

Organizational strategy making and first-line manager challenges: A building and dwelling perspective

Åge Gjøsæter and Øyvind Kyvik

Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Abstract: This study explores challenges experienced by first-line managers as strategy makers and particularly how these relate to converting strategic goals into reality within organizational front-line contexts. Using Heideggerian building and dwelling perspectives as a conceptual foundation, the first-line managers' role as organizational strategy makers are explored. A building perspective implies deliberate strategy making based on goals usually determined by upper-level management. From a dwelling perspective, on the other hand, strategy making is carried out non-deliberately by actors immersed in a relationally constituted nexus of social activity, as practical coping. The study reveals challenges related to facilitation of practical coping within organizational front-line contexts as dwelling contexts requiring a balancing of strategic and operational leadership behaviors. Implications for the leadership of organizational strategy making are elaborated.

Key words: strategy making; first-line managers; organizational front-line contexts; production core; building; dwelling; practical coping.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore challenges experienced by first-line managers as strategy makers, and particularly challenges in converting strategic goals into reality within front-line contexts, herein referred to as organizational production cores (Mintzberg, 1983). First-line managers constitute a subcategory of middle managers, defined as leaders two or more levels below top management in the organizational hierarchy and situated at the middle-management level closest to the production core (Caldwell, 2003; Hope, 2015). A key responsibility for first-line managers is to manage the daily operations with the aim of delivering products and services to customers. Another responsibility is relations-oriented leadership duties, because the vast majority of employees within organizations, often as much as 70-80 % (Priestland and Hanig, 2005), is employed within organizational production cores. Even further first-line managers are supposed to act as strategy makers within their areas of responsibility, converting strategic goals into reality while at the same time taking care of operational and relational leadership duties without any possibilities for further delegation of management responsibilities (Hales; 2005; Griffin, 2008; Peters, 2011).

Acting as strategy makers within organizational production cores implies converting more or less abstract strategic intentions stated in words and expressed in descriptive terms into new work-practices, as practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Converting strategic intentions into new practical consciousness are recognized as one of the most challenging issues in organizational strategy making. Research indicates that as much as 70-80 % of initiated strategy making processes do not achieve results as expected, are total failures, or make things even worse (Clegg and Walsh, 2004; Pelletiere, 2006; Lyons, Swindler and

Offner, 2009; Bruno and Kerber, 2010; Decker, Durand, Mayfield, McCormack, Skinner and Perdue, 2012; Stensaker and Haueng, 2016).

From the early 1990ies and onwards, a significant amount of research has focused on the role of middle-managers in organizational strategy making (e.g. Floyd and Wooldridge, 1994, 1997; Huy, 2001; Balugun, 2003; Balugun and Johnson, 2004; Mantere, 2007; Vøxted, 2007; Hope, 2010; Whittington, 2011; Stensaker, Bryant, Bråten and Gressgård, 2012; Elstad, 2015; Hope, 2015). However, much less attention has been granted to the particular challenges confronting first-line managers as middle managers at the lowest management level and on their role as strategy makers. With the objective of investigating the challenges first-line managers encounter as strategy makers, the following research question is formulated:

What constitutes particular challenges for first-line managers as strategy-maker within organizational production cores?

The objective of the study is to shed further light on the particular challenges related to converting discursively stated strategic goals into new practical consciousness and to explore first-line managers' role as strategy-makers within organizational production cores. Organizational production cores as contexts are inhabited by employees immersed in a relationally constituted nexus of social activity, where activities and actions are a balance between strategic intents and immediate operational objectives (Chia and Holt, 2006).

The next section establishes the study's theoretical foundation and outlines organizational production cores as an arena for strategy-making. The following section specifies methodological issues related to empirically revealing organizational- and relational conditions for strategy making within organizational production cores as experienced by first-line managers. Subsequently follows a presentation of the study's main empirical findings and a discussion of how the findings relate to the role of first-line managers as strategy makers both with reference to extant theory and to practice. The study concludes with a summary of its implications, its weaknesses and directions of further research.

2 Theoretical Perspectives

The study is inspired by Heidegger (1927) in its approach to the challenges facing first-line managers as strategy makers within organizational cores. Heidegger develops the concepts *building* and *dwelling* as modes through which the world is perceived. The building mode is described as "occurentness", according to Chia and Holt (2006) as a form of detached coping where strategy makers are acting intentionally and self-motivated. In this mode actions are guided by prior mental representations and phenomena are assigned identities, meanings and functions based on predefined goals that direct effort towards desired outcomes in the form of *purposefully planned actions*.

