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## COMPLETING THE ADAPTIVE TURN: A REVIEW OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH AND A RESEARCH AGENDA

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### Abstract

Based on our review of the past forty years of strategy implementation research, we find that the focus of the research area has moved from the pioneering structural control view to a more adaptive conception of strategy implementation. While early research focused mainly on how to conceptualize strategy implementation plans and how to establish optimal structures, systems, incentives, and controls for strategy implementation, the adaptive turn has shifted the research emphasis on to how organizations make sense of and enact strategies in practice. Although this adaptive turn has contributed significantly to understanding how strategies are implemented and adapted, it has also led to a further fragmentation of the field. We put forward an integrative view that aims at combining the distinctive strengths of the two complementary views. Instead of focusing either on conceptualizing or on enacting, we call for researchers to examine the continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting strategies at multiple hierarchical levels and in multiple organizational units simultaneously. We hope that our review will inspire future strategy implementation research to complete the adaptive turn through an enhanced, integrative view of strategy implementation.

## INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, the main emphasis of strategy implementation research has moved from designing plans, structures, systems, incentives, and controls for effective strategy implementation to developing an improved understanding of the adaptive dynamics of strategy implementation (e.g., Ahearne, Lam, & Kraus, 2014; Klingebiel & De Meyer, 2013). This “adaptive turn” has meant a shift in focus from conceptualizing strategy implementation plans to how organizations make sense of and enact these plans in practice (Alcadipani, Hassard, & Islam, 2018; Ansari, Reinecke, & Spaan, 2014; Bertels, Howard-Grenville, & Pek, 2016; Jarzabkowski, 2004). Although this shift has contributed to the revitalization and growth of strategy implementation research, it has also further fragmented the research area due to the different underlying philosophies, approaches, objects of analysis, and theories represented by the two ways of approaching the strategy implementation phenomenon.

The pioneering structural control view represents a predominantly top-down perspective on the strategy implementation process (e.g., Hitt et al., 2017). It emerged from the work of Galbraith and Nathanson (1978) and Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984) on how to establish optimal structures, systems, and processes for strategy implementation and on how to control progress. Building on contingency theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967), agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976), and theories of organizational controls (Simons, 1994b), the structural control view provided a solid theoretical basis for early research on how to conceptualize strategy implementation plans.

The adaptive turn has shifted the focus of strategy implementation research on to how strategies are continuously enacted and adapted in the implementation process. While strategies can be developed top-down, they can also emerge bottom-up through the proactive involvement of a broad range of different organizational actors. Moreover, activities and interactions take place not only vertically in an organizational hierarchy, but also horizontally across multiple organizational units. Finally, the adaptive turn also shifted the emphasis to theories better suited to explaining adaptive organization behavior, such as theories of sensegiving, sensemaking, rhetoric and discourse, and power and politics (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Sillince, Jarzabkowski, & Shaw, 2012; Vaara & Whittington, 2012).

Based on our review of the extant literature, both views have distinctive strengths and weaknesses. While the structural control view provides a good basis for examining implementation planning in a

systematic manner, it tends to overlook the behavioral and social dynamics associated with adaptive organizational behavior. The adaptive turn in strategy implementation research has helped address this gap by providing an in-depth understanding of how different types of organizations are enacting strategy in practice. However, due to the uniqueness of these dynamics, this enhanced understanding has not been effectively linked back to inform research on strategy implementation planning.

The limited integration of these two perspectives has prevented the emergence of a cohesive research program on how to move the strategy implementation research area forwards. This need for better integration was already noted in an earlier review of strategy implementation research two decades ago (Noble, 1999). However, despite the call to bring together the “*diversity of perspectives*” (Noble, 1999: 119), the differences between the views seem to have become even more pronounced. While diversity of perspectives is not a problem per se, we find that existing research forgoes the conceptual potential that a better integration could provide.

We propose an integrative view that can support future research in developing a more complete understanding of the strategy implementation phenomenon. The integrative view of strategy implementation emphasizes the complementarities between the research streams in terms of the approaches they take and the empirical phenomena they focus on. At the core of this view is the idea that research should pay closer attention to the continuous interplay between the conceptualizing and enacting of strategies and strategy implementation plans. Consequently, we call for researchers to complete the adaptive turn by investigating how these processes play out in different parts of an organization, how they intersect and influence one another, and how they jointly shape organizational strategies and outcomes.

Based on our review, we put forward a conceptual model of the integrative view of strategy implementation and a research agenda that highlights some of the most promising areas of future research. We structure the research agenda according to the three main areas of inquiry that emerged inductively from our review of the strategy implementation literature: (1) interplay of conceptualizing and enacting; (2) roles of different actors; and (3) coordinating strategic action. In addition, we highlight novel theories that have not been extensively used in strategy implementation research, but that could

complement existing theories in future research, so furthering an integrative view of strategy implementation.

Our review is structured as follows. First, we explain the methodology that we used to select, categorize, and review existing strategy implementation research. Second, we outline the key concepts that provide the conceptual foundation for our review. Third, we discuss the structural control view, its theoretical origins, and its main findings. Fourth, we analyze the emergence of adaptive strategy implementation research, which we call the “adaptive turn.” Finally, we conclude by putting forward an integrative view and a research agenda for completing the adaptive turn.

## METHODOLOGY

We began our review of the research area with a systematic database search using Thompson Reuters Web of Science™. We limited the search to the ten scholarly management journals with the highest impact factors: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Management Science*, *Organization Science*, *Organization Studies*, and *Strategic Management Journal*. While we did not limit the years of publication, most of the reviewed articles were published between 1980 and 2020.

To identify the core body of research on strategy implementation, we conducted two keyword searches. The first combined the term “strateg\*” with “execute\*” or “implement.\*” To avoid overlooking strategy implementation research conducted in the context of implementing strategic change, we complemented our initial search by combining the term “chang\*” with “execute\*” or “implement.\*” These keyword searches produced a total of 599 articles. Next, two of the authors read the abstracts of all 599 papers, rating them on a five-point scale to determine whether they focused on strategy implementation. The interrater reliability of this assessment was 0.707. All articles for which the ratings diverged were then separately analyzed more carefully to assess whether they dealt with implementation. This process resulted in a more focused set of 179 articles.

After reading these 179 articles, we eliminated another 15 because they were not sufficiently engaging with the strategy implementation topic area. When reading these articles and going through

their reference lists, we identified 21 additional relevant strategy implementation articles that had not appeared in our original keyword search. Most of these articles failed to appear either because they were published in journals that had not been included to our search. Adding these articles to the review resulted in a final set of 185 articles on strategy implementation. The different steps of this article selection process are shown in Figure 1.

When reading the articles and examining their reference lists, we also noticed several influential books that had played an important role, particularly in early strategy implementation research. These included Galbraith and Nathanson's *Strategy Implementation: The Role of Structure and Process* (1978), Hrebiniak and Joyce's *Implementing Strategy* (1984), Ansoff's *Implanting Strategic Management* (1984), and Galbraith and Kazanjian's *Strategy Implementation: Structure, Systems, and Process* (1986). Reading these books helped us further deepen our understanding of the structural control view underlying much of the early implementation research.

After identifying the 185 core articles, we read and coded them according to their research focus, theoretical perspective, methods, and key results. When coding these articles, we divided them into those representing the structural control view and those representing the adaptive turn. Our categorization emerged inductively from the coding process, as we realized that there were three factors distinguishing between the two views of strategy implementation: (1) the relative emphasis on conceptualizing versus enacting implementation plans; (2) the actors that the papers were interested in; and (3) the coordination and collaboration mechanisms that they focused on. Furthermore, the underlying theories were also quite different, as we explain in more detail in the subsequent sections of our review.

We coded into the structural control view articles that focused mainly on the development of implementation plans, focused on structures, incentives, and controls as the means of implementation, and that regarded strategy implementation mostly as a top-down process. In contrast, the articles representing the adaptive turn focused on strategy enactment and a broader range of actors. While the structural control view largely dominated strategy implementation research in the 1980s and 1990s, some of the early work also already highlighted the importance of the emergent and adaptive aspects of strategy implementation processes (e.g. Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984; Lindblom, 1959; Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Quinn, 1980; Quinn, 1981, 1982). However, as shown in Figure 2, it took

until early 2000 before adaptive strategy implementation research became mainstream and outpaced research relying on the structural control view.

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The articles corresponding to the two views on strategy implementation are listed in Appendix in Tables A.1 and A.2. We identified in total 88 articles representing the structural control view and 97 articles representing the adaptive turn in strategy implementation research. We will next provide a more detailed review of these two different streams of strategy implementation research. In the review, we focus on the three topic areas that emerged inductively from our review as the most important distinctions between the structural control view and the adaptive turn: (1) the relative emphasis on conceptualizing versus enacting implementation plans; (2) the roles of the different actors; and (3) coordination of strategic action. First, however, we outline the conceptual foundation of our review by discussing the concept of strategy implementation and how it has changed over time as researchers have become interested in the adaptive aspects of strategy implementation processes.

## CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

In early strategy implementation research, strategy implementation was commonly defined as “*a series of interventions concerning organizational structures, key personnel actions, and control systems designed to control performance with respect to desired ends*” (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984) or simply as the “*installation or putting into operation changes called for in a strategic plan*” (Nutt, 1989: 145). These definitions highlight the structural control view, according to which strategy implementation is centrally concerned with structures and controls and the operationalization of a predefined strategic plan. Based on a review of early strategy implementation research, Noble (1999: 119) paved the way for a more adaptive view of strategy implementation by defining strategy implementation as “*the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans.*”

In order to distinguish the concept of adaptive strategy implementation from these earlier definitions, Ahearne, Lam, and Kraus (2014) defined it as middle managers’ “*upward and downward influence to propose, accommodate, and embrace adjustments in planned functional level strategies at*



*the business unit level to fit with operational situations*” (Ahearne et al., 2014: 69). Compared to earlier definitions representing the structural control view, this definition puts more emphasis on the role of accommodation and adjustments in the planned strategies and also incorporates upward influence as a further mechanism for gaining higher-level approval for bottom-up strategy emergence and adjustments in planned strategies. However, as this definition focuses mainly on middle managers and situations in which functional strategies take precedence over business unit strategies, a broader definition would be beneficial to fully capture different types of adaptive strategy implementation behaviors.

Based on our review, we put forward an integrative view of strategy implementation that combines the traditional and adaptive views of strategy implementation. Building on the definitions above, we define strategy implementation according to the three core elements that emerged from our review: conceptualizing strategy, enacting strategy, and coordinating strategic action. Accordingly, we define strategy implementation as *the continuous interplay of three interrelated activities — conceptualizing, enacting, and coordinating — that enable an organization to realize strategies through collective actions by organizational stakeholders*. We define conceptualizing strategy as the activities involved in generating and continuously reevaluating an organization’s strategic direction. While conceptualizing includes the creation of strategy and strategy implementation plans by top managers, it also includes a wider set of activities and actors that contribute to the outcome. We define enacting strategy as the pattern of strategy implementation brought into being within people’s actions over time (e.g. Jarzabkowski, Lê, & Balogun, 2019; Rerup & Feldman, 2011; Weick, 2001). Enacting strategy thus involves both the actions of multiple diverse actors and their interactions in making sense of and adjusting a given strategy to their own contexts. Finally, we define coordinating strategic action as the deliberate actions aimed at orchestrating strategy implementation, as well as the social dynamics through which people work interdependently on goals and tasks to achieve collective action (Jarzabkowski, Le, & Feldman, 2012; Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009).

These three elements — conceptualizing, enacting, and coordinating — underpin our definition of strategy implementation. While many studies have highlighted strategy implementation as an important area of study, even studies representing the adaptive turn have tended to portray strategy implementation as a process that is prone to unintended consequences (e.g. Balogun & Johnson, 2004;

Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Huy, Corley, & Kraatz, 2014; Sonenshein, 2010). The term “unintended consequences,” however, implicitly assumes that outcomes should conform to the intended strategy — and, if they do not, that the implementation process is where strategy is diverted, waylaid, and changed. This view on the unintended consequences of implementation conforms to a long-outdated distinction between formulation and implementation (e.g., Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992; Huff & Reger, 1987; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). *The integrative view that we advance in this paper provides a more dynamic understanding of strategy implementation that unfolds through the interplay of conceptualizing and enacting strategy. It helps researchers to complete the adaptive turn by placing this adaptive interplay at the heart of strategy implementation rather than evaluating the quality of implementation based on the extent to which strategies have been “appropriately” implemented according to a predetermined plan.*

## REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

The deep historical roots of the strategy implementation literature can be seen to go back all the way to Adam Smith’s (1776) famous pin factory and the production efficiency that was gained by implementing specialization, Frederick Winslow Taylor’s principles of scientific management (Taylor, 1911), and the focus on employee motivation in Elton Mayo’s (1933) human resources school. However, it was not until the introduction of contingency theory (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967) and the emergence of strategic management as a scientific discipline dedicated to studying how strategies are “formulated” and “implemented” (Ansoff, 1965; Chandler, 1962; Hofer & Schendel, 1978) that “strategy implementation” became a research topic of its own. In the spirit of Chandler’s (1962) distinction between “strategy” and “structure,” researchers became interested in studying the fit between strategy and structure and whether structure follows strategy or vice versa (e.g., Hall & Saias, 1980; Miles & Snow, 1978; Rumelt, 1974).

The increasing interest in the topic area led to the publication of one of the first textbooks dedicated to strategy implementation (Galbraith & Nathanson, 1978) and, shortly thereafter, to another textbook (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984). Due to its main focus on structure, systems, incentives, and controls, the traditional view can be called the structural control view of strategy implementation (see, e.g., Galbraith & Nathanson, 1978). Despite early calls for research on adaptive strategy implementation (e.g., Lindblom 1959; Quinn, 1978, 1980, 1981), the structural control view largely dominated the

literature throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Even today, it is not uncommon for strategy researchers approach the topic area with a similar framing (e.g., Kiss & Barr, 2017; Tenhiälä & Laamanen, 2018).

While early strategy implementation research shared historical roots with strategy process research, with the two streams often being considered together (e.g. Ansoff, Declerck, & Hayes, 1976; Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg, Raisinghani, & Théorêt, 1976), the structural control view provided strategy implementation researchers with their own identity and enabled them to specialize in studying how to develop the structures, processes, systems, and controls needed for implementing strategic plans and decisions (Galbraith & Nathanson, 1978; Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984).

Most of the early research on strategy implementation did not focus on how strategies are implemented, but rather on how to conceptualize an implementation plan for a strategy or a strategic decision (e.g., Nutt, 1986, 1989). Contingency theory provided a good theoretical basis for this purpose, because it enabled the consideration of the different types of structures, processes, controls, and incentives that could be used to implement different types of strategies. This way of thinking about strategy implementation was adopted in research on the structures of multinational corporations, as many multinationals were struggling in the 1980s and 1990s with how to align their structures with their broadening international scope (e.g., Govindarajan, 1988; Govindarajan, 1989; Gupta, 1987).

We next review how the structural control view developed from its emergence to the present with a focus on the main findings relating to (1) conceptualization and enactment of strategy, (2) roles of the different actors, (3) coordination of strategic action, and (4) the main theories used.

### **Conceptualization and Enactment of Strategy**

In the early strategy implementation literature, it was common to make a clear distinction between strategy formulation and implementation (e.g., Ansoff, 1984; Ansoff, 1990; Ansoff et al., 1976; Hall & Saias, 1980; Hofer & Schendel, 1978). Such distinctions were considered useful as they helped researchers better understand the different activities involved in the “complex process of strategic management,” even though the distinctions were known to be artificial. As Nutt (1989) commented:

Distinctions between the development of a strategy and its implementation often blur in practice. Their separation becomes a practical necessity in research, allowing an investigator to get a grip on the complex process of strategic management (Schendel and Hofer, 1979). Focusing on an aspect of the process provides the leverage needed to explore a portion of strategic management

in depth. Such an approach can be insightful if one remains mindful of the blurred distinction between formulating and implementing a strategy. (p.146)

Although this distinction was challenged on multiple occasions by strategy process researchers (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992; Huff & Reger, 1987; Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Quinn, 1980), it continued to persist in strategy implementation research, as researchers interested in implementation often tended to define the scope of their research with a focus on how strategic plans are implemented (Dundas & Richardson, 1982b; Roth & Morrison, 1992).

A similar distinction exists in strategy implementation research between the conceptualization and enactment of strategy implementation plans. Much of the early implementation research tended implicitly to assume that conceptualizing an implementation plan is the most cognitively demanding task, and that once appropriate structures, processes, systems and controls are in place, strategy implementation will follow. Consequently, the early work tended to focus mostly on how to conceptualize an implementation plan and how to make the appropriate structural and other organizational choices, instead of examining how the organization is enacting the strategy in practice.

The search for an optimal structural design was clearly visible in the early research on strategy implementation in the strategic business units (SBUs) of multi-business firms. Researchers were interested in how to match the characteristics of SBU leaders (e.g. Govindarajan, 1989; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984; Roth, 1992), administrative controls (Birkinshaw & Morrison, 1995; Govindarajan, 1988; Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1986; Roth, Schweiger, & Morrison, 1991), and incentive systems (Stonich, 1981) with SBU strategies.

Contingency theory provided a good basis for examining the fit between strategy and different structural and other administrative design choices. Rueckert and Walker Jr. (1987) studied how the different Miles and Snow strategy types should be optimally matched with different structures and organizational conflict resolution mechanisms in order to eliminate conflicts between marketing and R&D functions. Covin, Slevin, and Schultz (1994) investigated performance implications of the fit between different strategies (build, hold, and harvest) and different strategic, structural, and tactical choices to implement them in a sample of 91 advanced technology manufacturing companies. Finally, Slater and Olson (2001) examined the performance implications of the fit between the different Miles

and Snow strategy types and the different marketing strategies used for implementing them.

A related research stream focused on the applicability of different tactics and best practices for strategy implementation from a process perspective (e.g., Hambrick & Cannella, 1989; Nutt, 1983, 1986, 1987, 1989). Skivington and Daft (1991) examined how the different strategy types related to the use of structure, systems, communication, and sanctions in the strategy implementation process. Liquori (2012) examined how the pace, sequence, and linearity of the change implementation process influences the likelihood of radical change to happen. Finally, Klein and Sorra (1996) put forward a conceptual model of how the implementation climate and individual level values fit influence commitment and the effectiveness of implementation.

Paving the way for a more adaptive perspective, Kim and Mauborgne were among the first to examine the effects of procedural justice on strategy implementation in SBUs (Kim & Mauborgne, 1991, 1993b, 1993a, 1995a, 1996, 1998). They defined procedural justice as (1) bilateral communication, (2) the ability of subsidiary units to challenge the headquarters' strategic views, (3) the headquarters' familiarity with the local situation, (4) provision of a full account of the headquarters' strategic decisions, and (5) the application of consistent decision-making procedures. Using this definition, they found that procedural justice in the interactions between the corporate headquarters and SBUs contributed to higher commitment, trust, and compliance among SBU managers (Kim & Mauborgne, 1991, 1993a), improved the ability of an MNC to execute global strategies (Kim & Mauborgne, 1993b, 1995a), and increased SBU managers' extra-role behaviors (Kim & Mauborgne, 1996).

### **Roles of Different Actors**

In terms of actors involved in implementation, early strategy implementation research focused predominantly on top management as the strategic decision-maker and developer of strategies and strategy implementation plans. Much of the early strategy implementation research also remained either at the level of the firm or organization, without specifying different actors, or focused on "management" as one monolithic unit rather than as a coalition of individuals.

While top management has continued to play an important role in strategy implementation research over the past four decades, the bounded rationality and other information processing limitations of the top management have been increasingly recognized. Moreover, researchers have increasingly

interested in the symbolic role of top management (Hambrick & Lovelace, 2018; Heyden, Fourne, Koene, Werkman, & Ansari, 2017), as well as in the effects of CEO personality characteristics (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2014) on strategy implementation processes.

The role of middle management was to implement top management's decisions or plans, and very few papers went beyond middle management to examine the role of other organizational members in strategy implementation. At the interface of top and middle management, studies focused on the role of the clarity of strategy communication (e.g., Fairhurst, Green, & Courtright, 1995; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004), the development of incentives for middle management to effectively implement predefined strategies (e.g., Stonich, 1981), and the organization of the implementation process (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993; Nutt, 1989). As these interactions were mostly seen as linear top-down interactions, the role of middle managers was either to accept a strategy and implement it effectively or to resist implementation either actively or passively (Guth & Macmillan, 1986).

To ensure effective implementation, early research on strategy implementation identified different approaches or "tactics" to overcome opposition and ensure effective implementation. For example, Nutt (1987, 1989) identified four such tactics: intervention, participation, persuasion, or edict. He developed a decision tree showing how managers could choose the strategy implementation tactic best suited to a particular situation (Nutt, 1989). Similarly, Hambrick and Cannella (1989) developed a model of how top management could better "sell" a given strategy to the organization.

Research on middle management's involvement in the strategy process initially focused on how involvement could be used to build broader consensus and higher organizational commitment to implement strategy (e.g., Floyd & Wooldridge, 1990; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992; Wooldridge & Floyd, 1989). However, it soon became evident that mere involvement does not guarantee commitment to implementation (Westley, 1990). Moreover, the effect of middle management involvement was found to play an even more important role in enhancing the quality of strategies than the commitment to implementation (e.g., Floyd & Wooldridge, 1990; Kim & Mauborgne, 1993b, 1995a; Wooldridge, Schmid, & Floyd, 2008).

