the Paris Metro Workshop », *Industrial Corporate Change*, 2005, Vol. 14, n°5, p. 847-871

Reynaud B., 2011, « How Rules Operate in Practice", *Academy of Management Annual Meeting*, Montreal

Salvato C. and Rerup C. (2011), "Beyond collective entities: Multilevel research on organizational routines and capabilities", *Journal of Management*, 37, 2, pp. 468-490

Seidl D., Balogun J. and Jarzabkowski P., 2006, « Stratégie comme pratique : recentrage de la recherche en management stratégique. Remettre l'humain dans la recherche en stratégie », in Golsorkhi D. (Ed.), *La fabrique de la stratégie. Une perspective multidimensionnelle*, Vuibert, p. 1-7

Spee A.P. and Jarzabkowski P., 2009. "Strategy tools as boundary objects", *Strategic Organization*, 7, 2, pp. 223-232

Spee, A. P., and P. Jarzabkowski (2011). 'Scenario planning as communicative process', Organization Studies, 32, 9, pp. 1217-1245

Spender, 1989, *Industrial recipes*, Oxford: Blackwell

Stenfors, S., Tanner L., and I. Haapalinna (2004). 'Executive use of strategy tools: building shared understanding through boundary objects', Frontiers of E-Business Research, pp. 635-645

Turner S. (1994). *The Social Theory of Practices: Tradition, Tacit Knowledge and Presuppositions*. Cambridge: Polity

Truijen, K.J.P., Hoeve, A. and Nieuwenhuis, A.F.M. (2007), "Measuring Organizational Routine Change in Work Teams: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Studying Organizational Routine Change", *Third International Conference on Organizational Routines*, Strasbourg, 25-26 May.

Vaara E. and Whittington R., 2012, "Strategy as practice. Taking social practices seriously", *Academy of Management Annals*

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M.G., Davis, G.B. and Davis, F.D. (2003), "User Acceptance of Information Technology: Toward a Unified View", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol.27, p. 425-478.

Walsh J.P., and Ungson G.R., 1991, "Organizational memory", *Academy of Management Review*, 16, pp.57-61

Whittington, R. (1996). "Strategy as practice", *Long Range Planning*, 29, pp. 731–735

Whittington, R. 2002, "Practice Perspectives on Strategy: Unifying and Developing a Field", Best Paper Proceedings, *Academy of Management*, Denver

Whittington R., 2006a, "Completing the practice turn in strategy research", *Organization Studies*, Vol.27, n°5, p. 613-634

Whittington, 2006b, "Learning more from failure: practice and process", *Organization Studies*, 27, 12, pp. 1903-1906

Whittington R. and Cailluet L., 2008, (Eds), *The crafts of strategy*, special issue of Long Range Planning, vol. 41

Wright, R. P., Paroutis S. E., and D. P. Blettner (2013). 'How useful are the strategic tools we teach in business schools?', Journal of Management Studies, 50, 1, pp. 92-125.