The dwelling mode, on the other hand, is described as "availableness" or "ready-to-hand" (Chia and Holt, 2006) through which the act and actions of strategy making are carried out non-deliberately through "availableness". Within a dwelling mode strategy making is characterized by an absorbed intentionality, as a "non-thematic circumspective absorption", in which the actor is totally immersed in his surroundings, as "a-being- in-the world" (Dreyfus, 1991). Actions are directed toward overcoming immediate impediments, in a *purposive practical coping*. Performative actions remain "quiet" because of an unarticulated availability where consistency of actions is ordered by *modus operandi*, as an internalized disposition. From a dwelling perspective, the world comes into being and takes

on significance through its incorporation into everyday activities (Ingold, 2000). This logic is in accordance with Weich's (2001) concept of enacted sensemaking in that strategy appears to emerge in line with the assertion that an organizational strategy makers can never know what they think thinks or want until they see what it does. Thus, strategy appears not to be fully articulated until well into the implementation phase.

Like Heidegger's *availableness*, practical coping describes the relatively smooth and unobtrusive responsiveness to circumstances that enable human beings to get around and do what they do, through practical activities. As actors, they *are* the practices (Dreyfus, 1991). The identity and individuality emerge through material practices. Practical coping involves intentionality of the body rather than of the mind (Chia and Holt, 2006) and constitutes a thoroughly material response to the world, guided by habitus, as an immersed strategy that ensures consistency of actions even though the actors may be unaware of it. From a dwelling perspective and the notion of practical coping associated with it, action is purposive rather than purposeful. Practical coping constitutes a kind of flexible responsiveness to a situation as it unfolds.

The characteristics of the Heideggerian *building* and *dwelling* modes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Building and dwelling as modes for agency and action.

Building	Dwelling
Strategic actor as observer – acting self-conscious intentional and self-motivated	Strategy-maker acts non-deliberately, immersed in a relationally constituted nexus of social activity
Action is guided by prior mental representations - phenomena are assigned identities, meanings and functions	Action through availableness and ready-to-hand phronetic appreciation
Actions are guided by predefined goals that direct effort towards desired outcomes – as <i>purposefully</i> planned action	Actions are directed towards overcoming immediate impediment – as purposive practical coping
Action as viewed by observers relying on a logic of explanation	Action as viewed by actors applying a logic of practice
Action becomes conscious because of an articulated occurrentness	Performative action remains “quiet” because of an unarticulated availability
Consistency of action assumed to be ordered by deliberate intent	Consistency of action assumed to be ordered by <i>modus operandi</i> - an internalized disposition

Source: Chia and Holt, 2006

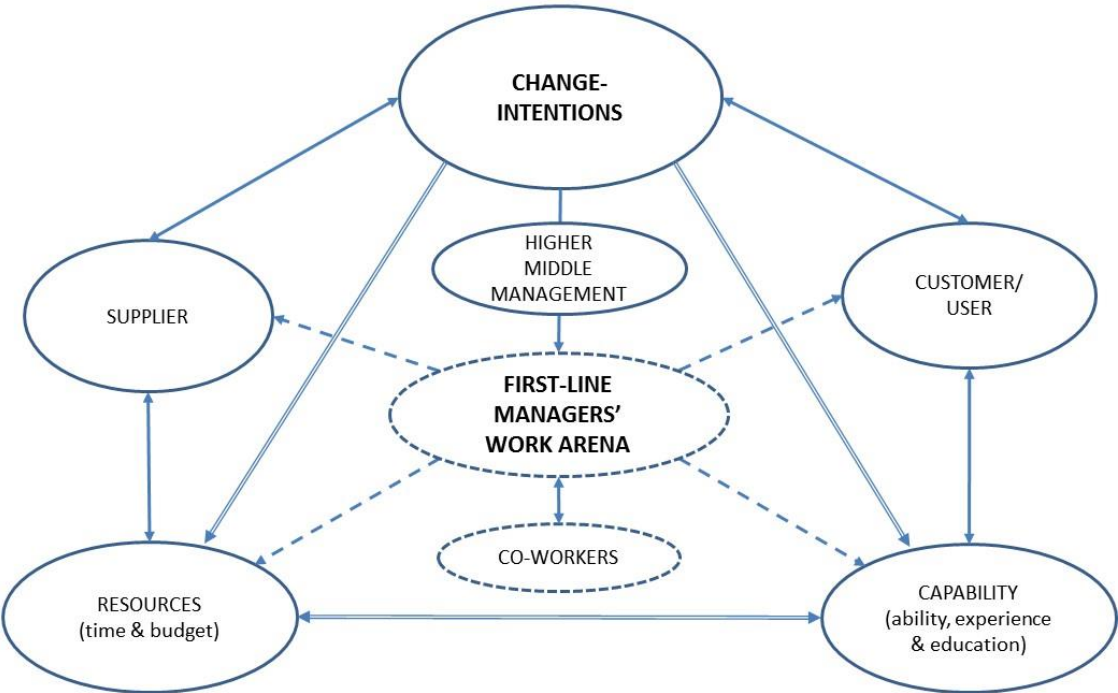
Strategy making, particularly in larger organizations, normally starts with discussions among upper-level leaders, as discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1984). To become new organizational reality, however, the discursive ideas have to be converted into practical consciousness. It is the objective of strategic management that more or less abstract ideas are transformed into new ways of acting, implying a change from *what to do* to *how to do* new and old things in new ways. Converting discursive ideas into new practical consciousness within organizational production cores thus suppose a bridging of the building and the