Besides top and middle management, early strategy implementation research was also interested in the role of strategic planning staff in strategy implementation. For example, Bryson and Bromiley

(1993) examined how the context of major projects influences project planning and implementation, and how context and process relate to performance outcomes. They found that the context was an important determinant of the chosen implementation approach. The experience, skill, and adequacy of planning staff enhanced communication and reduced the need for forced conflict resolution. This, in turn, improved implementation performance, as communication and project stability were related to project success. The use of force as a conflict resolution mechanism was found to be systematically negatively related to both project success and project learning outcomes (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993).

### **Coordinating Strategic Action**

The central coordination problem in the structural control view is how to align the organization with the top-down mandated strategy. This requires the ability to implement appropriate structures (Galbraith & Nathanson, 1978; Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984), incentives (e.g., Fisher & Govindarajan, 1992; Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2001; Stonich, 1981) and organizational controls (e.g., Kim, Park, & Prescott, 2003; Kumar & Seth, 1998; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994a), in order to achieve coordinated action, to eliminate organizational members' potential opportunistic behavior, and to overcome lack of motivation (e.g., Ross, 2014; Shimizu, 2012). The important role of clear communication in coordinating strategy implementation was also recognized early on (e.g., Dundas & Richardson, 1982b; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1991, 2000).

As structures provided the context for strategy implementation, formal controls and incentives served to ensure that the desired organizational actions take place. Formal controls and incentives were seen as the “control systems package” that consisted of a formal planning system to set goals and standards, an accounting information system to measure performance, and an evaluation and reward system to provide corrective feedback (Daft & Macintosh, 1984). Preble (1992) distinguished between strategic controls (strategic premise control, special alert control, and strategic surveillance) and strategy implementation controls. He argued that it is important to complement the more mechanistic strategy implementation control systems with the continuous evaluation of the initial premises on which the strategy was originally based. Finally, Simons (1994b) identified four types of management control systems used by managers to implement strategy. These included beliefs systems, boundary systems, diagnostic control systems, and interactive control systems, each based on different organizational

design principles. While beliefs systems, boundary systems, and diagnostic control systems may be seen as manifestations of the traditional top-down strategy implementation research, interactive control systems can be seen as foreshadowing adaptive strategy implementation.

Regarding strategy communication, researchers tended to focus on vertical information flows between the top management team and middle managers or between corporate headquarters and subsidiaries. Over time, however, the increasing interest in strategy implementation in diversified companies (Dundas & Richardson, 1982b) and subsidiaries of MNCs (Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1986, 1991, 2000) made it important to also analyze horizontal knowledge flows. Although this research still focused largely on how corporate headquarters can orchestrate the administrative and social system (e.g., Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994a), the view of SBUs and subsidiaries as independent decision entities, with their own strategies and horizontal interaction processes (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1988; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990; Ghoshal & Nohria, 1986; Ghoshal & Nohria, 1989), enhanced understanding of how strategy implementation can be orchestrated in a network of organizational units.

### **Main Theories Used**

*Contingency theory.* Consistent with the focus on conceptualizing strategy implementation plans through structures, processes, systems, and controls, traditional strategy implementation research relied extensively on contingency theory and the premise of fit between strategy and structure (Chandler, 1962). Of the 185 articles included in our review, nearly one third referred to contingency theory in the theory development or argumentation. While contingency theory is chiefly interested in the relationship between strategy and structure, empirical analyses decomposed these constructs into different dimensions of strategy content and structure, systems, processes, and other factors such as management's capabilities. For example, Gupta & Govindarajan (1984) examined whether marketing and sales experience, greater willingness to take risks, and higher tolerance for ambiguity would contribute positively to the effectiveness of SBUs with "build strategies" and negatively to the effectiveness of SBUs with "harvest strategies."

Later studies have extended the applications of contingency theory to an increasingly diverse set of administrative mechanisms, such as formalization, centralization, and organizational integration, as well as more sophisticated ways of capturing a firm's strategy or strategic positioning (Roth et al., 1991).



Hence, whereas Gupta & Govindarajan (1984) saw strategy as a relatively simple dichotomy of build vs. harvest strategies, subsequent studies have used Porter's generic strategies (e.g., Dobni & Luffman, 2003; Govindarajan, 1988; Gupta, 1987; Lee & Miller, 1999), Miles and Snow's typology (e.g., Covin et al., 1994; Golden, 1992; Slater & Olson, 2001), and different international strategy types (e.g. Birkinshaw & Morrison, 1995; Roth et al., 1991; Schleimer & Pedersen, 2014) to distinguish between different types of strategies in strategy implementation research.

Although the use of contingency theory in strategy implementation research has reduced over time, due to the growing popularity of more adaptive conceptions of strategy and structure, researchers have continued to use contingency theory to study specific questions relating to the fit of different types of strategies with different aspects of structure, controls, or incentives. For example, research on the role of incentives has examined how incentive system design characteristics, such as individual incentives (Shaw et al., 2001) or vertical or horizontal pay dispersion (Tenhiälä & Laamanen, 2018), fit with different strategy types and how this fit influences the effectiveness of implementation.

*Organizational control theory.* Early strategy implementation research also built on theories of organizational control (for a recent review, see, Cardinal, Kreutzer, & Miller, 2017). Theories of organizational control help explain how the different configurations of organizational control systems can influence strategy implementation. One early contribution to this research stream was the paper by Daft and Macintosh (1984) that synthesized the extant multi-disciplinary research carried out by accounting, organization theory, and strategy researchers, and identified various different management control subsystems (strategic plans, long-range plans, budgets, statistical reports, policies and procedures, and performance appraisal) that could be used for strategy implementation. The paper by Simons (1994b) on four archetypes of management control systems for strategy implementation provided an important further extension of this work.

The emergence of the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Kaplan & Norton, 2008) and the continuing interest of both researchers and management practitioners in performance measurement and management systems (Frey, Homberg, & Osterloh, 2013; Nyberg, Pieper, & Trevor, 2016) can be seen as an outgrowth of this early work on organizational control systems in strategy implementation. Later research in this tradition has also made important further contributions, among

others, by separating social and informal controls from formal controls and their distinctive effects on the effectiveness of strategy implementation (Brenner & Ambos, 2012; Cardinal et al., 2017; Kreutzer, Cardinal, Walter, & Lechner, 2016; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994a; Simons, 1994b).

*Agency theory.* Agency theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Fama, 1980; Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Ross, 1973) represents the third main theoretical pillar of early strategy implementation research. Although agency theory was not as central in early strategy implementation research as contingency theory, articles applying agency theory have continued to appear also more recently. While the focus on the controls or incentives needed to eliminate opportunism has declined in more recent research (e.g., Ross, 2014; Shimizu, 2012), agency theory has been used to explain, for example, why extrinsic rewards from an award program can crowd out motivation (e.g., Gubler, Larkin, & Pierce, 2016) and why team leaders might resist empowering their teams (e.g. Stewart, Astrove, Reeves, Crawford, & Solimeo, 2017).

*Other theories.* Alongside contingency theory, organizational control theory, and agency theory, a number of other theories have been used in individual studies in the early strategy implementation research. However, none of these other theories can be considered to have become as influential as the three aforementioned theories. One of these other theories is the *expectancy theory of motivation*. Guth and Macmillan (1986) drew on the expectancy theory of motivation to explain the level of effort that a middle manager would invest in strategy implementation. Accordingly, middle managers invest only limited effort in strategy implementation if (1) they are unlikely to perform successfully in strategy implementation, (2) they believe that even if they do perform successfully in strategy implementation, there is a low probability of a successful outcome for the organization, or (3) the desired organizational outcome does not satisfy their individual goals and needs.

## REVIEW OF ADAPTIVE TURN IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

In this section, we discuss the emergence of the adaptive turn in strategy implementation research. In particular, we show how the adaptive turn shifted the predominant focus from conceptualizing strategies and strategy implementation plans to how organizations are enacting strategy in the implementation process. Despite the early warnings of strategy process researchers about artificially separating strategy formulation and implementation (Lindblom, 1959; Mintzberg, 1978; Quinn, 1981), and despite calls for more adaptive views on strategy implementation (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984; Quinn, 1982), the adaptive turn in strategy implementation research did not occur until the turn of the millennium. The separation enabled strategy implementation research to emerge as a research area of its own with its own distinctive focus and identity (Nutt, 1989). The downside, however, was that researchers interested in strategy processes, in general, preferred to focus on strategy formulation and strategic decision-making and overlook implementation. In their review of the strategy process research published between 1992 and 2005, Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006) observed:

The small set of studies exploring implementation issues points to a strong disequilibrium concerning strategy-process research. It seems that research on implementation issues is seen as inferior compared with research on formulation issues. This is all the more incomprehensible because strategy implementation is a significant phase of the strategy process. (p. 694)

At the same time, researchers focusing on strategy implementation were cautious not to expand too far into strategy formulation due to the already existing large body of strategy process research. Consequently, this general divide in strategy process research, defined as “how strategies are formulated and implemented” (Huff & Reger, 1987; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006), largely persisted during the 1980s and 1990s. The shift that led to the adaptive turn in strategy implementation research was driven by the emerging research interest in strategy practices (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Jarzabkowski, 2004, 2005; Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003), the growing popularity of research on organizational sensemaking and sensegiving in the context of strategy implementation (Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003), and calls for more organic views of strategy (Farjoun, 2002). These developments moved the main emphasis of the strategy implementation literature from conceptualizing strategy implementation plans to how people in organizations make sense of and enact strategies in practice.

The important role of the organization in enacting strategy had also been recognized earlier. For example, Bower's (1970) pioneering study showed that strategy is not simply a matter of the formalized plans made by senior managers, but is also shaped by routinized organizational and administrative processes, particularly the resource allocation process. This led to a stream of research on iterative processes (Burgelman, 1983b; Noda & Bower, 1996), through which strategy making unfolds between managerial intentions, as they are encoded in formal plans, and the feedback loops generated through implementing those plans (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Building on Bower, Burgelman (1991; 1994, 1996; 2002) found that despite Intel's top management's formally articulated strategy of being a leader in the market for memory chips, middle and operational-level managers had been directing resource allocation processes toward the most profitable lines of business in the strategically overlooked area of microprocessors. This shift was critical to Intel's strategy in the mid-1980s as memory chips became progressively obsolete and Intel shifted its strategic direction to being a leader in microprocessors. Ultimately, this shift reshaped Intel's formally articulated strategy, as top managers redirected the formal strategy toward the profitable one already being implemented. Hence, the adaptive turn was able to build on the idea of strategy making as an evolutionary process that unfolds as an organization is enacting the company's "official" or "formal" strategy.

The early work on strategy enactment as a dynamic and multi-level process of iterative resource allocation received further impetus three decades later from research on strategy practices (for reviews, see, Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Seidl & Whittington, 2014; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). This research (also called strategy-as-practice research) examines strategy as something that people in an organization do rather than something that an organization has (e.g., Jarzabkowski, 2004; Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007; Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Whittington, 1996, 2007). With its emphasis on social construction, strategy-as-practice research contributed to the emergence of the adaptive turn in strategy implementation research (1) by emphasizing the process of *enacting strategy*, in which a formal strategy, no matter how carefully articulated, is always shaped by the "doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2001) of those who implement it, and (2) by bringing out the organizational arrangements of roles, hierarchies, and structural mechanisms involved in *coordinating strategy* (e.g. Floyd & Lane, 2000; Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000; Jarzabkowski et al., 2012; Mantere, 2008).

Strategy-as-practice research holds that strategies are enacted within the discursive, interpretative, and emotional practices of the actors who implement them (see Balogun, Jacobs, Jarzabkowski, Mantere, & Vaara, 2014). Based on this premise, a growing corpus of studies has shown that strategy implementation is a process of enactment brought about in the discourses (e.g. Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014; Sonenshein, 2010), interpretations (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Rerup & Feldman, 2011), and emotional reactions (Huy et al., 2014; Liu & Maitlis, 2014) of the implementors who shape the strategy that is ultimately realized. Furthermore, strategy-as-practice research has shown that the specific tasks performed by people with different functional expertise and organizational roles shape the way strategic change unfolds and that strategy initiators and formulators may also be strategy recipients and implementors (e.g. Balogun, Bartunek, & Do, 2015a; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019). Hence, in contrast to traditional strategy implementation research, which mainly focused on top management's activities and practices in conceptualizing implementation plans (e.g., Nutt, 1983, 1986, 1989, 1998), strategy-as-practice research called for broadening the range of organizational actors considered (e.g., Mantere, 2008; Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Whittington, 2006).

### **From Conceptualizing to Enacting Strategy**

The adaptive turn shifted the focus of strategy implementation research from conceptualizing strategy implementation plans to enacting strategies in practice and why strategy implementation often fails (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Earlier conceptual studies had noted the difficulty of developing implementable strategies, such as Lindblom (1959)'s "science of muddling through," Quinn's (1978; 1980) "logical incrementalism," Bourgeois and Brodwin's (1984) "crescive" model of strategy implementation, and Mintzberg and Waters' (1985) insights into the gap between intended and realized strategies. For example, Lindblom (1959) noted that rational-comprehensive decision-making requires intellectual capacities and sources of information that managers simply do not possess. Similarly, Quinn (1981) argued that since effective strategies emerge from a series of strategic formulation subsystems that each involve a different set of players, information needs, and time imperatives, higher-level strategies can only be arrived at incrementally. However, despite these early insights, it was not until the emergence of the adaptive turn that more systematic research efforts began examining organizational dynamics of strategy implementation.

Organizational sensemaking emerged as one important stream of research in the adaptive turn. Researchers began to examine how organizational members make sense of strategy in the strategy implementation process (e.g., Balogun, 2006; Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sonenshein & Dholakia, 2012). By viewing strategy implementation as a dynamic interplay of sensegiving and sensemaking (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), researchers found that strategies are often not implemented as originally intended due to senior managers' inadequate or unclear sensegiving actions and the socially negotiated nature of organizational schema change (e.g., Balogun, 2006; Balogun & Johnson, 2004, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). For example, Balogun and Johnson found that although change outcomes were influenced by vertical interactions, a large part of middle managers' sensemaking occurred through lateral, and largely informal processes in the absence of senior managers (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). This lateral influence increased the likelihood of unexpected outcomes from the sensemaking process (Balogun & Johnson, 2005).

Although the adaptive turn has reduced emphasis on organizational structure as the main means for implementing strategy, structure continues to play an important role in research on how organizations are enacting strategy. For example, Foss (2003) examined the reasons for the partial failure of Oticon's adoption of an innovative hybrid "spaghetti" structure. Although the goal of management was to create a more innovative and adaptive organization, its continuous interventions in the delegated rights of the decentralized company led to a loss of motivation and made the company revert to a more structured organizational form. In another study, Jarzabkowski, Le, and Balogun (2019) revisited the strategy-structure argument of Chandler (1962) to examine how espoused changes in structure and strategy were enacted within the hierarchical levels of a telecoms organization and how breakdowns in implementation stimulated enactment across levels from operational employees to middle and top managers in ways that modified both strategy and structure.

Besides changes in structure, researchers have examined how organizations enact new technologies (e.g., Edmondson, Bohmer, & Pisano, 2001), performance management systems (e.g., Stiles et al., 2015), quality management systems (e.g., Ansari et al., 2014; Yu & Zaheer, 2010), compliance systems (e.g., Bertels et al., 2016), and other practices. For example, Canato, Ravasi, and Phillips (2013) provided a detailed analysis of the coerced implementation of Six Sigma at 3M, which

was resisted by the organization as a culturally dissonant practice. The authors found that both the practice and the organizational culture ended up being adapted in the process. Based on their analysis, the authors put forward a process model of how organizational sensemaking influences the recursive relationship between practice adaption and cultural change over time. In another study on the role of culture in practice adoption, Bertels, Howard-Grenville, and Pek (2016) examined the implementation of a compliance routine at an oil company over a five-year period. Adopting the view of culture as a dynamic generative system (Weber & Dacin, 2011), they examined how organizational members shaped practice adoption by using different cultural strategies of action. They found that already the introduction of the routine was *culturally molded* to fit into the existing ways of working. When the new routine was then practiced, patterns of *cultural shielding* and *cultural shoring* emerged to deal with further clashes between the routine and the established ways of working.

One of the novel areas of inquiry that emerged was the role emotions in strategy implementation. In one of the first studies in this research stream, Huy (2002) found that middle managers' emotional commitment to change projects and attentiveness to recipients' emotions facilitated organizational adaptation, whereas the lack of such emotional balancing led to organizational inertia or chaos. In a follow-up study, Huy (2011) found that managers' group-focused emotions (e.g., toward either French- or English-speaking Canadians) influenced how they behaved with different individuals and groups in the context of strategy implementation. Moreover, middle managers' shifting legitimacy judgments of their top managers as change agents influenced their emotional reactions and caused increasing resistance to strategy implementation over time (Huy et al., 2014). Finally, in one of the most recent studies in this research stream, Vuori and Huy (2016) found that the failure of Nokia to implement its strategy was influenced by an asymmetry of fear between top and middle management. While top management was afraid of the competitive environment and hence pressured middle managers even harder to implement strategy, middle managers were so afraid of top management that they were not able to communicate that the proposed strategies were unrealistic.

The increasing emphasis on enacting strategy has also deepened understanding of the different outcomes of strategy implementation processes. While traditionally considered "failures" of implementation (e.g. Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003; Mantere, Schildt, & Sillince, 2012), mutations in

practices or routines (Bertels et al., 2016; Stiles et al., 2015) can represent important adjustments to initially conceptualized strategies and strategy implementation plans. Furthermore, process breakdowns (e.g. Jarzabkowski et al., 2019) may trigger a feedback loop to senior managers, leading them to revisit and potentially reconceptualize the initial strategy. Although critically important for adaptive strategy implementation, such feedback loops have received surprisingly limited attention to date.

### **Roles of Different Actors**

Instead of seeing organizations as vertical hierarchies, the adaptive turn has begun to view organizations as pluralistic settings that are characterized by diffuse power and by the divergent interests of different organizational members (e.g., Denis, Dompierre, Langle, & Rouleau, 2011; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2017). In order to establish a joint account, diverse actors need to engage in a sensemaking process that bridges the actors' multiple prevailing meanings and the new meanings conveyed by the proposed strategy (Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2017). Thus, the role of senior management is to mediate between the various local change narratives of different actors, which are influenced by different team-specific, relational, and interpretative contexts (Balogun et al., 2015a). Viewing strategy implementation from this perspective has made it necessary to broaden the range of actors considered and to reassess the roles of top and middle management.

Broadening the range of actors considered in strategy implementation has sparked interest in how the social positions and local contexts of individual organizational members influence their sensemaking about strategy. For example, Lockett, Currie, Finn, Martin and Waring (2014) examined how actors' cultural and social capital, as well as their disposition toward allocentrism, influenced their sensemaking of strategic change. Similarly, Regner (2003) found that the strategy work at the center and on the periphery of an organization was quite different in nature. While strategy making at the center was deductive and exploitation-focused, strategy work on the periphery was inductive and involved exploration, experiments, and trial and error.

Recognition of the role of top management as a mediator between different individuals and organizational contexts has also increased interest in how different organizational role expectations (e.g., Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008; Mantere, 2008) and interactions across the organization (e.g. Balogun, Best, & Lê, 2015b; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019) shape strategy implementation. For example, Mirabeau



and Maguire (2014) examined how top management used different discursive practices to manipulate the strategic and structural context of the organization to overcome organizational resistance and to mobilize broad-based support for the emergent strategy.

While much of the early work on strategy implementation has provided a largely negative view of organizational resistance, seeing it mostly as obstructing strategy implementation (e.g., Guth & Macmillan, 1986), the adaptive turn has adopted a somewhat more ambivalent stance. For example, Balogun, Jarzabkowski, and Vaara (2011) found in an analysis of the European integration strategy of a multinational corporation that the discourses of resistance were not subversive, but rather an essential part of middle-managers sensemaking about their new role in strategy making. Such views of resistance as potentially valuable feedback align well with those in the wider change management literature. Accordingly, resistance should not be seen only as an “irrational and dysfunctional reaction” by change recipients, but as an important resource for change (Ford et al., 2008).

When change agents or strategy formulators recognize “resistance” as a product of their own actions and sensemaking, they are better able to interpret it (e.g., Ford et al., 2008; Jarzabkowski & Balogun, 2009). For instance, Alcadipani et al. (2018) showed how resistance was triggered mainly by management’s actions. The authors found that different manifestations of dominance by management caused different types of resistance among frontline employees. First, when implementing a lean management strategy in a printing plant, evaluation and monitoring measures and disciplining led to direct, overt, or covert resistance such as protests or “working to the rule.” Second, framing the lean strategy as progressive and traditional practices as “outmoded” prompted discursive and situational irony. Finally, power symbolism and bolstering personal authority led to scorn and mockery directed at the proponents of the new practices as personalized “attacks” symbolizing contempt.

Overall, the research on resistance has improved understanding of the positive and negative effects of intra-organizational behavioral dynamics on adaptive strategy implementation (e.g., Ezzamel, Willmott, & Worthington, 2001; Stiles et al., 2015), and of the importance of accounting for both discursive (Balogun et al., 2014; Balogun et al., 2011) and emotional engagement in strategy implementation (Huy, 2002; Huy, 2011; Sanchez-Burks & Huy, 2009). Instead of considering resistance

as illegitimate, it should be seen as an integral aspect of strategy implementation and as a potentially valuable driver of adaptation during strategy implementation.