dwelling mode, i.e. for instance in the context of the various activities forming part of value creation process. A building perspective is typically based on predefined goals stated by upper-level management and is meant to direct effort towards desired outcomes, as purposefully planned actions. On the other hand, strategy-makers within organizational production cores primarily act within a dwelling mode where actions and activities in the first place are directed towards overcoming immediate operational impediments.

A key challenge for first-line managers as strategy makes is, thus, to facilitate the conversion of discursive ideas into new practical consciousness within organizational dwelling contexts. As strategy makers first-line managers may take on the role as navigator or the role as interpreter (Palmer and Dunford, 2008). The navigator role presumes that strategy-making processes could be managed as top-down interventions. The role as interpreter, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that organizational strategy making only to a limited extent can be managed through upper-level management interferences because they are social processes that are created through human interpretation of what constitutes meaningful actions and activities. Successful strategy making within organizational production cores therefore calls for first-line managers capable of adhering to predefined goals stated by upper-level management while at the same time facilitating strategy making in a way that reflects sensitivity to the relationally constituted nexus of social activities carried out within organizational production cores as dwelling contexts. Simultaneously strategy making duties have as an objective to be carried out within stated financial frames and time-schedules while also attending to customer/users, maintaining relations to suppliers and staying in touch with other stakeholders - and all of this while embedded in an increasingly dynamic and global ecosystem.

Typical first-line managers` work-contexts and arenas for strategy making are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Strategy-making’s work-arena



3 Methodology and Data-collection

A qualitative research approach was chosen (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2002; Griffin, 2008) to gain a deeper understanding of characteristics of organizational production cores as work contexts and as arenas for strategy making. The empirical data was collected through interviews with first-line managers within 12 different organizations, including 5 public organizations and 7 private enterprises. The public organizations consisted of municipalities as well as other public bodies. The private enterprises included shipbuilding yards, oil and gas enterprises and maritime shipping companies. In the research process it was the objective to identify common characteristics in the 12 organizations (Stake, 2000). The sample selection criteria were that all enterprises had more than 100 employees, that they recently had been through organizational change processes of some magnitude, and that they had an organizational structure that consisted of at least three levels.

The data collection took place through a combination of 75 single- and focus group interviews with first-line managers within the 12 organizations in the sample, conducted partly in 2008-2009, partly in 2013-2014 and partly in 2015-2016. All of the interviewees were responsible for human resources and financial functions within their areas of responsibility.

The interviews were carried out based on a semi-structured interview-guide. The questions in the guide were items identified in the literature as well as influenced by the researchers' own practice as middle managers. The interviews were directed towards challenges and activities during the strategy making processes that the organizations recently had been through. To verify the validity of the data collected, the interviewees were invited to a meeting after the interview-processes were completed. During this reflection and review-session, no new phenomena or causalities were detected.

4 Empirical findings

Empirical findings indicate that organizational cores constitute challenging arenas for strategy making. Though operational front-line contexts are organized with the prime objective of servicing customers and end-users for which an organization is established in the first place – upper-level management's attention was found to a large extent to be absent during the emerging strategy making processes. Strategy making processes and activities within organizational cores were supposed to proceed without any involvement of upper-level management except in case of deviation from stated strategic goals or operational procedures. *"There is less prestige working within operational production cores"*, was a representative statement by the interviewees in this regard.

Several of the interviewees also stated that they did not experience upper-level management to have sufficient knowledge of challenges related to converting strategic goals into new ways of working within organizational production cores. A key statement in this respect was: *"superior leaders only state strategic goals and are expressing greater loyalty upwards in the organizational system"*. Another interviewee expressed very much the same in the following way: *"The voice of first-line managers within organizational production cores should be more listened to; the voice does not have the saying it ought to have"*.

Prioritizing strategy making activities instead of administrative reporting duties constituted a key challenge for first-line managers. The challenge was reinforced by the fact that operational activities often were difficult to plan in advance because of unforeseen operative challenges that might arise during the day. Reconciliation of efficiency and effectiveness normally had to be carried out without any support from upper-level managers.

Even further first-line managers reported limited freedom of action when it came to financial affairs, particularly within the public enterprises.

As a first-line manager, she or he was the next superior for a significant amount of employees, within some of the 12 organizations in the sample up to 40 to 50 individuals. Even further work-schedules implying evening and night work made it extremely difficult for first-line managers to keep in regular contact with each of the employees, for which he or she was the supervisor. On the other hand, close relations with subordinates were recognized as important responsibilities, not the least during organizational strategy making processes.

Another key challenge reported was maintaining an appropriate balance between task-, relations- and change-oriented strategy-making duties within a work-arena reported as often being (over)full of daily duties. This challenge was aggravated by administrative reporting requests from staff units that on behalf of top management called for various reports regarding operational activities.

Key empirical findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Challenges for first-line managers as strategy makers within organizational production cores.

Key findings

- Organizational cores hectic work-arenas, often with an “overfull plate” of duties.
 - The voice of first-line managers to a limited extent listened to when strategic goals were formulated.
 - Upper-level management’s attention to a large extent in absent except during the initial discursive strategy making phase.
 - First-line managers did not experience upper-level managers to have a sufficient understanding of challenges that might crop up during the strategy making processes.
 - Administrative duties expected to be given priority, often at the expense of operational activities.
 - Financial conditions often put a ceiling on first-line managers’ freedom of action, particularly within public organizations.
 - Up to 40-50 employees to be “seen and heard” during strategy making processes.
-

5 Discussion

The empirical findings indicate that organizational production cores (Mintzberg, 1983) are arenas where many simultaneous processes and activities are fleeting together, constituting multifaceted organizational every-day ontologies (Heidegger, 1996). A first-line manager as strategy maker is supposed to balance operational, relational- and change-oriented strategy making activities and behaviors (Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004) within hectic work-arenas. The data shows first-line managers only to a limited extent are involved in discursive processes aimed at developing strategic goals. Contrasting this, the findings also indicate that first-line managers do not always perceive upper-level managers as having sufficient knowledge of operational issues to be able to specify the strategic goals, which eventually are supposed to be transformed into new ways of working within organizational production cores. This

results in a dissonance not only between what “they say” and what first-line managers, but also in a more fundamental lack of trust in superiors.

First-line managers as strategy makers are consequently supposed to bridge two different thinking modes, while at the same time balancing various leadership duties without being involved in building the strategic goals. They are supposed to act as linking pins (Likert, 1961) between thematic awareness grounded on a building worldview and practical coping grounded on a dwelling worldview. (Tsoukas, 2011) identifies this as a deliberate coping challenge demanding explicit awareness and articulation as well as reinterpretation of stated strategic goals. Reinterpretation of discursively stated strategic goals implies retroactive reframing of more or less abstract discursive ideas into concrete strategy making actions and activities to be carried out to realize new practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). A key challenge in this respect is to ascertain that the stated goals resonate with *modus operandi*, as the internalized dispositions within the actual organizational production core (Chia and Holt, 2006). Discursive ideas developed on basis of thematic awareness are supposed to be reinterpreted (Palmer and Dunford, 2008) to facilitate for practical coping actions and activities. Realizing new practical consciousness thus calls for first-line managers capable of fusing propositional properties and practical coping actions and activities, facilitating for strategy making activities to be enacted as practical coping by micro-organizational actors immersed within the nexus of social activity within organizational production cores.

Practical coping actions and activities presuppose availableness and ready-to-hand appreciation of prevailing organizational conditions (Chia and Holt, 2006) where decisions and actions emanate from being in situ. Being in situ implies that decisions and actions are grounded in internalized predispositions developed over time on the basis of social, cultural and technological traditions. The traditions predefine what constitute meaningful strategy making actions and activities, calling for first-line managers that are sensitive to the social embeddedness of prevailing operational practices within organizational production cores. This again calls for cultural sensitivity (Regner, 2003) because exercise of practical coping presupposes that stated strategic intentions find resonance within organizational cores. On the other hand, if they are not assumed to do so, a key challenge is to provide for processes aimed at unfreezing (Lewin, 1947) dominating organizational norms and values to make them receptive for collective purposive practical coping actions and activities (Chia and Holt, 2006).