The interface between top and middle management continues to play an important role also in adaptive implementation research. However, in contrast to a hierarchical understanding of the interface, studies have focused increasingly on the dynamic interplay across the different levels (e.g., Heyden et al., 2017) and on opportunities for joint sensemaking. For example, Raes, Heijltjes, Glunk, & Roe (2011) focused on the dynamics of information exchange and the mutual influence between top and middle managers. They suggested that information exchange processes characterized by cognitive flexibility contribute to strategic decision quality and that mutual influence processes characterized by integrative bargaining are associated with implementation quality. Building on these two key assumptions, they identified three interaction patterns at the TMT-MM interface. These include: “(1) a stable pattern with high levels of TMT participative leadership, MM active engagement, trust, cognitive flexibility, and integrative bargaining; (2) an upward spiral with increasing levels of TMT participative leadership, MM active engagement, trust, cognitive flexibility, and integrative bargaining; and (3) a downward spiral with decreasing levels of TMT participative leadership, MM active engagement, trust, cognitive flexibility, and integrative bargaining” (Raes et al., 2011: 117-118).

Continuous interaction between top and middle management is needed to enable adaptive decision-making when implementing the strategy of a subsidiary (Stiles et al., 2015), production plant (Alcadipani et al., 2018), or a strategic initiative (Klingebiel & De Meyer, 2013). Such interaction is particularly important in MNCs, which operate in various country contexts, in which corporate-level strategic directions are not only enacted, but also (re)conceptualized at the subsidiary level (e.g., Birkinshaw & Morrison, 1995; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994a).

### **Coordinating Strategic Action**

The main coordination problem in the adaptive turn is how to integrate socially constructed, yet necessarily partial perspectives of different employees in multiple different parts and levels of an organization into a cohesive pattern of action. This social constructionist perspective underlies much of the adaptive turn literature and has led scholars to investigate the limited power of structures as a means of controlling organizational members given that they can be “discursively mobilized” in different ways

(e.g., Ezzamel, 1994). Accordingly, strategic integration is achieved through political interactions in which actors negotiate their assigned positions in strategy implementation (e.g., Balogun et al., 2011). For example, Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009) found that different middle managers draw upon the relative power of their division to negotiate their roles as either strategy formulators or implementers.

Given the socially constructed nature of strategy, the role of coordination is to ensure legitimacy across managerial levels (e.g., Brown, 1995; Hengst, Jarzabkowski, Hoegl, & Muethel, Forthcoming; Huy et al., 2014) and shared agreement on strategy and the strategy implementation plan (e.g., Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2017). Consequently, researchers have focused increasingly on the use of strategy communication (e.g. Fenton & Langley, 2011; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011), rhetorical practices (Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007; Mantere & Sillince, 2007; Sillince, 2002), strategy discourses (e.g. Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Mantere & Vaara, 2008), and strategy concepts (Jalonen, Schildt, & Vaara, 2018) to orchestrate collective sensemaking processes in the organization (e.g., Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Mantere et al., 2012; Monin, Noorderhaven, Vaara, & Kroon, 2013).

Communication has been found to play an important integrative role (Jarzabkowski & Balogun, 2009), both vertically (e.g., Reitzig & Maciejovsky, 2015; Reitzig & Sorenson, 2013) and horizontally (e.g., Martin, 2011; Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010), in ensuring the development of a shared understanding of strategic goals across an organization. For example, Martin and Eisenhardt (2010) and Martin (2011) found that in particular horizontal communication among business unit heads played an important role in helping the organization in capturing new product-market opportunities. This horizontal coordination enabled the organization to combine the autonomy of business units without losing the potential benefits of cross-business unit synergies and reciprocal interdependence (Martin, 2011).

While strategy communication can be used to enroll organizational members in actively participating in strategy implementation, it can also impede participation. Mantere and Vaara (2008) examined this question by analyzing discourses impeding and promoting participation in strategy work in 12 organizations across 301 individuals, including management and employees from all levels of the organization. They found that discourses built on *mystification*, *disciplining*, and *technologization* impeded participation, whereas discourses that emphasized *self-actualization*, *dialogization*, and *concretization* promoted organization-wide participation (Mantere & Vaara, 2008).

One of the key debates in this area concerns the degree of explicitness of strategy communication. While traditional views on strategy implementation implicitly assumed that strategies should be clearly defined and communicated to ensure effective implementation (e.g., Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984), researchers representing the adaptive turn have problematized this assumption and argued that some degree of ambiguity might also be useful (Sillince et al., 2012). Building on Eisenberg's (Eisenberg, 1984; Eisenberg & Witten, 1987) conceptualization of strategic ambiguity, Davenport and Leitch (2005) found that ambiguity in organizational communication toward external stakeholders could be used to delegate authority, opening up the possibility for co-creating and negotiating new meanings with stakeholders. Relatedly, Sonenshein (2010) found that managers gained support for a strategic change by generating "equifinal" instead of "unitary" meaning.

Hence, the deliberate use of ambiguity in communicating strategy can facilitate enrolling stakeholders with divergent perspectives and contribute to establishing strategic consensus and commitment (Sonenshein, 2010). Studying the international strategy of a business school, Sillince, Jarzabkowski, and Shaw (2012) found that managers used rhetoric to construct three types of ambiguity to facilitate collective action: *protective ambiguity* (which appealed to common values to protect specific interests); *invitation ambiguity* (which invited participation in specific actions); and *adaptive ambiguity* (which enabled temporary adoption of specific values to appeal to a particular audience). They found that strategic actions were shaped by the different types of ambiguity, which shifted over time to shape the desired pattern of actions enabling strategy to be implemented, albeit with some adaptations.

Despite the increasing recognition of the potential benefits of strategic ambiguity in adaptive strategy implementation, studies have also continued to provide evidence of its potential dark side. Ambiguity has been found to contribute to escalating indecision (Denis et al., 2011) and, after the initial strategy enrollment stage, to internal contradiction and overextension, misinterpretations, and unintended deviations from strategy (e.g., Abdallah & Langley, 2014). Denis et al. (2011) found that in particular in the context of multi-party consortia, "networks of indecision" may emerge when participants of consortia have divergent interests.

Love, Priem, and Lumpkin (2002) provided one of the few quantitative studies on strategy ambiguity to examine what they called the "explicitness dilemma" of strategy articulation. They

advanced two opposing propositions: that explicitly articulating strategy either improves or reduces firm performance. In addition, they suggested that explicit articulation of strategy may be particularly important for coordination in decentralized firms and less important in centralized firms. Based on a survey of 95 manufacturing firms, the authors found no statistically significant relationship between the explicitness of strategy articulation and performance. Instead, they found that the effect is U-shaped such that those firms with the most and the least explicitly articulated strategies performed best, while those that were “stuck in between” performed worst. Regarding structure, they found that explicit strategy articulation contributed more positively to performance in firms with low centralization than in highly centralized firms.

Finally, the coherence and sequencing of strategy communication have been found to influence strategy implementation (e.g., Sillince, 1999b; Sonenshein, 2010). For example, Sillince (1999b) found that while different types of language were used in the different stages of a change implementation process, coherent language use was related to successful change implementation outcomes. Developing shared strategy vocabulary or strategy concepts may also be useful in helping managers to collectively deal with environmental changes and to articulate a new strategic direction for the organization. Based on a longitudinal study of a city organization, Jalonon, Schildt, and Vaara (2018) found that adopting the concept of “self-responsibility” helped managers to make sense of the optimal strategy and to promote change more broadly in the organization.

## Main Theories Used

*Sensegiving and sensemaking.* The research on organizational sensemaking grew out of Weick's extensive work on the social psychology of organizing that became popular in the 1980s and 1990s (Weick, 1979, 1995, 2001). However, its usefulness was not fully recognized in the strategy implementation literature until Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) introduced the concept of sensegiving to the change implementation literature. According to the authors, organizational members have a need to understand "*any intended change in a way that 'makes sense' or fits into some revised interpretive scheme or system of meaning*" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991: 434). Consequently, they defined sensegiving as "*the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality*" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991: 442).

Although top management's strategic sensegiving could also be seen as traditional top-down strategy communication, focusing on the interplay of sensegiving and sensemaking has enabled researchers to better fathom the cognitive and social processes associated with enacting strategy (e.g., Balogun & Johnson, 2004, 2005; Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). Sensemaking theories made it possible to overcome the theoretical dominance of the structural control view and provided an important theoretical lens through which to examine how organizational members at multiple levels of the organization interactively engage each other in sensegiving and sensemaking. We do not review the sensemaking literature here in further detail, as comprehensive reviews on the topic area already exist (e.g., Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

*Rhetoric and discourse.* The adaptive turn has also built on the increasing interest in rhetorical tactics, strategy communication, and strategy discourses (Heracleous, 2006; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Mueller, Sillince, Harvey, & Howorth, 2004; Sillince, 1999a, 2005). According to Sillince (1999a), organizations tend to institutionalize specialized repertoires of arguments. While these repertoires are subject to appropriation and manipulation by organizational members with a view to enhancing their own power, they are important for ensuring the coherence and comprehensible chronological progression of communication relating to strategy implementation (Sillince, 1999b).

Heracleous and Barret (2001) provide an example of the application of rhetorical and discourse theories in strategy implementation. The authors examined the discourses employed by different

stakeholder groups and how these influenced the trajectory and implementation failure of an electronic placing system in the London Insurance Market. They distinguished between flexible, continuously changing communicative acts and deeper, more stable discursive structures. This distinction enabled them to detect clashes between the surface level communicative acts and deeper-level discourses even when agreement existed at the communicative level (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). Again, we do not review the literature on language and discursive forms in strategy implementation more in detail, as comprehensive reviews already exist (e.g., Balogun et al., 2014; Vaara, Sonenshein, & Boje, 2016). Rather, we emphasize that speech acts and discourses, and how they are appropriated by different groups in organizations (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Jalonon et al., 2018), represent a powerful theoretical lens through which to examine the organizational interactions involved in conceptualizing, enacting, and coordinating strategy implementation.

*Organizational power and politics.* Theories of organizational discourse and rhetoric are closely related to theories of organizational power and politics (e.g., Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Sillince, 2000; Yousfi, 2014). While power and politics were examined also already in early strategy implementation research, the assumption of clear vertical hierarchical relationships tended to limit the scope of this research to studies on opportunism elimination and on the optimal degree of decision power on different levels of the organization (e.g., Guth & Macmillan, 1986; Ross, 2014; Stewart et al., 2017). Following the adaptive turn, however, power and politics have become increasingly central considerations in strategy implementation research (e.g., Davenport & Leitch, 2005; Ezzamel, 1994; Ezzamel et al., 2001; Harding, Ford, & Lee, 2017). Yet, instead of viewing power struggles and political action as barriers to effective strategy implementation by self-interested middle managers, the adaptive strategy implementation literature has adopted a more positive view, which also sees power and politics as providing feedback on dysfunctional strategies and as triggering further adaptation in strategies or strategy implementation plans (e.g., Bertels et al., 2016; Canato et al., 2013; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019).

## **COMPLETING THE ADAPTIVE TURN: A FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA**

Although the adaptive turn has contributed significantly to the revitalization and growth of strategy implementation research, it has also further fragmented the research area due to the philosophies, approaches, objects of analysis, and theories underlying the different views. One could

even argue that the two streams of research represent entirely different research areas, each with their specific topic areas, theories, and methods. Our rationale for advocating instead a closer integration of the two views is twofold: First, we see major synergies in terms of the complementary approaches adopted by the two literature streams in studying strategy implementation. Second, we also see potential for cross-fertilization in terms of the different empirical phenomena that the two bodies of literature have examined as the main constituents of strategy implementation. Consequently, we call for researchers to complete the adaptive turn by adopting an integrative view (Table 1).

Accordingly, instead of focusing on either conceptualizing or enacting strategy, we argue that researchers should examine their interplay. For example, very few studies have so far examined the feedback loop from enacting strategy back to (re)conceptualizing strategy. The focus seems to be on either one or the other. Similarly, instead of concentrating on either top managers as strategy originators or organization members as strategy recipients, more attention should be given to the continuous interplay between different organizational actors. Finally, instead of focusing on either structure, incentives, and controls or the social means of coordination and control, future research should examine the complementary influence of both.

We outline in Figure 3 an integrative model of adaptive strategy implementation that shows the different empirical foci of the structural control view and the adaptive turn and highlights their complementarities and integrative potential. Based on the model, we suggest concrete directions for future research to complete the adaptive turn in strategy implementation research.

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 Insert Table 1 and Figure 3 around here  
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While the integrative model resembles the traditional view by starting with top management conceptualizing an organization's strategy and strategy implementation plan, we argue that top management's work is commonly informed by interactions with diverse actors — including the board, representatives of external stakeholders, consultants, and organizational members from multiple levels and multiple organizational entities — that have contributed to and enriched the strategy articulated by the TMT. Moreover, past successes and failures, as well as the feedback loop from continuous enacting of strategy also influence the conceptualization of strategies and strategy implementation plans.

Building on both the structural control view and the adaptive turn, our model distinguishes between the creation of a strategy implementation plan and the framing of strategy implementation through social practices, discourse, and rhetoric. Whereas the structural control view focuses on the conceptualization of the formal aspects of the strategy implementation plan, the adaptive turn focuses on how the strategy implementation plans are shared with the organization. In order to highlight these complementary, yet intertwined strategizing behaviors, we include both elements in our model using an integrative, two-way feedback loop.

Contrary to the traditional focus on vertical, top-down coordination between top and middle management and the focus of the adaptive turn on middle management and front-line employees, we emphasize the importance of understanding the multitude of interactions across these diverse actors. Combining formal and informal coordination mechanisms enables co-aligning the different perspectives of diverse organizational actors into a cohesive pattern of action. Importantly, this co-alignment need not happen top-down, but may also occur bottom-up. Moreover, both informal and formal horizontal interactions across different functions, divisions, business units, and subsidiaries also play an important role in organizational co-alignment around a given strategic plan.

When different organizational actors interactively enact a given strategy, enacting usually results in adaptations. These adaptations may be caused by the infeasibility of some aspects of the strategy implementation plan, by local specificities, by unexpected changes in the organizational environment, or by organizational power and politics. We conceptualize this adaptive dynamic as the recursive interplay of enacting and adaptation that leads to continuous integration “in action.” Adaptations to strategy may emerge more frequently at lower levels of the organization as actors’ contributions to strategy at these levels relate to operational activities targeted at realizing goals that are more imminent and less extensive in scope. Challenges in implementation may prompt immediate performance feedback, which, in turn, enables “on-site” adaptations. Since these implementation activities also make more tangible what higher-level, strategic goals would mean in practice, continuous feedback and rapid adaptations may also require adaptations in the higher-level strategies.

Therefore, beside local adaptation, we suggest that also a more fundamental, longer-term (re)conceptualizing of strategies and strategy implementation plans may emerge from everyday strategy implementation activities. We call this second-order feedback loop the “Feedback loop from enacting to (re)conceptualizing.” As strategy adaptations move up the organizational hierarchy, their speed and frequency are likely to reduce. Fundamental adaptations of the broad strategic direction articulated by top managers are often less frequent and take longer to realize. This second-order feedback loop is, however, highly important because it enables more fundamentally reassessing and rearticulating the core premises of the strategy and strategy implementation plan rather than simple adaptation in action.

Below, we outline some of the most promising areas of future research based on the integrative view. We structure the research agenda according to the three main areas of inquiry that emerged inductively from our review of the strategy implementation literature: (1) interplay of conceptualizing and enacting; (2) roles of different actors; and (3) coordinating strategic action. In addition, we highlight novel theories that have not been extensively used in strategy implementation research, but that could complement the existing theories in future research in providing an integrative view of the strategy implementation phenomenon.

## **Interplay of Conceptualizing and Enacting**

We call for research on the continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting strategies and strategic plans. Although this might be seen as the relatively simple integration of two complementary views, the research streams constituting the structural control view and the adaptive turn are based on rather different research approaches and philosophies. Studies representing the structural control view tend to pursue a more managerialist normative-evaluative research approach. In contrast, studies constituting the adaptive turn tend to have a more descriptive-explanatory research approach. Hence, while the structural control view endeavors to provide management with guidelines and policies that make strategy implementation more effective, the adaptive turn focuses on explaining the behavioral and social dynamics of implementation.

Accordingly, the structural control view asks research questions such as “What approaches fit a specific situation and perform best in certain situations or under certain conditions?” or “How will a specific structure, incentive system, or performance management system ensure effective strategy implementation?” Adaptive turn research, on the other hand, asks questions such as “How do diverse groups of actors make sense of a new strategic initiative, what influences their sensemaking of the strategic situation and strategy implementation actions, and how does this understanding influence strategy implementation?” or “Why do some strategy implementation patterns emerge, and how did they emerge from the collective sensemaking process?”

We argue that both of these research approaches are valuable in advancing a more integrative perspective on adaptive strategy implementation. We need a deeper understanding of the continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting, not only in order to develop better strategies and strategy implementation plans, but also to better understand how organizations as social systems evolve over time through continuous iteration. To concretize these ideas and their implications for future research, we propose exemplary research questions inspired by the integrative view in Table 2.

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Although researchers representing the structural control view have examined how to develop contingency plans to account for unexpected events (e.g., Nutt, 1986, 1989), we have a limited understanding of how management could account for continuous strategy adaptation already when conceptualizing the strategy implementation plan (e.g., Klingebiel & De Meyer, 2013). One approach suggested by the adaptive turn research is to avoid devising too detailed and specific strategic plans (e.g., Abdallah & Langley, 2014; Sillince et al., 2012). However, more work on the different aspects of ambiguity in strategy implementation would be needed to address how ambiguity could be used more deliberately when conceptualizing strategy.

Another important novel area of research emerging from the integrative view is the temporal dynamics and speed through which adaptations occur (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). We have only limited understanding of the time lags that are associated with conceptualizing, enacting, and reconceptualizing of strategy, either within (e.g. Balogun & Johnson, 2004) or between different levels of the organization (e.g. Burgelman, 1983a; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019), and how different organizational structures, controls, and incentives influence these temporal dynamics. Moreover, we do not know how the different shorter-term, local strategy implementation modifications “in action” aggregate and feed back to adjust higher-level strategic direction. Adaptations take place more frequently at lower levels of the organization as the strategy implementation activities at these levels are targeted at realizing goals that are more imminent and less extensive in scope (e.g., Jarzabkowski et al., 2019; Klingebiel & Meyer, 2013), fundamental adaptations to strategy are likely to be less frequent and take longer time to realize.

We view adaptive strategy implementation as a process of continuous organizational evolution (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), in which different organizational units at multiple levels of the organization are simultaneously conceptualizing, enacting, and adapting their own strategies. Accordingly, the organization can be seen as a complex adaptive system (Dattee & Barlow, 2017; Girod & Whittington, 2015) that continuously addresses different unexpected internal and external environmental events in a dynamic manner. Building on our integrative view, further research would be needed to examine how different organizational structures, incentives, and controls could contribute to the continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting of strategy.

## **Roles of Different Actors**

Deepening the understanding of the role of actors in the integrative view requires delving deeper into the dynamic interplay between different dimensions of human agency. To this end, we found Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conceptualization of agency as a temporally embedded process useful. The authors note: "*As actors respond to changing environments, they must continually reconstruct their view of the past in an attempt to understand the causal conditioning of the emergent present, while using this understanding to control and shape their responses in the arising future*" (pp. 968–969). We argue that adaptive strategy implementation, on the one hand, depends on organizational members' "projective capacity," which enables them to generate possible future trajectories of action aimed at reconfiguring existing conditions in line with their hopes and desires. On the other hand, however, it also depends on organizational members' "practical capacity" to understand the emerging contingencies of the evolving situation in the context of past interactions and with a view to the future (Jarzabkowski, 2005).

While researchers interested in adaptive strategy implementation have begun to consider a wider range of actors, we still have only limited understanding of how to manage open adaptive systems in which individual agents have more power to influence strategy (Dobusch, Dobusch, & Müller-Seitz, 2019). Although still nascent, research on "open strategy" has made important progress in identifying some of the key dilemmas associated with broader employee interaction in the strategy process (Hautz, Seidl, & Whittington, 2017). These include dilemmas between (1) wider sources of knowledge vs. speed, flexibility, and control of the strategy development process, (2) creating commitment vs. undermining commitment due to unmet expectations, (3) responding to expectations about strategy disclosure vs. undermining competitiveness and causing confusion, (4) granting wider audiences a say in strategy development vs. burdening wider audiences with the pressures of strategy, and (5) realizing benefits of openness in selected areas vs. managing the escalating expectation for further openness in areas where openness is not desired (Hautz et al., 2017). Studying these dilemmas and the potential "dark side" of openness with an integrative view could advance our understanding of the opportunities and limits of openness, both from managerial and from social systems perspective.