Ingold (2000) terms this challenge as “wayfinding”, implying learning and knowing through iterative practical coping actions taken in situ and *sua sponte*. “Wayfinding” is supposed to be carried out within evolving and changing circumstances, where the strategic path is “known as we go” (Ibid, 2000: 229). Wayfinding depends upon the attunement of the wayfinder and his or her reponse to the movements observed during the wayfinding-processes. As wayfinders first-line managers act on basis of their repertoire of practices generated from experiences, their refined sensitivities and habituated ways of responding to tentatively negotiate their way through an uncharted terrain (Chia, 2016). Practices as such are the primary “tools” that managers rely on to construct their social orders and practices help sharpen empirical sensitivities and ensure the development of appropriate actions and activities to realize new practical consciousness. Organizations succeed by sensing, improvising and adapting as they go. In contrast to navigation (Palmer and Dunford, 2008) which primarily relies on pre-established maps and which assumes that strategy makers must know cognitively “before we go” (Chia, 2016), strategy making as practical coping within organizational dwelling contexts takes place non-deliberately where the actors find their strategic path. Thus strategy making within organizational production cores calls for cognitive human interpretation of what constitutes meaningful actions and activities, where

first-line manager`s organizational and relational sensitivity constitute the basis for appropriate navigational choice and maneuvers (Collins, 1998).

6 Implications

6.1 Implications for organizational strategy making

A building and dwelling perspective on organizational strategy making throws new light on organizational strategy making, particularly addressing challenges related to converting strategic intentions into new organizational practice within organizational production cores as dwelling contexts. Within organizational production cores, daily actions and activities are founded on logic of practice developed through experience gained over time, as practical coping, presupposing situational coping skills (Tsoukas, 2011). Strategic goals, however, are normally established based on logic of explanation founded on a building perspective. Realizing the stated intentions thus presupposes the bridging of two contrasting logics; logic of explanation and logic of practice representing what Tsoukas (2011) characterizes as a deliberate coping challenge.

The previous discussion points to the key complexity of first-line managers` coping processes in the form of bricolage (Levi-Strauss, 1966; Eikeland, 2012) whereby deliberate coping implies articulation and reinterpretation of the stated strategic goals. As elaborated in the discussion Tsoukas (2011) describes this as a retroactive reframing challenge aimed at attuning the stated strategic goals to meaningful practical coping activities within organizational production cores. This calls for first-line manager capable of making retroactively sense of the strategic intentions in order to consolidate, further refine or change the existing pattern of operational actions and activities to realize new practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Realizing new practical consciousness therefore demands an understanding of the social and cultural traditions within organizational production cores, including habits and customs embodied in the everyday interactions and activities in the form of skills and overriding predispositions (Bourdieu, 1990). In addition, first-line managers are supposed to be attentive to challenges that might crop up during the emergent strategy making processes and continually facilitate practical coping.

Simultaneously, first-line managers are supposed to make certain that an appropriate balance exists between daily operational activities and relations- and change-oriented strategy activities (Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004). This constitutes a significant challenge within organizational production cores where many processes and activities are fleeting together and forming multifaceted organizational every-day ontologies. For first-line managers, daily operational duties must be given priority while also keeping attention on relations-oriented leadership since the vast majority of employees within organizations works within organizational production cores (Priestland and Hanig, 2005). Even further, first-line managers are also supposed to act as role models during strategy making processes, maintaining trust through a combination of hands-on management and communication. Trustworthy communication requires that the stated strategic intentions are internalized (Balogun, 2003) and thus making them “integral to one`s make up” (Chia and Rasche, 2011). Acting as first-line manager and role model thus calls for practical wisdom (ibid) and situational leadership to be exercised in a wise way in form of metis (Scott, 1998) or cunning intelligence reflected in “street-smart” actions and behavior.