According to the integrative view, strategy implementation researchers should not only examine interaction patterns between the different actors as a top-down or bottom-up process, but as a continuous interplay of these two (Jarzabkowski et al., 2019). Future research could, for example, build on Reitzig and colleagues (see, e.g., Klapper & Reitzig, 2018; Reitzig & Maciejovsky, 2015; Reitzig & Sorenson, 2013) or on Ahearne, Lam, and Kraus (2014), in order to examine the dynamics of simultaneous upward and downward influence. Moreover, in addition to vertical interactions, it is important to account for horizontal interactions across organizational units as these are continuously implementing and adapting their strategies in co-alignment with one another. Existing research suggests that the actions of organizational units are influenced both by performance feedback from the market (e.g., Gaba & Joseph, 2013; Joseph & Gaba, 2015) and by pressures from external stakeholders in combination with vertical interventions by top managers to focus the attention of organizational units on specific practices or actions (e.g., Durand & Jacqueminet, 2015; Kostova & Roth, 2002). However, we still have only limited understanding of how these interactions contribute to feedback loops and adjustments to strategy implementation plans.

Researchers have also become increasingly interested in the role of external stakeholders and other institutional constituencies in strategy implementation (Davenport & Leitch, 2005; Durand & Jacqueminet, 2015; Klingebiel & De Meyer, 2013). For example, research has shown how different acquisition and alliance strategies can be implemented effectively by accounting for the needs of affected stakeholders (e.g., Boddy, Macbeth, & Wagner, 2000). Research on multi-partner alliances has helped us understand some of the complexities in working with external partners (Denis et al., 2011; Doz, Olk, & Ring, 2000). Interactions with regulators and other public sector agencies (Davenport & Leitch, 2005) and owners (König, Kammerlander, & Enders, 2013) have also been found to play an important role. However, we still know only little about the practices and processes through which external stakeholders and other organizational actors influence each other and how these interactions influence strategy implementation. Examining these influences from an integrative perspective could enable researchers to better account for the strategies of external stakeholders, the social dynamics of the wider network of organizational actors within which a focal firm is located, and how such external strategies and social dynamics constrain or enable strategy implementation.

## **Coordinating Strategic Action**

While the central coordination problem in the structural control view was how to create organizational alignment to implement strategy through structure, incentives, and controls, the adaptive turn shifted the attention to how best to integrate and co-align different socially constructed perspectives into a cohesive pattern of action. We propose that by combining both existing perspectives, the integrative view enables a more comprehensive understanding of coordination of strategic action in strategy implementation. Specifically, we believe that the existing research on the role of structures, incentives, and controls for strategy implementation could be enriched with the help of an integrative perspective to develop a more comprehensive understanding of coordination of strategic action.

Researchers interested in organizational ambidexterity have examined how to manage the balance between efficiency and adaptation and whether this could be achieved through structural separation, temporally, or contextually (e.g., Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008; Zimmermann, Raisch, & Birkinshaw, 2015). Although this research has traditionally not been connected to strategy implementation, these are important questions from the perspective of the integrative view of adaptive strategy implementation: How should an organization be structured to facilitate adaptive strategy implementation? Does centralizing or decentralizing decision responsibilities enable or constrain strategy implementation? To what extent should management maintain central control and to what extent should it allow strategy implementation to unfold in a self-organized organizational system? How can organizational units coordinate adaptive strategy implementation horizontally with each other? While most of this research has examined the role of structures and leadership, researchers have also found that social mechanisms can play an important complementary role in creating an organizational context that enables continuous adaptation (e.g., Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Zimmermann, Raisch, & Cardinal, 2018).

Besides an improved understanding of the role of structure, future research is also needed to revisit the role and design of incentive systems for adaptive strategy implementation. While research on strategic incentive system design has traditionally focused on top management's incentives (e.g., Miller, Wiseman, & Gomez-Mejia, 2002; Rajagopalan, 1997; Rajagopalan & Finkelstein, 1992; Rajagopalan & Prescott, 1990; Tosi, Werner, Katz, & Gomez-Mejia, 2000), researchers have become interested in how the incentive system might be extended to other organizational members (e.g., Boyd & Salamin,

2001; Tenhiälä & Laamanen, 2018). Although we know that incentives can play an important role in how top management frames environmental change (Eggers & Kaplan, 2009), and that vertical and horizontal pay dispersion should be matched to the firm's strategic orientation (Tenhiälä & Laamanen, 2018), we have only limited understanding of how the incentive system could be used strategically to enable adaptive strategy implementation. Specifically, research is needed on how incentive systems can be optimally structured to inspire individual- and team-level effort without sacrificing horizontal collaboration in the organization.

Adopting an integrative view of adaptive strategy implementation calls for an improved understanding of the role of standardization and formalization of organizational systems, processes, and practices in strategy implementation. The advances made in recent years in understanding in the interplay of formal and informal controls in organizations (e.g., Ambos, Kunisch, Leicht-Deobald, & Steinberg, 2019; Cardinal et al., 2017; Kreutzer et al., 2016) provide a good basis for developing more integrative view of the different types of control (e.g., Simons, 1991, 1994b). Further research efforts would also be needed on how to use the well-established measurement and management systems, such as the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; 2008), in a less static manner and as a tool for empowering the organization as a whole (Paranjape, Rossiter, & Pantano, 2006).

Finally, many organizations have started experimenting with novel digital platforms for coordinating and tracking strategy implementation actions in real-time (Leonardi, 2018; Neeley & Leonardi, 2018). Although there is long-standing research interest in how new information technology (IT) systems are implemented and legitimated in organizations (Brown, 1995, 1998; Prasad, 1993; Sahay, 1997) and in how information technology can be used in strategy implementation (Aral, Brynjolfsson, & Wu, 2012), there is scarcity of research on how digital strategy implementation platforms can be used to advance strategy implementation. Research adopting the integrative view might examine, for example, whether digital strategy implementation platforms could be used to create faster feedback loops between conceptualizing and enacting strategy implementation plans.



## Novel Theories for Strategy Implementation Research

*Attention-based view.* Despite its potential as an integrative theoretical lens to deepen our understanding of strategy implementation (e.g., Joseph & Ocasio, 2012; Ocasio & Joseph, 2018), we have only limited understanding of how organizational attention influences strategy implementation. According to the attention-based view (Ocasio, 1997), organizational behavior is influenced by how organizations channel and distribute attention. One of the means to do this is through “the structural distribution of attention” with communication channels acting as “pipes and prisms” that distribute organizational attention (Ocasio, 1997). Beyond this structural view, researchers have also examined the dynamic shifting of attention from one focus area to another (e.g., Laamanen & Wallin, 2009; Rerup, 2009). Research on strategy implementation would benefit from an enhanced understanding of how the dynamics of organizational attention play out, how these influence interaction between organizational units, and how performance feedback is attended to (Joseph, Klingebiel, & Wilson, 2016; Joseph & Ocasio, 2012; Joseph & Wilson, 2018)..

The attention-based view could be used as a theoretical lens to study how the dynamics of organizational attention could be managed during strategy implementation to ensure consistency of attention focus and sustained attentional engagement in the organization (Ocasio, 2011). Moreover, as organizational attention may sometimes shift fluidly, we would need to better understanding of how to manage the trade-off between consistency and change of attention focus. Finally, we have a limited understanding of the implications of attention dynamics for strategy implementation when organizational attention is captured by an external stakeholder group or by an intra-organizational coalition that directs the organizational attention to areas that better serve their own interests (Durand & Jacqueminet, 2015; Hoffman & Ocasio, 2001; Ocasio, Laamanen, & Vaara, 2018).

*Evolutionary theory.* Our conceptualization of adaptive strategy implementation as a continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting strategy across multiple organizational levels and in multiple organizational units simultaneously also bears resemblance to some of the prior research on the evolution of organizations more generally. On the one hand, it builds on pioneering work on the intra-organizational ecology of organizational decision making by Burgelman (1983a; 1983b, 1991) and on the associated bottom-up vs. top-down debate (Lovas & Ghoshal, 2000). On the other, it relates to more

general theories on organizational evolution (Aldrich, 1999) and to the dynamics associated with the evolution of organizational routines (Feldman, 2000; Nelson & Winter, 1982). While this body of work has not been commonly considered strategy implementation research, research on the co-evolution of multiple organization units holds potential for enhancing our understanding of how adaptive strategy implementation occurs in multiple organizational units in parallel (e.g. Flier, Bosch, & Volberda, 2003; Volberda, Van den Bosch, & Mihalache, 2014).

*Paradoxes, tensions, and dualities.* The adaptive turn indicates the potential for multiple tensions to arise between actors at different levels, between actions taken within units and at the organizational level, and between an organization's past and future states. From an integrative perspective, such tensions are not necessarily destructive or negative, but rather may enable continuous feedback loops between conceptualizing and enacting strategy. Hence, we suggest that theoretical approaches that examine tensions as potentially productive will be important for taking the adaptive turn forward. Here, a body of theories that have largely been considered under the notions of paradox, tensions, and dualities (see Fairhurst et al., 2016 and Schad, Lewis, Raisch, & Smith, 2016 for reviews) may prove insightful. For example, the paradox lens (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011) could be used to examine how leaders make strategic decisions that balance tendencies toward exploration and exploitation (Smith, 2014), and how they negotiate the implementation of strategies that are shaped by contradictory market and regulatory forces (Jarzabkowski, Lê, & Van de Ven, 2013). Also, the notion of dualities between individual actions and the patterns that they produce may be a fruitful way to explain the interplay between conceptualizing and enacting strategy (e.g. Jarzabkowski, 2008; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019; Rerup & Feldman, 2011). The benefit of such lenses is that they openly acknowledge the inherent tensions in strategy implementation, which may be productive in generating feedback loops and enabling adaptation (e.g. Hengst et al., Forthcoming; Lê & Jarzabkowski, 2015). Furthermore, the benefit of such theorizing is that it is dynamic, examining the push and pull that tensions, paradoxes, and dualities generate and within which implementation processes unfold (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2017; Lê & Bednarek, 2018; Van de Ven, 1992).

*Psychological theories.* Strategy implementation researchers have become increasingly interested in how the psychological characteristics of CEOs influence strategy implementation

(Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2014; Huy, 2002; Huy, 2011; Vuori & Huy, 2016). However, as of yet little is known about how the psychological characteristics of other organizational members contribute to strategy implementation-related behaviors. For example, research on the core-self-evaluation (CSE) construct has found that individuals with high CSE are more motivated and demonstrate higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors, lower voluntary turnover, higher entrepreneurial orientation, and higher job performance (e.g., Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2017; Chang, Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, & Tan, 2012; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Yet, we still have only rather limited knowledge of how different psychological traits are activated, how they aggregate in teams and on an organizational level, and how they relate to adaptive strategy implementation.

Psychological theories can also contribute to research on the temporal dynamics of adaptive strategy implementation. Theories on temporal focus and regulatory focus have become increasingly popular in recent management research (Nadkarni & Chen, 2014; Nadkarni, Pan, & Chen, 2019; Shin, Kim, Choi, Kim, & Oh, 2017; Stam, van Knippenberg, Wisse, & Pieterse, 2018). We do not, however, know how the temporal and regulatory foci of managers and employees influence strategy implementation. For example, are organizations with more promotion- and future-focused managers better at implementing strategies than those with more prevention- and past-focused managers?

Finally, research on psychological ownership might enhance our understanding of actors' varying commitment to strategy. Prior research has found that employees who experience higher psychological ownership of their organizational units and firms are more motivated to work in favor of what they regard as their "own" than ones failing to experience similar psychological ownership. However, while research has found that psychological ownership is related to diverse positive individual-, team-, and organization-level outcomes (Avey, Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans, 2009; Liu, Wang, Hui, & Lee, 2012; O'Driscoll, Pierce, & Coghlan, 2006; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003), such as individual-level entrepreneurial behavior (e.g., Sieger, Zellweger, & Aquino, 2013), we have only limited understanding of its role in strategy implementation.

### **Methodological Implications for Research on the Integrative View**

We conclude with a brief methodological note for researchers interested in pursuing the integrative agenda of strategy implementation outlined in this paper. While studies of strategy

implementation may focus on any particular element of our integrative view, they need methodologies that enable both zooming in on the details of our recursive cycles of enacting and (re)conceptualizing strategy and zooming out to appreciate the wider context within which these cycles shape the realized pattern of strategic action over time (Jarzabkowski & Bednarek, 2018; Nicolini, 2010, 2016). Moreover, these methodologies will also need to account for strategy implementation as unfolding within a flow of experience over time (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

Accounting for contextual embeddedness will require sensitivity to both prior strategy implementation actions and their ongoing realization after the study; both of which will be shaped by activities in the moment (Jarzabkowski, Lê, & Spee, 2016; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). Hence, the observation period in any study should be chosen either because of the particular theoretical salience of that moment in the evolution of the organization and its strategy or because it represents a known and familiar strategy-making script (Jarzabkowski et al., 2016). Moreover, studies will also need to be sensitive to, and develop methodologies for tracing, the adaptive dynamics surrounding the phenomenon of interest (Kouamé & Langley, 2018; Mirabeau, Maguire, & Hardy, 2018).

While the choice of a quantitative or qualitative research design is not the central question here, the structural control and the adaptive turn research streams have to some extent developed along these fault lines. The structural control view has built relatively more on quantitative methods to produce generalizable insights into policies likely to support strategy implementation and organizational performance. In contrast, adaptive turn research has built largely on qualitative methods to develop rich insights into how certain organizations enact and adapt strategies and strategy implementation plans. We argue that to advance our understanding of adaptive strategy implementation, future research must more consciously take into account the insights produced on the other side of the methodological fence. We therefore call on quantitative research to more systematically test the insights produced by qualitative research in order to create statistically generalizable knowledge about strategy implementation.

In this spirit, studies by Ahearne et al. (2014) and Reitzig and colleagues (Reitzig & Maciejovsky, 2015; Reitzig & Sorenson, 2013) have tested the insights of *qualitative* research into the role of middle management's behavior in adaptive strategy implementation using *quantitative* research designs. In similar spirit, we need more *qualitative* research to deepen our understanding of the dynamics

underlying many of the *quantitatively* established relationships between the different strategy implementation constructs. Klingebiel & Meyer (2013) provides a good example of this approach by deepening our understanding of the dynamics associated with strategic decision-making during strategy implementation and, specifically, of the role of environmental uncertainty in explaining variations in the procedural rationality and analytical comprehensiveness of these decisions.

## CONCLUSION

Our review documents the shift of emphasis in strategy implementation research during the past four decades from conceptualizing strategy implementation plans, structures, incentives, and controls for effective strategy implementation to how organizations enact strategies and strategy implementation plans. We call this shift from the structural control view to adaptive strategy implementation “the adaptive turn” in strategy implementation research. Although the adaptive turn has contributed significantly to the revitalization and growth of strategy implementation research, it has also further fragmented the research area due to the philosophies, approaches, objects of analysis, and theories underlying the different views. The limited integration of these two views has prevented researchers from benefitting from the potential synergies of these complementary bodies of knowledge and the emergence of a cohesive research program on how to move strategy implementation research onwards. Our proposed integrative view combines insights from the structural control view and from the adaptive turn. Building on the integrative view, we put forward a research agenda and call for researchers to complete the adaptive turn by investigating how the two views of strategy implementation can best complement and enrich each other.

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Figure 1. Steps taken in the article selection process to arrive at the final sample of **185** reviewed articles

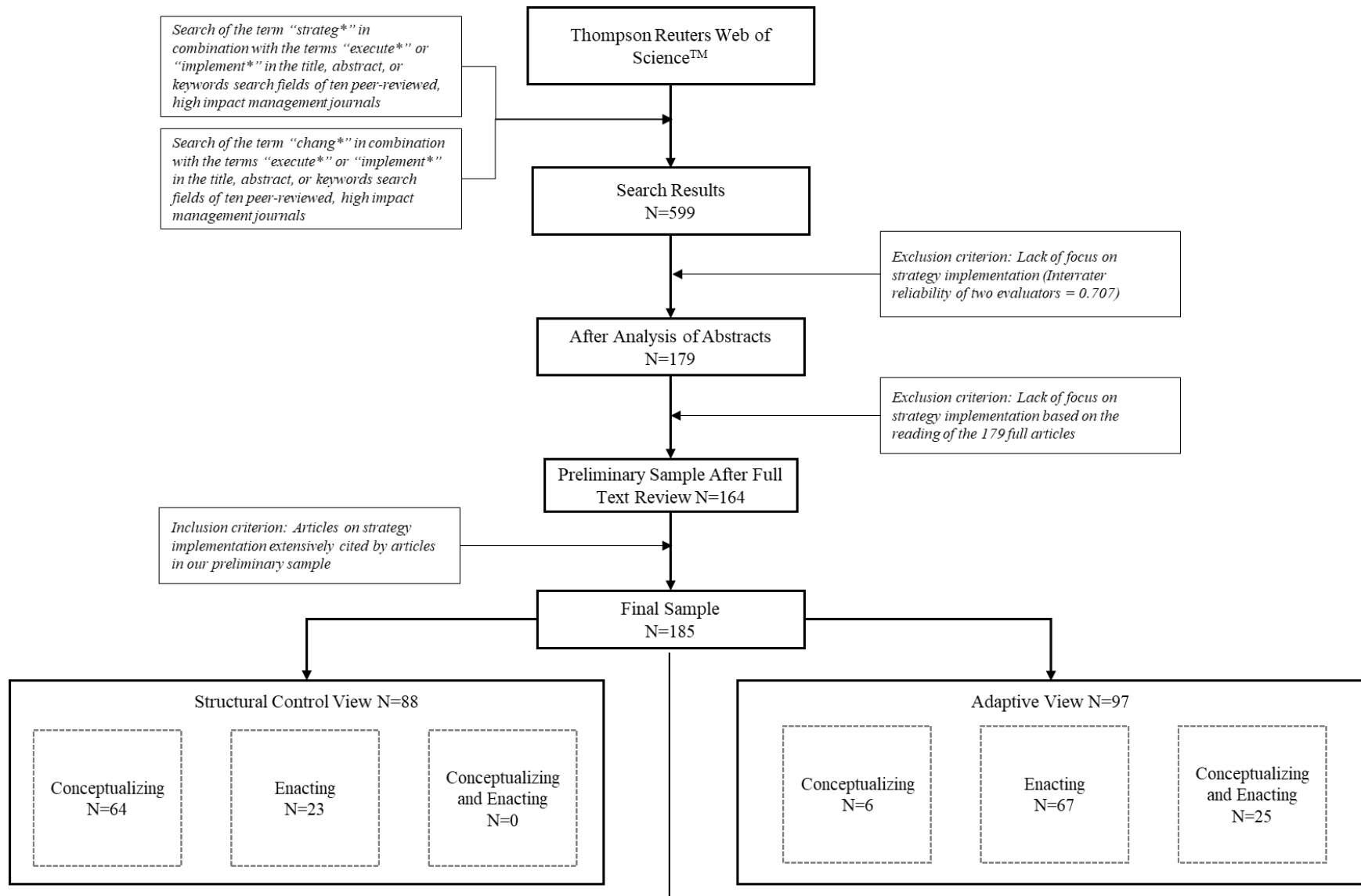


Figure 2. Development of strategy implementation research according to the traditional and adaptive views of strategy implementation (N=185)