A building and dwelling perspective on organizational strategy making also point to the influences of the role of the organizational system in promoting or hampering strategy making processes. A key aspect in this respect is the communication between organizational levels during the strategy making processes. Bridging detached and practical coping through

deliberate coping (Tsoukas, 2011) requires extensive communication between strategy makers at various levels within organizational systems during the strategy making processes (Shotter, 2005, 2006; Bunderson, Van Der Vegt, Cantimur and Rink, 2016). Particularly, strategic knowledge collected by upper-level managers needs to be fused with more detailed practice oriented knowledge available at lower organizational levels, not the least within organizational production cores. The challenge of fusing strategic and operational knowledge again points to first-line managers as key communicational linking pins (Likert, 1961) during organizational strategy making processes. This study's empirical findings, however, indicate that first-line managers primarily experience their role as strategy makers as soldiers hired for implementing strategic intentions in line with guidelines worked out by upper-level management (Handy, 1997). The organizational system with its structures of membership, hierarchies, rules, control and sanctions (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011), does not take advantage of the key role offered by first-line managers as processors of detailed operational knowledge.

However, the findings also indicate that the success rate of organizational strategy making efforts might increase if first-line managers to a larger extent were involved in the discursive strategy making process, thereby taking advantage of their strategic position within organizational systems, amongst other in order to reconcile propositional strategic intentions and situational coping skill within organizational production cores. Taking advantage of operational competence, stated strategic intentions would more easily be accepted as meaningful strategic actions and activities to solve challenges within organizational cores, and thus stand a better chance of becoming new practical consciousness (Huy, 2001; Hales, 2005; Vøxted, 2007; Peters, 2011; Hope, 2015). The stated strategic goals would to a larger extent resonate with the prevailing logic of operational production cores, and thus being accepted as basis for practical coping actions and activities carried out more or less tacitly (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2010; Gjørseter and Kyvik, 2015), thus narrowing the knowing - doing gap (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000). Successful organizational strategy making therefore calls for bridging of a building perspective, as detached coping, and a dwelling perspective, as practical coping (Tsoukas, 2011). This presupposes dialogical communication process between strategy makers at various organizational levels, including first-line managers, during the emerging strategy making processes.

6.2 Educational implications

The objective of reducing the knowing – doing gap also appears to have clear implications for university-level education. With reference to the thoughts of Hodgkinson (Hodgkinson et al. 2001) and Huff (Huff 2000), knowledge production is radically changing, also requiring continued dynamic adaptation of what learning institutions offer and how they interact with stakeholders. “Based on this there seems to exist an urgent need to rethink the traditional business schools’ sole focus on leadership, management, administration, organization and finance/economics, and in addition encourage and actively stimulate more collaboration with engineering - and other faculties and with firms within the schools’ surrounding eco-systems” (Kyvik 2017, 16). The argument is that involving students increasingly in university-industry interactions will help both future leaders and future front-line managers to appreciate the effective interactions required between the front-line production core and top-management. Starting these learning processes at the university-campus will stimulate inter- and cross-disciplinary cognitive collaboration processes and lead to increased knowledge sharing between faculties and small and large firms embedded in surrounding business-clusters.

Eventually, from a front-line manager's perspective, it appears important that the top-leader or top-leader team either have "been in the front" or are sufficiently humble to learn which competences are most valid in the juxtaposing of demands faced in front of customers and users. Part of this key competence is the prime ability to function in the role of front-line manager and secondly to be able to bridge strategic intentions, operational demands and relationship-based leadership duties. The theory required for functioning as an effective front-line manager or future CEO may be learned at the university, but the rest will still be apprehended in a practical operational context.

7. Conclusions

The study's empirical findings and subsequent elaboration indicate that involving first-line managers in the discursive strategy making processes might increase the success rate of organizational strategy making efforts and take advantage of their key position within organizational systems. Operational knowledge available within organizational cores may thus to a larger extent be fused into the discursive strategy making processes, converting strategic intentions into meaningful actions and activities to solve challenges within organizational production cores - and thus transforming strategic intentions into new practical consciousness. As strategy makers first-line managers should be particularly alert to the tacit understandings and internalized styles of practical coping within the operational production cores. On the other hand a fully developed Heideggerian onto-epistemology framework provides a coherent way for different types of strategy making from a practical perspective. Successful strategy making should make room for both building and dwelling modes, acted out as non-deliberate as well as deliberate engagement.

A building and dwelling perspective on organizational strategy making reminds us, as educators and researchers, of the importance of resisting the seduction of the superficial and dare to look beneath the surface of social phenomena and focus on the "rough ground" (Dunne, 1993) of the practitioners. It is the challenge of research on organizational strategy making to explore the spontaneous emergence of strategic processes and appreciate the myriad of micro-organizational activities involved in creating new practical consciousness. This requires a grasping of the internal cognitive logic of local coping actions that take place largely unplanned and in situ in dealing with the exigencies of an evolving situation, immanent in everyday practical coping. To grasp these immanent aspects scholars need to embrace the reality of tacit forms of understanding (Polyani, 1983) and the meaning of local forms of knowing.

8. Limitations and Directions for further Research

The empirical findings and subsequent conclusions of the study may not be generalized. The empirical data represents the voice of first-line managers and others' voices may express other opinions of why organizational change-processes often do not succeed. Also the chosen sample may not be representative for other industrial contexts and the Norwegian cultural setting may not be comparable to samples drawn in other cultures.

A natural next step in this research will be to expand the data to include informants from several levels within organizations to verify how professionals from other areas of responsibility perceive what promotes and/or hinders the strategic change process. Another

research topic would be an investigation of how the organizational hierarchy and level of bureaucracy affects the strategic change- and innovation process (Bunderson et al., 2016).

References

- Ahrne, G. and Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: the significance of partial organization. *Organization*, 18 (1), 83-104.
- Balugun, J. (2003). From blaming the middle to harnessing its potential: creating change intermediates. *British Journal of Management*, 14, 69-83.
- Balugun, J. and Johnson, G. (2004). From intended strategies to unintended outcomes. The impact of change recipients' sensemaking. *Organizational Studies*, 26(119), 1573-1601.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bruno, F. and Kerber, K. W. (2010). Creating a sustainable approach to change: Building organizational change capacity. *Advanced Management Journal*, Spring, 4-21.
- Bunderson, J. S, Van Der Vegt, G., Cantimur, Y. and Rink, F. (2016). Different views of hierarchy and why they matter: hierarchy as inequality or as cascading influence. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59 (4), 1265-1289.
- Caldwell, R. (2003). Models of change agency: A fourfold classification. *British Journal of Management*, 14, 131-142.
- Clegg, C. and Walsh, S. (2004). Change management: time for change. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 13 (2), 217-239.
- Chia, R. (2016). A process-philosophical understanding of organizational learning as "wayfinding": process, practices and sensitivity. *The Learning Organization*, 24 (2), 107-118.
- Chia, R. and Holt, R. (2006). Strategy as practical coping: a Heideggerian perspective. *Organizational Studies*, January, 635-655.
- Chia, R. and Rasche, A. (2011). Epistemological alternatives for researching Strategy as Practice: Building and dwelling worldviews. In Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L, Seidl, D. and Vaara, E. *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 34-46.
- Decker, R., Durand, R., Mayfield, C. O., McCormack, Skinner, D. and Perdue, G. (2012). Predicting implementation failure in organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communication and Conflict*, 16 (2).
- Dunne, J. (1993). *Back to the rough ground: Phronesis and techne in modern philosophy and in Aristotle*. London. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Dreyfus, H.L. (1991). *Being-in-the-world*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Eikeland, O. (2012). Action research, applied research, intervention research, collaborative research, practitioner research, or Praxis research? *International Journal of Action Research*, 8 (1), 9-44.

Ekvall, G. and Arvonen, J. (1991). Change-centred leadership: an extension of the two-dimensional model. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 7, 17-26.

Elstad, A. K. (2015). Critical success factors when implementing an enterprise system- an employee perspective. *Doktorgradsavhandling NHH*. Bergen: NHH.

Floyd, S. W. and Wooldridge, B. (1994). Dinosaurs or dynamos? Recognizing middle management`s strategic role. *Academy of Management Executive*, 8(4), 47-57.

Floyd, S. W. and Wooldridge, B. (1997). Middle management`s strategic influence and organizational performance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 34(3), 465-485.

Gjørseter, Å. and Kyvik, Ø. (2015). Er høyere organisasjons- og ledelsesstudier egnet for utvikling av reflekterte praksisaktører (Are higher organization and leadership studies appropriate for developing reflective practitioners?). *Magma*, 39-52.

Ghauri, P. and Grønhaug, K. (2002). *Research methods in business studies. A practical guide*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society - outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hales, C. (2005). Rooted in supervision, branching into management: continuity and change in the role of first-line manager. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42, 3, 471-506, May.

Griffin, M. G. (2008). The lived experience of first line managers during planned organizational change: a phenomenological study of one firm in the resident construction industry. Doctorial thesis. Washington: *The Faculty of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development of the George Washington University*.

Hansen, L. H., Larsen, M. and Gulddahl Rasmussen, J. (red.) (2015). *Communication as relational practice of leading*. Bainingstoke, Hampshire: Palmgrave Macmillian.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Heidegger, M. (1927). *Being and time*. (Translated by J. Stambaugh in 1962). New York: SCM Press.