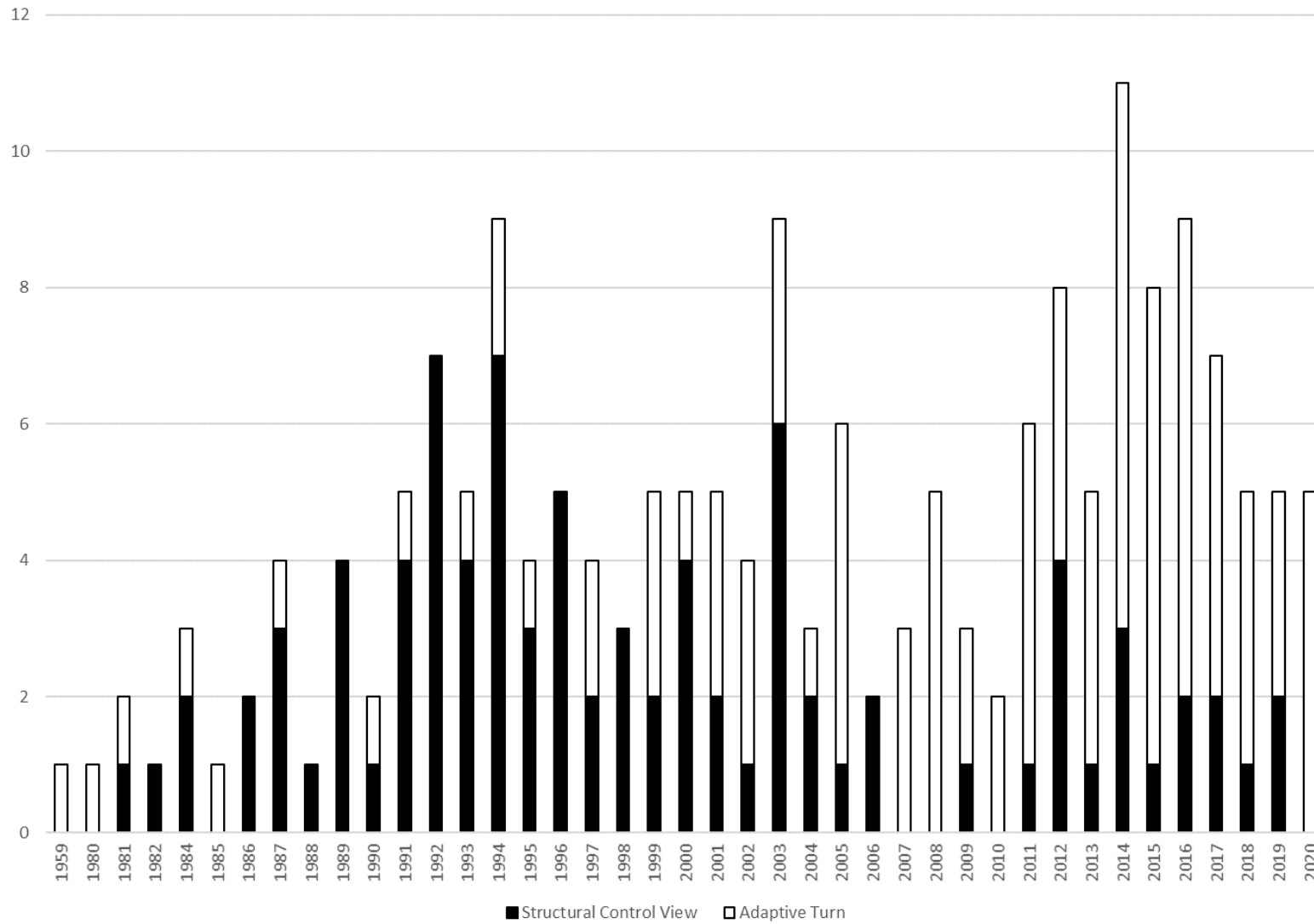
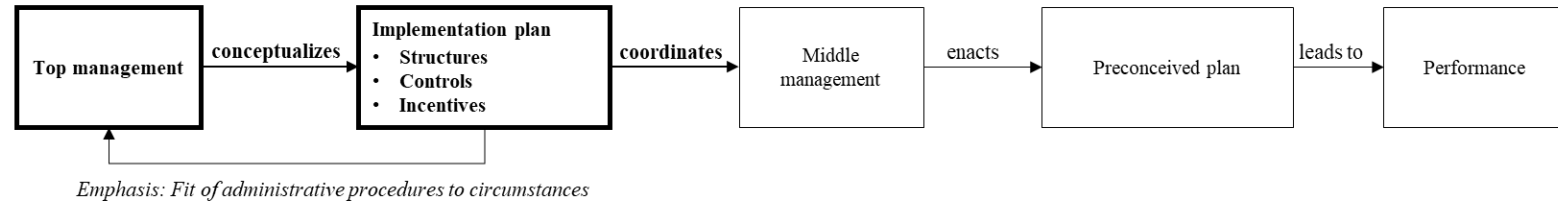
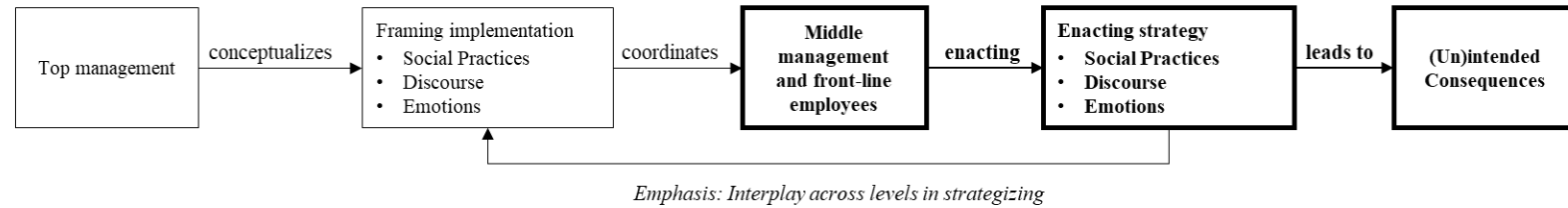


Figure 3. Integrative Model of Completing the Adaptive Turn in Strategy Implementation Research

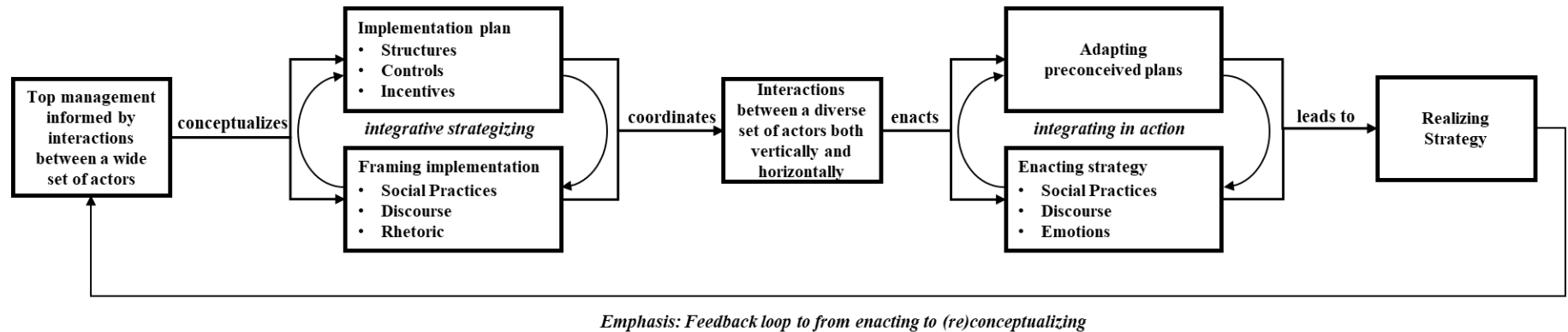
#### Traditional View



#### Adaptive Turn



#### Integrative View: Completing the Adaptive Turn



*Table 1. Comparison of the research foci of the structural control view, adaptive turn, and the integrative view of strategy implementation*

	<b>Structural Control View</b>	<b>Adaptive Turn</b>	<b>Integrative View</b>
<b>Conceptualizing and Enacting Strategy</b>	Focus on conceptualization of strategies, structures and implementation plans	Focus on organizational enacting of strategy in the actions and interactions of organizational members	Focus on the continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting strategy, in particular, the feedback loop from enacting to (re)conceptualizing
<b>Roles of the Different Actors</b>	Top management as formulators and middle management as implementors of strategy	Middle and lower-level managers as active participants in the strategy implementation process	Interactions among a diverse set of organizational stakeholders both vertically and horizontally
<b>Coordinating Strategic Action</b>	Focus on structures, incentives, and controls as the main coordinating mechanisms	Focus on sensegiving, rhetoric, talk and text, and discourse as coordinating mechanisms	Focus on both structural and social means for coordinating collective action
<b>Main Theories</b>	Contingency theory, organizational control theory, agency theory	Sensegiving and sensemaking, rhetoric and discourse, organizational power and politics	Attention-based view; evolutionary theory; paradoxes, tensions, and dualities; psychological theories

*Table 2. Future research directions based on the integrative view*

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**Selected Future Research Opportunities Based on the Integrative View**

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Continuous interplay of conceptualizing and enacting

- How can organizations develop an implementation plan for a strategy or a strategic decision that contains contingencies for known and unknown uncertainties to enable faster adaptation?
- How does ambiguity of strategy enable or constrain adaptive strategy implementation?
- How does strategic issue selling by organizational members contribute to adaptive strategy implementation?
- How do the shorter-term, local strategy implementation modifications “in action” aggregate in an organization and feed back to adjust the firm’s higher-level direction?
- How do different structures, controls, and incentives influence the effectiveness of feedback loops in strategy implementation plan conceptualizing, in strategy enacting, and in strategy (re)conceptualizing stages?
- How can companies align strategic plans, structures, systems, incentives, processes, and other factors to create an “adaptive organizational system” to address external environmental dynamics?

Engagement of a broader range of actors

- How can top management provide employees with the necessary discretion to participate in strategy processes and initiate adaptations, while also maintaining control to ensure coordinated action?
- How can managers cope with the tension between motivating employees to effectively implement a predefined plan while encouraging them to recognize and initiate adaptations of these plans?
- How do horizontal interactions between managers contribute to horizontal and vertical feedback loops and adjustments in strategies and strategy implementation plans?
- How do diverse organizational actors with different vested interests come together to negotiate the meaning of a strategy implementation plan or a new strategic initiative (either incremental or radical)?
- What role do external stakeholders play in adaptive strategy implementation?

Coordination of adaptive strategy implementation

- How should an organization be structured for adaptive strategy implementation?
- Does centralization/decentralization of responsibilities enable/constrain adaptive strategy implementation?
- To what extent should management maintain central control over organizational processes and outcomes and allow adaptive strategy implementation to unfold in a self-organized organizational system?
- How can organizational units coordinate adaptive strategy implementation horizontally with each other?
- What kind of control and incentive systems allow organizational members to remain motivated to achieve strategic goals while also being able to accommodate and reward a necessary adaptation of predefined courses of action during the implementation of a strategic initiative?
- How should incentives be structured to inspire individual effort while also allowing for collaboration across levels and units in adaptive strategy implementation?
- To what extent does standardizing and formalizing organizational systems, processes, and practices enable or constrain adaptive strategy implementation?
- How to organize resource allocation such that it allows for adaptive strategy implementation?
- How can management maintain an overview over adaptive strategy implementation?
- How do digital strategy implementation platforms and tools influence strategy implementation process?

## APPENDIX

Table A.1 *Strategy implementation literature representing the traditional view of strategy implementation*

Study	Outlet	Conceptualizing vs. Enacting	Actors Involved	Coordination	Theories	Research Method	Key Finding(s)
Stonich (1981)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Management	Coordination through measurement and reward system	Contingency theory	A conceptual paper	To enable effective strategy implementation, companies must design a measurement and reward system for their managers that encourages longer-term and not just short-term optimization
Dundas & Richardson (1982a)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate level and diversified BU level	Coordination through normative guidelines on how to make the diversified corporation function well	Control theory and contingency theory	A conceptual paper	There are a number of administrative contingencies - such as the expected performance, the sizes, and the ownership structure of the different businesses - that have to be taken into account in order to successfully implement diversification strategy.
Daft & Macintosh (1984)	JOM	Conceptualizing	Within level: Middle Management	Coordination through multiple control subsystems, i.e. budget, policies and procedures, performance appraisal system, and statistical reports	Organization theory, control theory	A qualitative analysis based on interview data with middle managers from multiple companies	The formal control systems used by managers to link strategy formulated by the TMT to departmental activities complement each other in a three-stage management control cycle of target setting, monitoring, and corrective feedback.
Gupta & Govindarajan (1984)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the SBU	Coordination through the choice of SBU leaders	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data collected from the general managers of 58 SBUs within 8 Fortune 500 diversified firms headquartered in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and the state of New York	Matching the SBU leader characteristics to the SBU strategy results in better performance of the SBU.
Guth & Macmillan (1986)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through (micro) political means	Commitment theory, expectancy theory	A quantitative and qualitative analysis of 330 written reports by 90 middle managers on the most recent cases in which they intervened, in their own self-interest, in the decision processes of their firms	Middle management will intervene in organizational decision-making processes when their self-interest is at stake.
Spruill & Hofmeister (1986)	JOM	Enacting	Across levels: Across the hierarchy	Coordination through mental representations of strategy	Research from cognitive psychology	A qualitative case study of the implementation of a management-by-objectives program in one urban school district	There exist major differences in thinking about implementation associated with organizational position and commitment that remain throughout the implementation process. While managers overestimated the change's value and salience for participants, managers underestimated the likelihood of problems or failure, in comparison with participants' estimates.
Gupta (1987)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the SBU	Coordination through different types of corporate-SBU relations	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data from the general managers of 58 SBUs within eight diversified Fortune 500 firms headquartered in the northeastern United State	Fitting the corporate-SBU relationship to the SBU strategy relates positively to performance. Corporate-SBU decentralization emerged as positively associated with SBUs' effectiveness irrespective of the strategic context.
Nutt (1987)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Management	Coordination through different types of implementation tactics	Literature on strategic management	A quantitative study of strategic planning projects in 68 different organizations	Four archetype tactics were identified that were used almost exclusively to implement strategy. An 'interventionist' approach yielded the best results; 'persuasion' and 'participation' were next most effective tactics, and 'edicts' the least effective.
Ruekert & Walker Jr (1987)	SMJ	Enacting	Across units: Marketing and R&D	Coordination through structures and formalization	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data drawn from three divisions of a Fortune 500 industrial products manufacturer	Conflicts between marketing and R&D personnel are the greatest for business units pursuing a Miles and Snow Prospector strategy. The organizational structures used to manage and resolve conflicts between marketing and R&D do not seem to vary significantly across business units pursuing different generic strategies



Govindarajan (1988)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the SBU	Coordination through different administrative mechanisms	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data collected from SBU general managers and their superiors at 24 firms on the Fortune 500 list (sales range: \$450 million to \$37 billion)	Fitting administrative controls with Porter's generic strategies is positively related to SBU performance.
Govindarajan (1989)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the SBU	Coordination through SBU leader choice	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data collected from general managers of 121 SBUs	Fitting SBU manager characteristics with Porter's generic strategies is positively related to SBU performance.
Hambrick & Cannella (1989)	AME	Conceptualizing	Within level: Management	Coordination through strategic conversations and administrative systems	Research on strategy implementation	A qualitative study at the chemical products manufacturing division of a large multibusiness firm	Identification of a behavioral pattern for effective strategy implementation that involves broad participation at the formulation stage, careful assessment of implementation obstacles, adaptation of administrative systems, and the selling of strategy upward and downward the organization.
Nutt (1989)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Management	Coordination through different implementation tactics for the implementation of strategic plans	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on interviews conducted with the manager who initiated an episode of strategic planning, and monitored its progress, and other key people involved with the plan in 50 organizations across the United States	Implementation tactics have to be chosen to match the different contingencies of the strategy implementation situation.
Wooldridge & Floyd (1989)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Top Management	Coordination through consensus on strategy	Research on consensus and on strategy processes more generally	A conceptual paper	To explain the ambiguous results on the relationship between consensus in the top management team and organizational performance, scholars may need to consider the influence of different types and stages of strategy processes. Synoptic and incremental processes are compared in terms of their effects on the scope, content, and degree of consensus.
Wooldridge & Floyd (1990)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Middle Management	Coordination through involvement in strategy formation	Research on middle management involvement in strategy	A quantitative analysis using data from questionnaire-based study with 157 middle managers at 11 banks and nine manufacturers and additional qualitative data from CEOs and middle managers	While middle management involvement in the formation of strategy is associated with improved organizational performance, this effect does not seem to be produced by higher consensus and improved strategy implementation but rather by a higher quality of decision making and superior strategies. This suggest that the involvement of middle managers should provide them with the opportunity to critically examine strategic decisions.
Gupta & Govindarajan (1991)	AMR	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the SBU	Coordination through aligning corporate control systems to the differentiated strategic roles of business units	Contingency theory	A conceptual paper	Corporate control over a subsidiary should be aligned with this subsidiary's strategic role (i.e., depending on whether this subsidiary is a global innovator, a local innovator, an integrated player, or an implementor).
Kim & Mauborgne (1991)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and SBUs	Coordination through a strategy process that is procedurally just	Justice-based research	A quantitative analysis based on data gathered via an extensive mail questionnaire sent to subsidiary top managers of SBUs of 19 large MNCs directly involved with the head office in their strategy-generation process	Procedural justice in global strategic decision-making enhances commitment, trust, and social harmony as well as outcome satisfaction in subsidiary top management.
Roth et al. (1991)	JIBS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and SBUs	Coordination through a global strategy, operational capabilities (i.e., coordination, a shared managerial, and geographic concentration), and administrative mechanisms (i.e., formalization, centralization, integration)	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on survey data collected from the President or CEO of 82 business units competing in global industries	When there was a proper alignment between the international strategy, organizational capabilities, and administrative mechanisms, superior business unit performance occurred.
Skivington & Daft (1991)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Within level: Top management	Coordination through adjustments to organization structure and systems and interaction processes targeted at explaining and interpreting strategy	Research on strategy implementation that understands organizational structure either as an enduring	A quantitative study of the implementation of 57 decisions in integrated circuits, petroleum, and health care firms	The implementation of strategic decisions relied both on adjustments to organization structure and systems and on interaction processes focused on explaining and interpreting strategy. Different gestalts - different combinations of structural framework and process variables - characterized the implementation of different types of strategic decision.

					configuration of tasks and activities or as a pattern of interaction, contingency perspective		
Fisher & Govindarajan (1992)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Profit center managers	Coordination through incentives	Contingency theory	A quantitative study based on a compensation survey performed annually by a major compensation consulting firm, including 524 PCMs from 322 firms	A complex set of factors (i.e., market, political and human capital factors) influence profit center manager compensation.
Floyd & Wooldridge (1992)	AMP	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through strategic conversations and administrative systems	Consensus research	A conceptual paper - informed by previous action research	Managing strategic consensus (i.e., shared understanding of and shared commitment to the strategy across the managerial hierarchy) plays a central role in effective strategy implementation. There exist four forms of strategic consensus (i.e., strong consensus, informed skepticism, blind devotion, and weak consensus) that are each appropriate in different situations.
Golden (1992)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and SBUs	Coordination through an optimal allocation of responsibilities to the SBUs	Contingency theory	A quantitative study based on a survey of 496 hospital CEOs	SBU performance is enhanced when: (1) SBUs with an external strategic orientation control environmental monitoring activities and strategic decision analysis, and (2) SBUs with an intraorganizational orientation control those activities relating to operations.
Hart (1992)	AMR	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Top management and organizational members	Coordination differs depending on the strategy making mode	Literature on strategy processes and strategic decision-making	A conceptual paper	A framework of five different modes of strategy making (i.e., command, symbolic, rational, transactive, and generative) that specify varying roles top managers and organizational members can assume in the strategy-making process
Preble (1992)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Within level: Company Level	Coordination through a strategic control system that includes feedback and feedforward controls	Theories of control, research on environmental monitoring and scanning	A conceptual paper	The development of an overall strategic control process diagram that includes feedback controls of performance as well as anticipatory feedforward controls that are supposed to facilitate the timely updating of strategies by monitoring changes in internal and external circumstances
Roth (1992)	JOM	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the SBU top management	Coordination through the match of SBU top manager characteristics and the SBU strategy	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data from a survey of senior managers of 82 SBUs competing in global industries	Fit of the three SBU senior management decision-making characteristics --risk taking, openness in decision making, and group consensus -- with an SBU's global or multidomestic strategy is positively related to SBU performance.
Roth & Morrison (1992)	JIBS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and SBUs	Coordination through different subsidiary roles	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis based on data from a survey of 125 subsidiary managers in MNCs in France, Germany, Japan, U.K., U.S., and Canada	Identification of a range of subsidiary characteristics associated with receiving a global subsidiary mandate (i.e. the subsidiary manages the research and development, production, and marketing activities of a product or product line globally).
Bryson & Bromiley (1993)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Middle management	Coordination through communication forcing and compromise	Contingency perspective, strategy process research	A quantitative analysis of coded data from 68 case descriptions of major projects of planned change	Greater experience, skill, and adequate numbers of planning staff foster communication and problem solving during the planning and implementation process which contributes to greater project success.
Kim & Mauborgne (1993a)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and SBUs	Coordination through procedural justice in MNC's strategy making process	Procedural justice	A quantitative analysis based on data from a survey of 119 subsidiary managers from 60 different subsidiary units in North America, Europe, and Asia	Procedural justice enhances subsidiary top managers' compliance with a multinational's strategic decisions directly and indirectly (i.e., through the attitudes of commitment, trust, and outcome satisfaction).
Kim & Mauborgne (1993b)	JIBS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and SBUs	Coordination through procedural justice in MNC's strategy making process	Procedural justice	A quantitative analysis based on data from a survey of 221 MNC executives with 88 in the CHQ and 142 in the subsidiaries	Procedural justice is related to a multinational firm's ability to formulate superior strategies and implement them effectively. Procedural justices fosters global learning, a balancing of global and local perspectives, and global strategic renewal, thereby supporting strategy formulation. It further enhances subsidiary compliance with

							multinationals' strategic decisions, improving the implementation of worldwide strategies.
Veliyath & Shortell (1993)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Within level: Company level	Coordination through the strategic planning system configuration	Contingency theory	A quantitative study with the CEOs of a sample of 406 hospitals belonging to eight leading hospital systems in the United States	Identification of differences in strategic planning system characteristics between Prospectors and Defenders and of the negative performance implications of a deviation from a defined ideal profile of strategic planning system characteristics among Prospector organizations.
Barney & Zajac (1994)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Company level	Coordination through firm-specific strategy implementation skills	Resource-based view of the firm	A conceptual paper (Special Issue introduction article)	Since strategy implementation skills must be specific to the particular strategies being implemented by a firm, strategy implementation cannot be studied independent of the content of a firm's strategies, and independent of the particular competitive context within which a firm operates.
Covin et al. (1994)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Within level: Company level	Coordination through the fit of strategic mission and structural and tactical choices	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis of survey data from 91 advanced technology manufacturing companies	Exploration of the performance effects of specific strategic, structural, and tactical choices for firms with build-oriented strategic missions compared to firms with more hold-and harvest-oriented strategic missions.
Hart & Banbury (1994)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Company level	Coordination through different strategy making process modes	Literature on different strategy-making process models, resource-based theory, contingency theory	A quantitative analysis of survey data from a sample of 285 top managers	Firms with high process capability (i.e., the simultaneous use of multiple strategy-making process modes) outperform single-mode or less process-capable organizations.
Nohria & Ghoshal (1994b)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through shared values and differentiated fit	Contingency theory	A quantitative analysis with a survey of 54 MNCs subsidiaries	There are two different approaches to managing the nexus of headquarters subsidiary relations in a multinational corporation - differentiated fit and shared values. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive but rather MNCs that can simultaneously implement these approaches have the best relative performance.
Oswald, Mossholder, & Harris (1994)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through involvement and a compelling strategic vision	Literature on strategic involvement, on strategic vision salience, and on psychological attachment to organization and job	A quantitative analysis based on survey data from large Fortune 100 corporation based in the mid-western United States that manufactures consumer goods	The more involved managers were in strategy formulation, the more they were committed to the organization and satisfied with and involved in their work. The positive effects of strategy involvement are enhanced within the context of a salient strategic vision.
Reger, Gustafson, Demarie, & Mullane (1994)	AMR	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through current and ideal organizational identity	Cognition, organizational identity, radical vs. stepwise change	A conceptual paper	Development of a dynamic model in which successful implementation of organizational transformation is dependent on management's ability to reframe the change over time. Implementation may best be accomplished through a series of middle-range changes that are large enough to overcome cognitive inertia, but not so large that members believe the proposed change is unobtainable or undesirable.
Simons (1994a)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Top management	Coordination through formal control systems	Literature on organizational control and management control systems	A multiple case study of 10 newly appointed top managers over an 18-month period	In promoting strategic change, top managers used control systems to formalize beliefs, set boundaries on acceptable strategic behavior, define and measure critical performance variables. Furthermore, at times managers used control systems interactively and personally involved themselves in the decisions of subordinates to motivate debate and discussion about strategic uncertainties.
Birkinshaw & Morrison (1995)	JIBS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through different subsidiary roles	Contingency theory	A quantitative study based on a survey of 126 subsidiary top managers in MNCs	There are three types of subsidiary roles - world mandate, specialized contributor, local implementer - and these subsidiary roles are associated with specific structural context characteristics that either comply more with the

							underlying principles of a hierarchy or heterarchy model of MNC structure.
Fairhurst et al. (1995)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through inertial forces in the organization that affect communication patterns	Population ecology, inertia, socio-technical systems, communication	A quantitative analysis of the introduction of socio-technical systems philosophy in five manufacturing plants	When sources of organizational inertia were present in a plant (i.e., because the plant had a history of top-down control and hierarchical authority or an autocratic plant manager), the adoption of a socio-technical systems approach and the associated participative communication practices proceeded less effectively.
Kim & Mauborgne (1995b)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through a strategic decision-making process that incorporates the five dimensions of procedural justice	Procedural justice	A quantitative study based on a survey of 79 head office managers and 142 subsidiary top managers	The exercise of procedural justice has a positive effect on strategy formulation as it facilitates the kind of information processing necessary for the design of effective global strategies.
Banker, Lee, Potter, & Srinivasan (1996)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Front-line employees	Coordination through incentive system design	Contingency approach	A quantitative analysis on data from 77 months from 34 outlets of a major retailer	The positive impact of outcome-based incentives on sales, customer satisfaction, and profit increased with intensity of competition and proportion of upscale customers and decreased with level of supervisory monitoring.
Dean & Sharfman (1996)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: High-level managers	Coordination through decision process rationality	Theories of decision-making, procedural rationality, and organizational politics	A quantitative analysis of 52 decisions in 24 companies based on information from two informants for each decision	Decision-making processes influence the success of strategic decisions. While procedural rationality enhances decision-making effectiveness, political behavior undermines decision-making effectiveness.
Kim & Mauborgne (1996)	MS	Enacting	Across levels: Corporate headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through strategic decision-making processes that are procedurally just	Procedural justice	A quantitative study based on a survey of 119 subsidiary managers from 60 different subsidiary units in North America, Europe, and Asia	Procedural justice enhances both managers' in-role and extra-role behavior. The effect of procedural justice on both managers' in-role and extra-role behavior is mediated by a higher commitment to a decision.
Klein & Sorra (1996)	AMR	Conceptualizing	Within level: Innovation adopters	Coordination through a climate of innovation and fit of innovation values	Innovation and organizational culture literature	A conceptual paper	Implementation effectiveness, that is, the consistency and quality of targeted organizational members' use of an innovation, is a function of the strength of an organization's climate for the implementation of that innovation and the fit of that innovation to targeted users' values.
Roth & Odonnell (1996)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through incentives	Agency theory	A quantitative study based on a survey of senior managers of 100 foreign subsidiaries	Subsidiary management's compensation strategy is influenced by the agency problem, defined by the subsidiary's cultural distance from its headquarters, lateral centralization, and senior management's commitment to the parent. An incentive structure that is aligned to the agency state is positively related to subsidiary effectiveness.
Dyck (1997)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Organization-level	Coordination through different types of rationality	Transformational change, Weberian multiple rationalities framework, configuration theory	A historical case study of a small arts college in Canada spanning a 40-year organizational history, including four different configurations and 11 transformational change attempts	Transformational change attempts are commonplace, and most such attempts are rejected. Transformational change attempts are more likely to be implemented if they are perceived to be more rational than the status quo, and especially if the primary basis for transformation is value-rationality. Over time, organizational members will perceive an incumbent configuration as increasingly rational.
Miller (1997)	OSt	Enacting	Across levels: Decision makers and implementors	Coordination through characteristics of the implementation process and the organization	Research on decision making and strategic change	A qualitative analysis based on interview and document data of 11 decisions in 6 organizations	There are five key success factors that appear to be critical to the successful implementation of strategic decisions. There needs to be support (especially from influential persons, and those implementing the decision), clarity about what the objectives are and how to reach them, a favorable climate within the organization and a little bit of luck.
Brown & Magill (1998)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and business units	Coordination through centralization versus decentralization of decision rights	Structural contingency perspective, multiple	A conceptual paper	Three contingency factors predict the distribution of decision making rights between the corporate and business-unit levels for the management of IT applications: (1) the level at which opportunities for IT-related synergies across business units are being pursued at the corporate

					contingency perspective		level, (2) the degree to which IT plays a strategic role for a given business, and (3) the degree of line managers' IT knowledge at the business-unit level.
Kim & Mauborgne (1998)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Teams	Coordination through procedurally just strategic decision-making processes	Research on procedural justice	A conceptual paper	Development of an "intellectual and emotional recognition theory" that explains why the exercise of procedural justice has positive attitudinal and behavioral consequences. Procedural justice simultaneously responds to the complex, multifaceted needs of human beings from the basic concern for proper human conduct, to the need to feel socially accepted and valued in a group, to the rational and calculative need to protect and advance self-interests.
Kumar & Seth (1998)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Joint venture parents and joint venture	Coordination through the design of control mechanisms	Structural contingency theory, resource dependence perspective and agency theory	A quantitative study based on a survey of 64 joint venture CEOs	The use of different JV control mechanisms can be explained by the degree of strategic interdependence between the JV and each parent and the environmental uncertainty faced by the JV.
Godard (1999)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Management and employees	Coordination through implementation rationales, implementation processes, implementation intensity, and organizational context	Literature on implementation rationales and processes, contingency perspective	A quantitative analysis of survey data of managers with primary responsibility for industrial relations or human resources management in 141 Canadian workplaces	Although the rationales for the implementation of workplace reforms and the respective implementation processes may affect implementation effectiveness, the extent to which this is the case is limited and varies depending on intensity of adoption, on establishment size, and on the definition of effectiveness employed.
Lee & Miller (1999)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Management and employees	Coordination through organizational commitment to employee well-being	Contingency theory, Porter's generic strategies, resource-based view	A quantitative analysis of survey data of 129 Korean companies in the textiles, machinery, automotive parts, and electronics industries	Dedicated positioning strategies appear to be executed more effectively where organizations exhibit a high level of commitment to their employees.
Beer & Eisenstat (2000)	SMR	Conceptualizing	Across Levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through an engaged and competent management, a clear strategy that ensure that the right people work together, and an honest and fact-based dialogue	Literature on organizational change and development, strategy process research	A qualitative analysis based on action research at Becton Dickinson and 12 other companies	Six barriers to strategy implementation are identified: (1) Top-down or laissez-faire senior management style, (2) unclear strategy and conflicting priorities, (3) ineffective senior management team, (4) poor vertical communication, (5) poor coordination across functions, businesses or borders, (6) inadequate down-the-line leadership skills and development. Ways to overcome these barriers are elaborated.
Dooley, Fryxell, & Judge (2000)	JOM	Conceptualizing	Within level: Management team members	Coordination through strategic consensus	Literature on consensus research and commitment	A quantitative analysis of survey data from strategic decision makers at different hospitals	There exists a positive relationship between strategic consensus and implementation success that is partially mediated by decision commitment. However, contrary to expectations, decision commitment engendered by consensus actually reduces implementation speed, which may be due to the increased care that committed groups may apply to executing decisions.
Prasad & Prasad (2000)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and employees of the subsidiary	Coordination through discursive practices	Discourse theories and theories of resistance	A qualitative study of the implementation of a new computer system in a health maintenance organization in the US	Three ways in which routine resistance is discursively constituted were identified: (1) owning resistance - when individual employees identified and described some of their own actions as being resistant, (2) naming resistance - when organizational members labeled the actions of other employees as resistant, (3) indirect resistance - when managers interpreted certain employee actions as disruptive, even though they simultaneously acknowledged that these actions were not necessarily intended as such.
Slater & Olson (2000)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Organization-level	Coordination through fitting the sales force management practice to the business strategy	Contingency perspective	A quantitative analysis of survey data from manufacturing and service firms	Superior performance at the firm or SBU level was achieved when sales force management practices were matched to Miles and Snow (1978) business strategy types.
Huy (2001)	AMR	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Change agents and change recipients	Coordination through the timing and pacing of the different types of interventions	Literature on time in the context of change, literature on the content of	A conceptual paper	The capable sequencing, timing, pacing, and combining of intervention ideal types (i.e. commanding, engineering, teaching, and socializing) critically influences the effectiveness of planned change processes.

					change, paradox theory		
Shaw et al. (2001)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Withing level: Manufacturing employees	Coordination through incentive system design	Literature on individual motivation, institutional theory, organizational justice, and neoclassical economics	A quantitative analysis of survey data from 379 HR managers in the trucking industry and among 141 plant managers in the concrete industry in the US and Canada	Compensation practices reinforcing collective effort, teamwork, and flexibility (team incentives and skill-based pay) enhance the effectiveness of integrated manufacturing systems (total quality management and advanced manufacturing technology), while practices inhibiting cooperation and teamwork among employees (individual incentives and seniority-based pay) impede it.
Shaw, Gupta, & Delery (2002)	SMJ	Enacting	Within level: Manufacturing employees	Coordination through incentive system design	Congruence perspective	A quantitative analysis of survey data from 202 member facilities of the American Concrete Pipe Association	Pay dispersion is associated with higher levels of workforce performance when accompanied by formal individual incentive systems and independent work. Pay compression is associated with higher performance in the absence of individual incentive systems and when work is interdependent.
Dobni & Luffman (2003)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Firm-level	Coordination through coalignment of market orientation, strategy profiles, and environmental context	Literature on market orientation, contingency perspective	A quantitative study based on a survey including 210 executives of Regional Bell Operating Companies in the United States	There are different market orientation and strategy profiles that correspond to distinct competitive contexts. An organization that aligns its market orientation to its strategy and to the specific requirements of its context performs better than an organization that does not achieve such a match.
Edmondson (2003)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels: Team leader and teams	Coordination through team leader behavior, organizational context characteristics, and team learning processes	Learning and leadership	A study based on qualitative and quantitative data from 16 operating room teams learning to use a new technology for cardiac surgery	Team leader coaching, ease of speaking up, and boundary spanning were associated with successful technology implementation. The most effective leaders helped teams learn by communicating a motivating rationale for change and by minimizing concerns about power and status differences to promote speaking up in the service of learning.
Hickson, Miller, & Wilson (2003)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Within level: Management	Coordination through an experience-based approach (i.e. keeping control by assessing, specifying, and resourcing) and/or a readiness-based approach (i.e., being prepared for action by appropriate structure and prioritizing) to strategic decision implementation	Literature on strategic decision making, literature on project planning, literature on strategic decision implementation	A qualitative study of the implementation and long-term consequences of 55 decisions in 14 organizations	Two distinct approaches to implementation management - experience-based and readiness-based - enhance the chances of decision implementation fulfilling expectations. The greatest chance of success is provided by a dual approach that combines both courses of action.
Johnson-Cramer, Cross, & Yan (2003)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels	Coordination through change process characteristics	Adaptation and inertia theories, literature on innovation adoption	A qualitative analysis based on observational, survey and interview data from a commercial lending institution	The level of fidelity in a purposive change effort can be explained by characteristics of the change (e.g., alignment with organizational goals, norms, and culture), characteristics of the implementation process (e.g., participative practices employed in the design and implementation phases), and organizational characteristics (e.g., organizational slack).
Kim et al. (2003)	JIBS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: MNC and different global functions	Coordination through people-based, information-based, formalization-based, and centralization-based integration	Contingency and configuration theory	A quantitative analysis based on a survey of 161 MNCs	The way that multinational businesses in integrated global industries coordinate and control R&D, manufacturing, and marketing functions across borders has significant implications for performance. For global R&D integration, people-based and information-based modes are more effective than formalization-based and centralization-based modes. For manufacturing, people, information, and formalization are more effective than centralization. For marketing, information and centralization are more effective than people and formalization.
Maritan & Brush (2003)	SMJ	Enacting	Within level: Organization-level	Coordination through a template outlining general principles of practice transfer and the explicit	Resource-based view of the firm, intrafirm transfer of practices	A qualitative study based on 30 hours of semi-structured interviews of plant workers, engineers, business unit managers, and corporate staff	Heterogeneity among the plants, stemming from both differences in resource endowments and differences in choices made by managers, presents challenges to the internal transfer of superior practices. Rather than only to

				management of differences between the template and various recipients		members who were involved in the implementation of flow manufacturing	achieve exact replication, explicitly coordinated practice transfer may serve to transfer general principles in a way that takes account of the differences between recipient.
Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths (2005)	JMS	Enacting	Across Levels	Coordination through organizational culture and reshaping capabilities	Theories on culture and capabilities	A quantitative study based on a two-wave survey of 67 employees in a state government department in Queensland, Australia about to implement an end-user computing system	Evidence suggests that employees who perceived strong human relations values in their division reported higher levels of readiness for change prior to the implementation of the new end-user computing system which, in turn, was predictive of system usage. Employees who reported high levels of reshaping capabilities within their division also perceived heightened levels of readiness for change which, in turn, too, was predictive of change implementation.
Ketokivi & Castaner (2004)	ASQ	Enacting	Within level: Middle Management	Coordination through participation in strategic planning and top managers' effort to communicate the organizational priorities that emerged from the planning process	Literature on participatory strategic planning	A quantitative study based on a survey with informants from 164 manufacturing plants from five countries and three industries	Participation in the strategic planning process and communication of the resulting priorities jointly reduce position bias among middle managers in terms of their perception of the intended strategy.
McNulty & Ferlie (2004)	OST	Enacting	Across Levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through a top-down orchestrated reengineering process and through sedimented conditions that protect the existing ways of organizing	Theories of organizational change and transformation, neo-institutional theory	A qualitative study of a reengineering process in a UK hospital	Rather than transformational change, transformatory change initiatives may result in "sedimented change" in which former ways of organizing retain resilience. The resilience of these "deep structures" predicts continuing limitations to transformation strategies designed to achieve "big bang" change in public service organizations, especially those reliant on purely subjective interventions such as "top managerial leadership".
Becker & Huselid (2006)	JOM	Conceptualizing	Across Levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through strategic human resource management practices	Strategic human resource management, resource-based view	A conceptual review	Strategy implementation is identified as the central mediating variable in the relationship between strategic human resource management and organization performance.
Vaast & Levina (2006)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through detailed codification and standardization of practices	Organization design, codification, and inertia	A qualitative study of a medium-sized European mutual insurance company's IT department	Increasing the degree of codification in activities of a corporate IT department to control, coordinate, and deliver services more cost effectively to its business clients led to the loss of organizational adaptability. While management felt that the change had been effective as the IT department had become a cost-efficient service provider, clients perceived that the change was not working because the IT department no longer understood the clients' needs, was less responsive than external providers, and did not deliver systems clients could use productively.
Van Riel, Berens, & Dijkstra (2009)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels	Coordination through motivation and open climate for communication	Goal setting and motivation theories	Online survey of employees in three large companies	Perceived efforts by management aimed at motivating and informing employees and at developing their capabilities each are related to strategically aligned behavior. Efforts to stimulate motivation among employees, providing a rationale for the strategy and an open communication climate have a stronger effect than participation in decision making and supportiveness. Finally, each of the perceived efforts are complementary to the others
Parmigiani & Holloway (2011)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Across levels. Corporate parent and business units	Coordination through governance mode choice and parent-level implementation capabilities	Organizational economics	A quantitative analysis of data from 72 restaurant chains	A parent's operating expertise from related experience improved quality; however, this capability detracted from growth, particularly unit growth for internal units. Coordination based upon collocation of parents and business units improved performance both in terms of growth and quality, especially for internal units. Unexpectedly, collocation also improved unit growth of outsourced units.
Aral et al. (2012)	MS	Conceptualizing	Organization	Coordination through incentives and practices	Contingency Theory	A quantitative analysis of data on human capital management (HCM) software adoption over 11 years with survey data on incentive systems and HR analytics practices for 189 firms	Complementarities among information technology (IT), performance pay, and human resource (HR) analytics practices are examined. The adoption of human capital management (HCM) software is greatest in firms that have also adopted performance pay and HR analytics practices.

							HCM adoption is associated with a large productivity premium when it is implemented as a system of organizational incentives, but has less benefit when adopted in isolation
Hill, Seo, Kang, & Taylor (2012)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through hierarchical distance and perceived top management's change-related communication effectiveness	Transformational leadership, hierarchical distance, communication, commitment to change	A quantitative analysis based on a two-wave survey of employees in a government agency	Hierarchical distance between employees and the TMT negatively influenced employees' affective and normative commitment to change. In addition, perceived top management's change-related communication effectiveness partially mediated these relationships. Managers' transformational leadership behaviors enhanced perceived top management's change-related communication effectiveness of their workgroup members, thereby influencing their commitment to change.
Liguori (2012)	OST	Conceptualizing	Within-level: Department level	Coordination through the three dimensions of process of change - pace, sequence, and linearity.	Literature on the process of change and its dimensions, archetype theory	A qualitative analysis based on a multiple case study of processes of accounting change in three departments of two Canadian and two Italian municipalities	The right sequence of change in the key-elements is the necessary and sufficient condition for radical change. The other two dimensions of the change process (i.e. pace and linearity) have negligible influence.
Brenner & Ambos (2012)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through formal and social controls and the way they are sequenced	Institutional theory, contingency theory, theories of organizational controls	A qualitative analysis based on longitudinal multiple-case-study of the firm's actions and control dynamics over time through semi-structured interviews with managers in 62 MNCs	MNCs face a dilemma of "institutional duality," which might render headquarters' controls meaningless in a foreign subsidiary context. MNCs need to impart meaning through the use of social controls before they can introduce other controls in their network of subsidiaries. For process and output controls to have any validity, they must be based on precontractual elements, such as shared norms.
Shimizu (2012)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing	Within levels: Middle and operational management	Coordination through stock options, passive monitoring, and procedural justice	Agency theory and research on autonomy	A conceptual paper	Direct and indirect agency risks associated with providing middle and operational managers with autonomy in the hopes of encouraging corporate entrepreneurship are examined. Stock options, passive monitoring, and perceived procedural justice are argued to be able regulate the potential negative side effects of high autonomy, such as opportunistic behaviors and perceived unfairness.
Herrmann & Nadkarni (2014)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Top management	Coordination through CEO oversight of strategic change	Literature on strategic leadership, literature on strategic change	A quantitative study based on a survey among CEOs and top executives of 120 randomly selected SMEs in Ecuador	The effects of CEO personality characteristics are different in strategic change initiation and strategic change implementation. Effective strategy implementation is fostered by a CEO's emotional stability and conscientiousness, but it is hindered by a CEO's agreeableness.
Ross (2014)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing	Within level: Top management	Coordination through the integration or separation of the responsibility for strategic planning and execution	Penrose's typology of a manager's task, agency theory	A formal agency-theoretic model	A formal model is developed on when to assign (i) entrepreneurial services, which relate to strategic planning and the acquisition of resources, and (ii) managerial services, which relate to execution, to the same generalist manager rather than to different specialists. If managers and their supervisor have symmetric information about work conditions, hiring a generalist dominates. On the other hand, if managers have better information about work conditions, hiring specialists dominates.
Schleimer & Pedersen (2014)	JIBS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through MNC parents' intensity of effort to leverage the knowledge across its subunits	Organizational learning and the use of a teacher-student lens	A quantitative study based on a survey of the effects of different structural mechanisms and motivational processes by MNC parents on the ability of 216 subsidiaries to absorb parent-initiated marketing strategies	MNC parents can cultivate subsidiaries' ability to absorb the knowledge embedded in many complex strategies that entail largely implicit components, such as marketing strategies, through the adoption of specific authority structures and social controls (i.e., decentralized authority structures and normative relationships linking subunits). However, the impact of these social structures on the subsidiary's ability to absorb the largely implicit marketing knowledge is accounted for by specific motivational efforts of the MNC parent to leverage the knowledge across its subunits.
Barrick, Thurgood,	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Organization	Coordination through three organizational resources	Engagement theory, resource	A quantitative analysis of survey data of org. members across the	The synergistic interaction between organizational resources and strategy implementation is highlighted. The