Hope, O. (2015). *Mellomlederen*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.

Hope, O. (2010). Essays on middle management responses to change initiatives. *Doctorial thesis NHH*. Bergen: NHH.

Huy, Q. N. (2001). In praise of mille managers. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(8), 72-79.

Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment*. London, New York: Rutledge.

Kemster, S. and Gregory, S. (2015). Should I stay or should I go? Exploring leadership-as practice in the middle management role. <https://research.gate.net/publication/283696225>.

Kirkhaug, R. (2017). *Endring, organisasjonsutvikling og læring*. (Change, organizational development and learning). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Larsen, H.H. and Elias, S. V. (2008). *Hvidbok. "Ledelse i øjenhøjde - mellomlederen i centrum"*. (Whitebook. "Leadership at private – the middle manager at the center"). Copenhagen: Mediahuset Den offentlige ApS.

Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage of mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in group dynamics, concepts, methods and reality in social science: social equilibria and social change. *Human Relations*, 1: 2-38.

Likert, R. (1961). *New patterns of management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lyons, J. B., Swindler, S. D. and Offner, A. (2009). The impact of leadership on change readiness in US Military. *Journal of Change Management*, 9 (4), 459-475, December.

Mantere, S. (2007). Role expectations and middle manager strategic agency. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45 (2), 294-316.

Mintzberg, H. (1983). *Structures in five: designing effective organizations*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Palmer, I. and Dunford, R. (2008). Organizational change and the importance of embedded assumptions. *British Journal of Management*, 19, 20-32.

Pellettiere, V. (2006). Organization self-assessment to determine the readiness and risk for planned change. *Organizational Development Journal*, 24, 38-43.

Peters, T. (2011). A peerless strategic opportunity: the first-line manager. *New World of Work*, 08.07.

Pfeffer, J. and Sutton, R. I. (2000). *The knowing doing gap*. Harvard Business School Press.

Polyani, M. (1983). *The tacit dimension*. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith.

Priestland, A. and Hanig, R. (2005). Developing first-level leaders. *Harvard Business Review*, 112-120.

Raelin, J. D and Cataldo, C. G. (2011). Whither middle management? Empowering interface and the failure of organizational change. *Journal of Change Management*, 11 (4), 481-507.

Regner, P. (2003). Strategy making in practice: a development in cultural theorizing. *Journal of Management Studies* 40, 57-82.

Sandberg, J. and Tsoukas, H. (2010). Grasping the logic of practice: theorizing through practical rationality. *Academy of Management*, 36(2), 338-360.

Scott, J. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human conditions have failed*. New Haven: Yale ISPS Series.

- Shotter, J. and Katz, A.M. (1996). Articulating a practice from within the practice itself: Establishing formative dialogues by the use of “social poetics”. *Concepts and Transformation*, 1: 213-237.
- Shotter, J. (2005). Inside the moment of managing: Wittgenstein and the everyday dynamics of our expressive-responsive activities. *Organizational Studies* 26: 113-135.
- Shotter, J. (2006). Understanding process from within: an argument for “witness-thinking”. *Organization Studies*, 585-604.
- Stake, R. E. (2000). The case studies. In N.K. Denzin, Lincoln, Yonne A. (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research second edition* (s. 134-164). Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Stensaker, I., Bryant, M, Bråten, M. and Gressgård, L. J. (2012). Middle Managements` role during change. I Colman, H. L., Stensaker, I. og Tharaldsen, J. E. (red.). I *A Merger of Equals? The Integration of Statoil and Hydro`s Oil and Gas Activities*, 69-88. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Stensaker, I. and Haueng, A. C. (2016). *Omstilling. Den uforutsigbare gjennomføringsfasen*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Tsoukas, H. and Chia, R. (2002). On organizational becoming. Rethinking organizational change. *Organizational Science*, 13, 5, 567-582.
- Tsoukas, H. (2011). Practice, strategy making and intentionality: A Heideggerian onto-epistemology for Strategy as Practice. I Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L., Seidl, D. og Vaara, E. *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Voxted, S. (2007). *Den nye mellomleder*. (The new middle manager). Oslo: Gyldendal Akademiske.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organization*. London: Sage.
- Whittington, R. (2011). Giddens, structuration theory and Strategy as Practice. In Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L, Seidl, D. and Vaara, E. *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 109- 126.
- Yukl, G. and Lepsinger, R. (2004). *Flexible leadership. Creating value by balancing multiple challenges and choices*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.