Smith, & Courtright (2015)				(motivating work design, HRM practices, and CEO transformational leadership), the TMT members' striving to implement the firm's strategic objectives, and collective organizational engagement	management theory	hierarchical levels from 83 small- to medium-sized credit unions located throughout the US	firm's workforce is maximally engaged when organizational resources such as motivating work design, HRM practices, and CEO transformational leadership, are coupled with TMT's active guidance about the strategic types of employee contributions that will be valued.
Gubler et al. (2016)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Front-line employees	Coordination through an attendance award program	Theories on motivation and incentives	A quantitative analysis of a 21-month panel of daily worker-level data spanning the 12-month "pre-award period" (before Plant 1 introduced the award) and the 9-month "award period" (when the Plant 1 award program was in place)	The complex costs of corporate awards on tasks included and even on tasks not included in the award program are shown. An attendance award program temporarily changed behavior in award-eligible workers but did not habituate improved attendance. The extrinsic reward from the award program crowded out the internal motivation of those employees who had previously demonstrated excellent attendance, generating worse punctuality during periods of ineligibility and even resulting in 8% efficiency loss in the execution of their daily laundry tasks.
Sonenshein (2016)	AMR	Enacting	Across levels: Change agents and top managers	Coordination through different meaning-making tactics used by internal social change agents to advance different issue types	Sensemaking and meaning making	Conceptual paper	Two issue impediments are identified that obstruct the efforts of social change agents who work within corporations and direct their firms to address a social issue — issue illegitimacy and issue equivocality. These impediments ground four types of issues that social change agents attempt to advance: convertible, blurry, safe, and risky. By matching the meaning-making tactics used to influence the interpretations of others to the issue type, social change agents will more likely influence top managers to support a social issue.
Hutchison-Krupat (2017)	MS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Senior leaders and their direct reports	Coordination through senior leadership's incentive and communication decisions	Literature on the role of incentives and communication within organizations	A multitask principal–agent model	The nontrivial nature of credible communication means there are initiatives for which any detailed communication on the part of senior leadership is simply interpreted as rhetoric; it has no impact on a direct report's actions. If leadership's more detailed communication is to have any effect on a direct report's actions, the information asymmetry between senior leadership and a direct report must be sufficiently large; a new initiative's potential to create value must be sufficiently uncertain. Consequently, when interests differ, such as the objectives of senior leadership and those of a middle manager, greater uncertainty (i.e., information asymmetry or vague communication) can serve the role of bringing potentially disparate interests more in line with one another.
Kiss & Barr (2017)	JOM	Conceptualizing	Within level: Top management teams	Coordination through TMT mental models (centralization vs. decentralization)	Configurational perspective, upper echelon theory, information processing perspective, research on organizational learning	A quantitative analysis of publicly available data of 104 new venture firms	Longer new product development (NPD) strategy implementation duration benefits new venture performance when there exist low levels of industry turbulence and high levels of mental model centralization among the TMT as top managers with high levels of mental model focus are better able to spot and solve inconsistencies associated with the different stages of the NPD process and to provide the necessary direction. Shorter NPD strategy implementation duration benefits new venture performance when there exist high levels of industry turbulence and lower levels of mental model centralization among the TMT as top managers with low levels of mental model focus downplay formal problem-solving approaches and provide directions that are aligned with an improvisational approach to learning.
Stewart et al. (2017)	AMJ	Enacting	Within levels: Team leaders	Coordination through leaders' facilitative or obstructive influence	Theories of power, status, identity, and empowerment	A mixed-method study based on data from a longitudinal quasi-experimental design complemented with qualitative data from interviews on the implementation of a team-based	Higher-status team leaders (i.e., physicians) are less successful than lower-status team leaders in implementing team-based empowerment. Team-based empowerment creates a status threat for high-status leaders who then struggle to protect their old identity as someone with

						empowerment initiative within the Veterans Health Administration	distinct professional capabilities, which in turn leads to improper delegation behavior.
Han, Kang, Oh, Kehoe, & Lepak (2019)	AMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through the vertical and horizontal fit of an organization's HR system	Strategic human resource management literature, research on high-performance work system, an HR system's vertical fit, and an HR system's horizontal fit	A quantitative analysis based on data from a nationally representative four-wave panel sample of Korean establishments	A high-performance work system (HPWS) was more positively related to future product sales among establishments pursuing a fast-follower, relative to a first-mover or fence-sitter, entry timing mode. These performance benefits associated with vertical fit were more pronounced in the context of stronger horizontal fit—reflected in internal consistency in the implementation of practices across the domains of the HPWS. Product sales then conveyed the dual-alignment effect of an HPWS on financial performance.
Raveendran (2020)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Business units	Coordination through the firm's structure that shapes the interactions among its employees	Research on the role of current structure in reorganization decisions, literature on centralization and decentralization, prior work on the timing of reorganizations	A quantitative analysis using data on the reorganizations of cell-phone manufacturing firms during 1983–2008	The effect of a firm's current structure on its corporate reorganization decisions, which are defined as the addition and/or removal of business units, is examined. The way employees are grouped into business units may affect both the type and timing of subsequent reorganizations; the reason is that employees of similar (resp. different) backgrounds need less (resp. more) time to achieve effective collaboration.

Journals: AME = Academy of Management Executive; AMJ = Academy of Management Journal; AMR = Academy of Management Review; AMP = Academy of Management Perspectives; ARP = Annual Review of Psychology; ASQ = Administrative Science Quarterly; JIBS = Journal of International Business Studies; JOM = Journal of Management; JMS = Journal of Management Studies; MS = Management Science; Ost = Organization Studies; OrgSci = Organization Science; PAR = Public Administration Review; SMR = Sloan Management Review; SMJ = Strategic Management Journal

*Table A.2 Strategy implementation literature representing the adaptive view of strategy implementation*

Study	Outlet	Conceptualizing vs. Enacting	Actors Involved	Coordination	Theories	Research Method	Key Finding(s)
Lindblom (1959)	PAR	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Policy formulators	Coordination through a systematic comparison of multiple alternative policies and a ubiquitous process of mutual adjustment among parties with different interests	Literature on rational policy formulation	A conceptual paper	The method of "successive limited comparisons" among policy alternatives provides a better basis for rational policy formulation than the so-called "rational-comprehensive method".
Bourgeois (1980)	SMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Top management	Coordination through consensus on strategic means	Literature on the rational-comprehensive and the political-incremental view of strategic decision making	A quantitative analysis based on data from questionnaire-based study among the top executives of 12 non-diversified public corporations headquartered in the Pacific Northwest	The greatest economic performance occurs when strategy makers agree on means, agree on a narrow range of operable goals, and disagree on the less tangible goals.
Quinn (1981)	JBS	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Management	Coordination through top executives that provide an overall strategic direction that is detailed enough to ensure that the incremental processes within the subsystems do not get out of control but broad enough to also provide the flexibility needed to exploit new opportunities	Logical Incrementalism	A qualitative analysis based on studies at several large companies	Constantly integrating the simultaneous incremental processes of strategy formulation and implementation, which are based both on formal-analytical and on power-behavioral practices, is the heart of effective strategic management.
Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984)	SMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: The CEO	Coordination differs across the five approaches to strategy implementation	Configuration theory	A conceptual paper	There exist five approaches to strategy implementation that can be combined in practice. They vary regarding the effort expended on the formulation and on the implementation sides of strategy making.
Wernham (1985)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Unit managers	Coordination through the availability of resources; top management support; perception of benefits; technical and organizational validity; history of past implementation attempts; size of the implementing unit; and the nature of the market environment	Research on strategic management and, in particular, strategy process research	A qualitative case study of the implementation of centrally generated strategic initiatives within British Telecom	Contrary to the view in the traditional strategic management literature of the implementation of strategy proceeding rationally in a linear fashion through a compliant, monolithic, unitary organization, strategy implementation is a complex interactive process between the headquarter and the subsidiaries that possess their own power and resources and a significant measure of autonomy.
Schilit (1987)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Middle management	Coordination through the upward influence of middle management	Research on strategic decision making and strategy processes	A qualitative study of 60 middle managers from 57 organizations that were required to maintain a diary of their interactions with their direct superior over a 2-month period	Identification of determinants of the occurrence of upward influence attempts by middle managers and of conditions that increase the likelihood of these attempts being successful.
Westley (1990)	SMJ	Enacting	Within level: Middle Management	Coordination through inclusion in strategic planning	Literature on the role of middle management in strategy making, microsociological theory	A conceptual paper	Inclusion in strategic conversations is likely to leave middle managers feel included and energized about strategic issues if these strategic conversations provide a genuine opportunity for joint sensemaking with the decision makers in the organization
Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991)	SMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Across the managerial hierarchy	Coordination through sensemaking and sensegiving	Sensemaking/sensegiving literature	An ethnographic study of the initiation of a strategic change effort in a large, public university	The initiation of the strategic change can be meaningfully described as unfolding through interrelated processes of sensemaking and sensegiving.
Noble & Newman (1993)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through intentional acts by different actors, acting in their organizational roles and pursuing their organizational	Contingency theory	A qualitative case study conducted at a large American state university which was introducing a Student Information Management System	While the literature often privileges the impact of technology on organizations, this article shows that how technology may be altered because of pressures emanating from organizational structure. Organization structures can

				interests, that together unwittingly caused the adaptation of the system to the existing structure			impact on the development process so as to alter computer-based systems to a design which is unintended but more consistent with existing organizational arrangements.
Ezzamel (1994)	OST	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through discourse	Foucault's theory of power relations	A qualitative single case of a change process at a UK university, triggered by a reduction in funding	A study of the extent to which the budgeting system can be deployed as a disciplinary regime in the context of a change initiative. Groups opposed to the proposed change mobilized arguments from within and outside the accounting discipline to cast strong doubts on the top policy makers' proposals for resource reallocations and promoted an alternative strategy to cope in the reduction of organizational funding.
Mueller (1994)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Company level	Coordination through firms' strategic choices that are constrained by internal factors, including traditional modes of control, management style, and company culture	(Broader) resource-based view, contingency perspective	A multiple case study of teamworking strategies at engine plants of Ford and General motors across four countries	While teamwork has been portrayed as a corporate response to environmental challenges and certain best practices of teamworking have been proposed, companies design teamwork not according to a best model, but according to their objectives, which in turn are shaped by management style, employee relations, company traditions, i.e. their internal firm-specific resources.
Brown (1995)	OST	Enacting	Within level: Change agents	Coordination through a combination of 'rational' arguments which appealed to stakeholder self-interest and cultural norms, control over the flow of information, and symbolic action	Literatures on interpretive approaches to understanding organizations and IT, politico-symbolic perspective on organizations	A qualitative study based on interview and documentary data on the implementation of a Hospital Information Support System at a major U.K. hospital	Establishing legitimacy for a large information technology system and the new power relations that this project introduced was accomplished by a niche marketing campaign in which key stakeholder groups were fed radically different explanations regarding the motivations for the change and its likely implications for them and the organization.
Gerwin & Moffat (1997)	MS	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and product development teams	Coordination through team autonomy versus managerial control	Research on autonomous work teams	A quantitative study of 53 cross-functional product development teams in 14 firms	Withdrawing autonomy from cross-functional product development teams due to concerns about a lack of a shared understanding of the development process, environmental change, or a lack of managerial "buy-in" undermines team performance.
Sahay (1997)	OST	Enacting	Not specified	Coordination through technology, time-space, and social structure	Structuration theory, theories of time and space	A conceptual paper	Meanings of time-space are deeply embedded within social structure, and IT through its capability to create new time-space conditions for social interaction, impinges on the material ordering of our daily lives and the associated feelings of inclusion and presence with respect to the social system. These feelings contribute to redefining conditions of social structure and also influence how actors interact with technology.
Sillince (1999a)	JMS	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through rhetoric and informal logic	Discourse analysis, rhetorics, power, structuration theory, institutionalization	A conceptual paper	Development of an organizational theory of argumentation that suggests that organizations institutionalize very specialized repertoires of arguments, which constrain what their members can say, and which are discourse resources which are subject to appropriation and manipulation by organization members to increase their power and influence. Managers responsible for organizational change need to know what types of justifications justify each stage of change most persuasively.
Sillince (1999b)	OST	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Organization-level	Coordination through coherent communication of organizational change	Theory of speech acts, theory of political language forms, theory of language coherence	A qualitative analysis based on two case studies of companies (AT&T and Chrysler) undergoing major organizational change	Coherent use of language contributes positively to organizational change. In the case of AT&T, this sequence was coherent - attacking the current occurred before supporting the new, and ideals occurred before rules. In the Chrysler case, key elements of coherence were missing, because attacking far outnumbered supporting communications, and ideals were considered simultaneously with rules.
Weick & Quinn (1999)	ARP	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Organization-level	Coordination through a change agent whose role in episodic change is that of prime mover	Literature on organizational change	A conceptual paper	Conceptualizations of episodic change are contrasted with conceptualizations of continuous change on the basis of implied metaphors of organizing, analytic frameworks,

				who creates change and whose role in continuous change is that of a sense maker that interprets the change dynamics already under way			ideal organizations, intervention theories, and roles for change agents.
Lovas & Ghoshal (2000)	SMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across Levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through evolutionary processes governed by the strategic intent of the top management and administrative systems	Models of organizational and intraorganizational ecology	A qualitative study of the interrelationship between strategic decision making and administrative systems at Oticon, a Danish hearing aid company	A model of strategic management as guided evolution that accounts for the role of top management in shaping the direction and outcomes of the evolutionary processes within firms through which strategic initiatives get chosen and for the role of human and social capital as another critical unit of selection within such processes.
Edmondson et al. (2001)	ASQ	Enacting	Across levels: Team Leaders and team members	Coordination through team leader behavior, implementation processes, and team psychological safety	Collective learning and organizational routines	A qualitative study of 16 hospitals implementing an innovative technology for cardiac surgery	Implementation of a new technology that required substantial changes in the existing work routines involved four process steps: enrollment, preparation, trials, and reflection. Successful implementers used enrollment to motivate the team, designed preparatory practice sessions and early trials to create psychological safety and encourage new behaviors, and promoted shared meaning and process improvement through reflective practices.
Ezzamel et al. (2001)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels: Plant managers and employees	Coordination through unplanned responsible autonomy/negotiated flexibility or planned flexibility/lean manufacturing methods	Resistance, power, control and identity	A qualitative single case study of repeated corporate-driven initiatives designed to implement a range of 'lean manufacturing' initiatives at 'Northern Plant', a pseudonym	Workers employed a variety of individual and collective forms of resistance due to their identification with practices that had been established earlier when management were content to indulge self-managing patterns of work in return for securing required levels of output.
Heracleous & Barrett (2001)	AMJ	Enacting	Across Levels: Different stakeholder groups	Coordination through discourse and rhetorical practices	Literature on discourse	A qualitative analysis based on interview and observational data of the London Insurance Market	Discourses employed by different stakeholder groups exhibit certain relatively persistent structural features (i.e. values and beliefs) that guide (communicative) interactions in cooperative and conflicting ways and influence strategy implementation through their effects on agents' interpretations and actions.
Huy (2002)	ASQ	Enacting	Within level: Middle Management	Coordination through balancing between emotionally committing to person-ally championed change projects and attending to recipients' emotions	Emotions research	A qualitative analysis based on a field study of a large service-providing company in the information technology undergoing radical change	Emotionally committing to personally championed change projects while also attending to recipients' emotions facilitates organizational adaptation, whereas the lack of such emotional balancing leads to organizational inertia or chaos.
Jarzabkowski & Wilson (2002)	JMS	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: TMT and departments	Coordination through organizational and TMT practices	Strategy as practice perspective, strategy process perspective, structuration theory	A qualitative analysis based on interview, observational, diary, and archival data of the top team of Warwick University	How strategy is put into action depends on the interplay between TMT action, characteristics of the organizational context, and practices which arise from, and also shape the interplay between, the TMT as agents and the organizational context.
Love et al. (2002)	JOM	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Corporate and the business units	Coordination through explicitly articulated strategy or through structural centralization	Social learning vs. organization design perspective, contingency perspective	A quantitative analysis based on survey data from US manufacturing firms	The relationship between strategy explicitness and firm performance is curvilinear as very low or very high levels of explicitness are associated with higher levels of performance. Explicit strategy shows its greatest benefits in more decentralized firms, while keeping strategy close to the vest is likely most beneficial in centralized firms.
Foss (2003)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination and collaboration through structure, leadership actions, and project management office	Theory of the firm, organizational economics	A qualitative study of Oticon's experiment with adopting an internal-hybrid form - the "spaghetti organization"	Frequent managerial meddling with delegated rights in the decentralized "spaghetti" organization led to a loss of motivation and caused the change back to a more structured organization.
Geppert, Williams, & Matten (2003)	JMS	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Corporate headquarters and SBUs	Coordination through host or home country rationalities	Social construction	A qualitative study based of the emerging choices and constraints in the management practices of local managers in German and British subsidiaries of three MNCs	National contexts impact on both the formulation of parent company strategies via a home country rationality and on the implementation of global strategies via a host country rationality.
Regner (2003)	JMS	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Management in the periphery	Coordination through a macro strategy process in which ideas are generated in the peripheries	Strategy process and practice research	A qualitative analysis based on an in-depth case study of Couplet and a multiple retrospective study of strategy	Strategy creation consisted of fundamentally different activities in the periphery and center of an organization. While strategy making in the periphery was inductive,

			and center of an organization	that were subsequently implemented as corporate strategic change in the center		creation issues in Ericsson, Pharmacia, and AGA	including externally oriented and exploratory strategy activities like trial and error, informal noticing, experiments and the use of heuristic, strategy making in the center was more deductive, involving an industry and exploitation focus, and activities like planning, analysis, formal intelligence and the use of standard routines.
Balogun & Johnson (2004)	AMJ	Enacting	Within levels: Middle Managers	Coordination through middle managers' lateral social interactions	Sensemaking/sensegiving literature	A qualitative study during an imposed shift from hierarchical to decentralized organization across three divisions of a recently privatized utility in the United Kingdom	The socially negotiated nature of schema change and, in particular, the significance of middle managers' lateral social interactions that occur primarily in the absence of senior management in shaping change is highlighted. A "replacement" pattern of schema change is identified in which middle managers moved from shared through clustered sensemaking, to shared but differentiated sensemaking.
Balogun & Johnson (2005)	OST	Enacting	Across levels: Across the managerial hierarchy	Coordination through Initial coordination from the organization design team, inter-recipient sensemaking	Sensemaking/sensegiving literature	A qualitative study of strategic change in the core business division of a recently privatized utility	While change outcomes are influenced by vertical interactions between recipients and senior managers, the greatest amount of MM sensemaking activity occurs through lateral and largely informal middle manager processes in the absence of more senior managers. Consequently, 'managing' change is less about directing and controlling and more about facilitating recipient sensemaking processes to achieve an alignment of interpretation.
Davenport & Leitch (2005)	OST	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Central agency and external stakeholder groups	Coordination through use of ambiguity in communication strategies as a mode of authority delegation	Literature on strategy in the public sector, literature on strategic ambiguity, Clegg's (1989) concept of facilitative circuits of power	A qualitative analysis based on interview and document data from a public-sector research-funding body targeting to transform the New Zealand science system	The strategic use of ambiguity can be employed to manage the competing demands of stakeholders. By employing ambiguity in strategic communication, considerable authority was delegated to stakeholders and stimulated a variety of creative responses. The high discretionary element that accompanies authority delegation using strategic ambiguity, however, also carries risks as it encourages a diversity of interpretations that is not under the control of the central agency.
Ezzamel & Burns (2005)	OST	Enacting	Across units: Different professional groups in the organization	Coordination through professional competition	Literature on professional competition, politico-symbolic perspective on organizations	A qualitative study based on interviews and documents of the implementation of EVA™ ('economic value added') at a major UK Retailer	Finance managers sought to strengthen their professional jurisdiction and enhance their financial and symbolic rewards by imposing stricter controls over buyers and merchandisers through the introduction of a new accounting technique. Buyers and merchandisers resented as an undesirable intervention into their work practices and mobilized their influence and work knowledge to ensure the abandonment of EVA™ ('economic value added').
Maitlis (2005)	AMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Leaders and stakeholders	Coordination and collaboration through "sensegiving"—attempts to influence others' understandings of an issue	Sensemaking/sensegiving literature	A qualitative analysis based on a two-year study of sensemaking in in three British symphony orchestras, across 27 issue domains	Four forms of organizational sensemaking were identified (i.e., guided, fragmented, restricted, and minimal) that result from the degree to which leaders and stakeholders engage in "sensegiving". Each of the four forms of organizational sensemaking is associated with a distinct set of process characteristics that capture the dominant pattern of interaction and results in particular outcomes, specifically, the nature of the accounts and actions generated.
Rouleau (2005)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Middle management	Coordination of stakeholders through sensegiving actions	Sensemaking/sensegiving literature	A qualitative analysis based on observational, interview, and document data from a small company in Canada	MM's were selling the change to clients' through four practices: narrating an attractive story about the change, using cultural codes to bolster the meaning created around the new strategy, producing subjective and emotional effects to sell the new strategic orientation to the client, and providing good reasons for the strategic change.
Mantere (2007)	JMS	Enacting	Within level: Middle management	Coordination through role expectations that top management places on middle management	Literature on roles, agency, and discourse	A qualitative analysis of interview data from 262 interviews in 12 organizations in Northern Europe	Certain conditions shaped by the TMT enable middle managers to fulfill the strategic role expectations placed upon them.

Sillince & Mueller (2007)	OST	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through discourse	Strategy-as-Practice approach, literature on framing, research on responsibility	A qualitative analysis based on interview and documentary data from a virtual e-business transformation team charged with the mission of re-orienting a multinational insurance company	Middle managers' goals play an important role in their interpretations of their own responsibilities in strategy implementation. Top management ambivalence about strategy provided a middle management team with wide scope for interpretation of responsibility for developing and implementing a strategic initiative. In the early stage, responsibility as well as expectations about the strategy's successful outcome were 'talked up'. In the later stage, when the strategic initiative was failing, the middle management implementation team engaged in 'talking down' of expectations.
Tucker, Nembhard, & Edmondson (2007)	MS	Enacting	Within level: Team level	Coordination through learning activities by improvement project participants	Research on best-practice transfer, team learning, and process change	A quantitative study based on data from 23 neonatal intensive care units seeking to implement new or improved practices	A high level of supporting evidence for a unit's portfolio of improvement projects was associated with implementation success. Learn-how (activities to discover the underlying science of a new practice so as to operationalize the practice in a target organization) was positively associated with implementation success, but learn-what (activities to identify best practices) was not.
Volkoff, Strong, & Elmes (2007)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and employees	Coordination through routines and roles that were embedded in the material elements of the system	Critical realist perspective, theories on routines	A qualitative study of an enterprise system implementation through 150 visits and 72 formal interviews with 60 different people	When embedded in technology, organizational elements such as routines and roles acquire a material aspect, in addition to the ostensive and performative aspects. The process of change is explained as a three-stage cycle in which the ostensive, performative, and material aspects of organizational elements interact differently in each stage.
Jarzabkowski (2008)	AMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Top management	Coordination through interactive, procedural, or integrative strategizing	Structuration theory	A qualitative case study of top managers in three universities	In the context of weakly institutionalized strategies, a sequential pattern that moves from interactive to procedural strategizing may be successful at shaping strategy. In the context of strongly institutionalized strategies, only an integrative approach that mobilizes both interactive and procedural strategizing simultaneously is likely to be successful at shaping strategy.
Leonardi (2008)	AMR	Enacting	Not specified	Coordination through discourse	Discourse	A conceptual paper	Deterministic discourse creates an ideological orientation toward technological change, labeled as discourse of inevitability, which makes the fundamentally indeterminate relationship between technology and culture appear determinate.
Lüscher & Lewis (2008)	AMJ	Enacting	Within level: Middle management	Coordination through a process of collaborative sensemaking that uses paradox as a lens into managerial challenges	Paradox theory, sensemaking	A qualitative study based on action research at the Danish Lego company	Collaborative sensemaking transformed paradox from a label to a lens, contributing to a process for working through paradox and explicating three organizational change aspects - paradoxes of performing, belonging, and organizing.
Mantere & Vaara (2008)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through discourse	Social learning perspective on strategy, literature on strategy discourse	A qualitative analysis based on 301 interviews, documents and observational data in 12 organizations	Three discourses that legitimize nonparticipatory approaches to strategy work and three discourses that promote participation in strategy processes are identified.
Davis, Eisenhardt, & Bingham (2009)	ASQ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Organization-level	Coordination through the amount of organizational structure	Contingency theory	An analysis based on computational and mathematical modeling	Different environmental dynamism dimensions have unique effects on the structure-performance relationship. Generally, the relationship between structure and performance is unexpectedly asymmetric: performance gradually fades with too much structure but drops catastrophically with too little.
Jarzabkowski & Balogun (2009)	JMS	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Division and business units	Coordination through communication, participation, negotiations, and compromises across actors.	Literature on strategic planning, strategy making, and political activity, activity theory	A qualitative study based on interview and document data of a multinational attempting to deliver greater strategic integration across Europe	Business unit characteristics shape experiences of inclusion or exclusion and dominant or subordinate roles in communication and participation activities within the planning process. Strategic integration is achieved through political interactions in which actors renegotiate the positions attributed to them within the planning process.

Denis et al. (2011)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Members of central agency and members of stakeholder organization	Coordination through practices of reification and practices of strategic ambiguity	Literature on decision pathologies, literature on decision making in pluralistic contexts	A qualitative analysis based on observational, interview, and document data of the process of merging three large teaching hospitals	The interplay of practices of reification and practices of strategic ambiguity maintain commitment and divergence among people that have sufficient common interest to pursue decision-making activities in order to resolve issues that link them together but have insufficient common interest to actually achieve this resolution in a concrete way.
Huy (2011)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through social identities and group-focus emotions	Concepts drawn from social-psychological literatures (i.e. group-focus emotions, group social identities)	A qualitative single-case study of large bilingual Canadian information technology company over three years	Top executives who favor an affect neutral task approach can inadvertently activate middle managers' organization-related social identities, generating group-focus emotions. These emotions prompt middle managers - even those elevated to powerful positions by top executives - to support or covertly dismiss a particular strategic initiative even when their immediate personal interests are not directly under threat.
Kim, Hornung, & Rousseau (2011)	JOM	Enacting	Within level: Employees	Coordination through the anticipated benefits of the change, the quality of the employment relationship, and the formal involvement in the change	Theory of planned behavior	A quantitative study based on a two-wave survey of 72 employees from a hospital undergoing a strategic reorientation toward continuous improvement	Formal involvement in the change had stable positive effects on change supportive behaviors. The effects of both anticipated benefits of the change and the quality of the employment relationship were moderated by time, such that the former became less and the latter more important as the change progressed from an earlier phase of implementation to a later stage of institutionalization
Martin (2011)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Business-unit general managers (GMs)	Coordination through executive leadership group structures, processes, and psychosocial characteristics	Dynamic managerial capabilities, organizational structure	A qualitative analysis based on interview and archival data from six multibusiness organizations in the software industry	Recombinative group structures (vital resource autonomy, reciprocal interdependence of BUs), recombinative group processes (regular interactions between general managers, joint efforts to realize synergies across BUs), and social equivalence enable GMs' dynamic managerial capabilities.
Raes et al. (2011)	AMR	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through different interaction processes and role behaviors	Theories of information processing, the interpersonal process perspective of strategy implementation	A conceptual paper	TMT's participative leadership style and MM's active engagement promotes cognitive flexibility during information exchange and integrative bargaining during mutual influencing which respectively will lead to higher strategic decision quality and higher implementation quality.
Sonenshein (2010)	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Management and employees	Coordination through narratives and discourse	Sensemaking, discourse, narratives	A qualitative study of a Fortune 500 retailer with data from interviews, survey, and document analysis	Managers tried to foster support by generating "equifinal" instead of "unitary" meaning. Managers disseminated a narrative describing the change as transformational alongside a narrative describing the change as incremental, enabling employees to draw on either symbolic resource.
Yu & Zaheer (2010)	JIBS	Enacting	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through different degrees of contextual influence on different underlying dimensions of a practice	Practice adoption	A qualitative analysis based on case studies of Six Sigma implementation in Korean and US firms	A cascading, sequential pattern to the local adaptation of the conceptual, social and technical dimensions of organizational practices is identified: The way a practice is initially conceptualized affects how the social dimension is adapted, which subsequently influences how the technical dimension is modified. Since organizational practices are multidimensional by nature, and because those dimensions are often intertwined, the adaptation of one particular dimension in order to enhance fit with the environment can interfere with the consistent application of other dimensions of the practice.
Dokko & Gaba (2012)	AMJ	Enacting	Corporate venture capital managers	Coordination through modification of practices to fit the contexts of adopting organizations	Contingency theory, practice adoption	A quantitative analysis of 93 information technology firms with CVC units	The extent of practice variation by managers adopting a practice is determined by two types of career experience: Experience with the practice itself leads to a more faithful replication of an adopted practice, while experience that enables assessment of the fit between the practice and the adopting firm leads to greater modification of the adopted practice.
Kellogg (2011)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Across the	Coordination through status-based tactics and countertactics	Social movement theory, neo-institutional theory	A qualitative analysis of a comparative case study of two matched hospitals	Implementing reform inside organizations may require internal reformers not only to mobilize with one another but also to stand up to internal defenders' countertactics in



			organizational hierarchy			based on 57 interviews of general surgery chief residents and interns	everyday encounters. Defenders can divide reformer coalitions by linking reform practices to a status characteristic associated with lower-status reformers, denigrating higher-status reformers by associating them with these practices, and reintegrating higher-status reformers into the defender group.
Sillince et al. (2012)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through the ways actors construct and exploit ambiguity	Rhetorics, discourse	A qualitative analysis based on a longitudinal case study of an internationalization strategy of a business school	Ambiguity is shaped by the strategic actions proposed but also by how actors construct that ambiguity rhetorically to shape ongoing actions. Strategic action does not happen despite ambiguity but rather the pattern of action that emerges is shaped by the way actors construct and exploit ambiguity over time.
Sonenshein & Dholakia (2012)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Management and employees	Coordination through managerial communication	Social psychological research, sensemaking research	A quantitative study based on survey data from 159 store employees of a large retailer	Managerial communication that clarifies why a change is important and identifies the benefits associated with the change can enable employee engagement with strategic change implementation. These types of meaning-making processes can create the requisite psychological resources – affective commitment, unit identification, and perceived change efficacy – that facilitate change implementation behaviors.
Canato et al. (2013)	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Leaders and organizational members	Coordination through practice adaptation and cultural change	Theories of culture and adoption of new practices in organizations	A qualitative analysis based on a longitudinal case study of the implementation of Six Sigma at 3M using multiple data sources	The implementation of culturally dissonant practices is an ongoing process that involves the mutual adaptation of organizational practices and culture. A conceptual model is developed according to which the cultural changes induced by coercive implementation of new practices involves a partial change in shared beliefs and behavioral patterns and a more general enrichment of the cultural repertoire of organization members.
Gondo & Amis (2013)	AMR	Enacting	Across units: Within and across organizations	Coordination through discourse	Institutional theory, discourse	A conceptual paper	A framework is developed showing that variations in practice adoption are related to two distinct institutional dimensions: the acceptance dimension (differing levels of acceptance of the need to adopt a practice) and the implementation dimension (differing levels of conscious reflection during implementation of the practice). An institutional paradox is revealed: the discursive characteristics that make a practice more easily accepted also reduce the conscious engagement needed for its implementation.
Klingebiel & Meyer (2013)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Management	Coordination through adaptive decision-making during the course of the strategic initiative implementation	Literature on strategy decision making	A qualitative study based on document and interview data on 121 decision episodes during the rollout of a strategic initiative - an electronic road-tolling scheme - that involved multiple stakeholders	Procedural rationality and analytical comprehensiveness in adaptive decision-making during strategy implementation is higher when managers become aware of new uncertainty than when they become aware of new certainty.
Reitzig & Sorenson (2013)	SMJ	Enacting	Across units: Across subunits	Coordination through peer evaluation of innovation ideas	Literature on organizational learning/intraorganizational ecology models of organizational evolution, in-group evaluation biases	A quantitative analysis of internal evaluations of 11,975 idea proposals at a multinational firm with operations in both consumer products and manufacturing	Managers were significantly more likely to support ideas from their own subunits. With regard to ideas emerging from other subunits, managers were most biased against ideas from smaller and from lower-status subunits of the organization.
Abdallah & Langley (2014)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and professionals	Coordination through different degrees of ambiguity of strategy discourse	Literature on ambiguity in strategy texts, Michel de Certeau's (1988) theory of practice	A qualitative analysis based on document and interview data from a cultural organization that produces and distributes films	While different forms of ambiguity reflected in strategy discourse and the different modes of consumption of strategy texts associated with it can be an important resource for organizational actions, the loosely coupled initiatives may eventually enter into conflict with one another, demanding readjustment.

Ahearne et al. (2014)	SMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Middle management	Coordination through senior managers' control, middle managers' adaptive strategy implementation, and formal (i.e., size of a business unit or region) as well as informal (i.e., reputational and informational social capital) structure	Literature on middle managers, social networks, and paradoxes	A quantitative analysis of survey data and objective firm data on performance from the largest business unit of a Fortune 500 company in the cleaning industry	Middle managers' upward influence in the form of championing strategic alternatives is beneficial to business unit performance up to a moderate threshold as losing too much control is more costly than the marginal benefits of being flexible and adaptive. Their downward influence in facilitating adaptability of planned strategy at the operating level, on the other hand, has only a positive effect on business unit performance.
Ansari et al. (2014)	OST	Enacting	Across levels: Headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through the active management of practice adaptation at the intra-organizational level	Practice adoption, contingency theory	A qualitative study of the adaptation of a specialized quality management practice in a multinational corporation in the aerospace industry	Three strategies are identified through which organizations can manage the tension between preserving the 'core' practice while allowing local adaptation at the subsidiary level: creating and certifying progressive achievement levels, setting discretionary and mandatory adaptation parameters, and differentially adapting to context-specific and systemic misfits.
Huy et al. (2014)	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Change agents and change recipients	Coordination through legitimacy judgements and related emotional reactions	Literature on planned radical organizational change, on resistance to change, and on legitimacy judgments	A qualitative study based on interview and documentary data from a large information technology company	Change recipients' legitimacy judgments of change agents and their associated emotional reactions in various phases of planned change explain recipients' emergent resistance to the change effort.
Kleinbaum & Stuart (2014)	SMJ	Enacting	Within level: Corporate staff	Coordination through corporate staff's broad social networks that extend across different business units	Social network literature	A quantitative study based on information from the complete internal e-mail record of BigCo, a large information technology company	Members of corporate staff have broad networks that frequently stitch together colleagues from different business units and enable the implementation of coordination-based corporate-level strategy. This is due to a sorting process that assigns individuals with broader networks to corporate staff roles but it is also due to the fact that the move to the corporate staff further broadens individuals' networks. The literature's emphasis on structure as a means to achieve coordination might undervalue the selection process those structures are populated with the right people.
Lockett et al. (2014)	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through individual actors' social positions, which shape their sensemaking about organizational change	Literature on sensemaking and organizational change, field theorists' concepts of social position, Bourdieu's theory of practice	A qualitative analysis based on archival, interview, and observational data of three focal actors in different social positions at the National Health Service in England	Different social positions will be characterized by unique capital endowments, which will shape actors' resulting dispositions toward profession-centrism and allocentrism, and in turn their sensemaking about opportunity construction and opportunity problematizing during change processes.
Mirabeau & Maguire (2014)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy and including external actors	Coordination through mobilizing support to provide impetus for autonomous projects, manipulating strategic context to legitimate the projects by constructing them as consonant with the prevailing concept of strategy, and altering structural context to embed the projects within organizational units, routines, and objectives	Strategy process research (in particular, seminal works by Mintzberg, Bower, and Burgelman), strategy-as-practice research	A qualitative case study of strategy formation in the technical support organization of a global telecommunications equipment provider that took place between 1997 and 2006	A model is developed that shows how emergent strategy originates as a project through autonomous strategic behavior and how it subsequently becomes realized: To mobilize resources for impetus, project champions can generate support by securing resources from three sources – their organizational unit, other organizational units, or external actors. To manipulate strategic context for consonance, champions can introduce new strategic categories or imaginatively stretch existing ones. Altering structural context for embeddedness involves creating new teams, establishing new procedures and routines, and setting new organizational objectives.
Sonenshein (2014)	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Management and employees	Coordination through the skill of managers to shift from autonomous to directed resourcing to foster employees' creative actions as an organization's perceived resource endowment changes	Research on resources and creativity	A qualitative analysis based on a multi-year single case study in a retail company that builds on 60 interviews and other materials	A process model is developed of how managers facilitate creative resourcing as perceived resource endowments increase over time. Managers can foster creativity with perceived limited resources through autonomous resourcing, in which managers shape employees' identities to enable them to act creatively. As they shift to directed resourcing, managers engage in an artful balance of

							providing the appropriate type of objects that continue to stimulate and shape creativity without overdetermining it or stymieing it.
Bala & Venkatesh (2015)	MS	Enacting	Employees	Coordination through employees' experiential engagements (i.e., user participation and training effectiveness) and psychological engagements (i.e., user involvement and management support) with a new IT	Theory of adaptation adopted from social psychology	A quantitative analysis based on two field studies conducted over a period of six months, with four waves of data collection each, in two organizations implementing two different IT systems	Employees performed four different technology adaptation behaviors-exploration-to-innovate, exploitation, exploration-to-revert, and avoidance-based on whether they appraised an IT as an opportunity or a threat and whether they had perceptions of control over an IT. Employees' experiential engagements (i.e., user participation and training effectiveness) and psychological engagements (i.e., user involvement and management support) during the implementation jointly determined their appraisal of an IT.
Balogun et al. (2015a)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Senior management team	Coordination through change narratives	Literature on sensemaking and narratives	A qualitative case study exploring strategic change in the European division of a FMCG multinational corporation	The relationship between wider organizational change and local change action is mediated by the senior management team's local change narratives that are influenced by the team-specific relational and interpretative context.
Durand & Jacquemin et (2015)	JIBS	Enacting	Across levels: Headquarters and subsidiaries	Coordination through attention allocation	Attention-based view, literature on competing institutional demands	A quantitative study of the implementation of 25 practices associated with three corporate social responsibility issues in 101 worldwide subsidiaries of a multinational company	External peers' conformity to the CSR norm directs subsidiaries' attention toward the CSR-related demands of external constituents at the expense of the demands from the headquarters. Internal peers' conformity increases attention to both external and headquarters' demands related to CSR. As higher attention levels result in higher practice implementation, internal and external peers' conformity drives the heterogeneity of practice implementation in the MNE.
Hutchison-Krupat & Kavadias (2015)	MS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Senior managers and project managers	Coordination through top-down or bottom-up strategic resource allocation	Decision-making theory, literature on information asymmetry	A principal-agent model	Decisions about the level of resources allocated to a strategic initiative can happen top-down or bottom-up but no single decision process is the "best." A firm may find that a bottom-up process allows the organization to profitably pursue more risky and difficult initiatives than would a top-down process, yet this same organization may find it more profitable to employ a top-down process for initiatives that are standard and do not represent a lot of risk.
Reitzig & Maciejovsky (2015)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Middle Management	Coordination through the corporate hierarchy	Information economist and organizational psychology perspectives on mid-level managers' information transmission behaviors	An empirical field study, a simulation-guided study, and a laboratory study	Managers pass up fewer ideas the steeper the hierarchy that surrounds them once they fear negative feedback for commission errors they make (passing up ideas whose values were below the threshold) or once they incur administrative costs for passing on ideas irrespective of their quality.
Stiles et al. (2015)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels: Headquarter and subsidiaries	Coordination through a newly-implemented performance management routine, a new espoused organizational schema, and the cognitive and motivational aspects of individual agency	Literature on organizational routines and cognition	A qualitative study of the implementation of a centralized performance management routine at two subsidiaries a Japanese multinational	Different performances of subroutines emerge into a new ostensive pattern of a routine as cognitive and motivational aspects of individual agency manifest and affect the new espoused organizational schema.
Valentine & Edmondson (2015)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Team level	Coordination through mesolevel structures that bounded a set of roles (rather than a set of specific individuals, as in a team)	Role-based coordination, temporary teams	A multimethod study of an emergency department of a hospital through qualitative interview data and quantitative longitudinal data	The introduction of new mesolevel structures that bounded a set of roles and gave them collective responsibility for a whole task enabled small-group interactions to take the form of an actual team process despite the lack of stable team composition. As a consequence, patient throughput time in a hospital emergency department improved by 40% after the new mesolevel structures were implemented.

Zimmermann et al. (2015)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing and enacting	Across levels: Senior executives and front-line managers	Coordination through mandated and emergent charter definition processes through which an organizational unit's activities and responsibilities are defined	Ambidexterity and paradox literature, process theorization	A qualitative analysis based on a multi-level multiple case study of four alliances	A multilevel process model of the process through which organizations decide to adopt an ambidextrous orientation is developed. According to the process model, the mandated (or top-down) charter definition process (through which an organizational unit's activities and responsibilities are defined) can be complemented with an alternative emergent (or bottom-up) charter definition process in which frontline managers take the initiative to adopt an ambidextrous orientation in their part of the organization.
Bertels et al. (2016)	OrgSci	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and employees	Coordination through the implementation of an operational compliance tool	Theories on culture and adoption and enactment of routines	A qualitative analysis based on a single case study with five years of interviews, site visits, observations, check-in calls, focus group sessions, and 82 interviews with Oilco employees from the most senior managers down to front line operators.	The analysis of Oilco's integration of the operational compliance routine showed that an organization's culture played an active and variable role in shaping the integration of routines. In line with the idea of culture as a repertoire or "toolkit" from which organizational members construct strategies of action, employees put cultural strategies of action differently to use and produced distinct patterns of action. Some of these patterns closely matched those of the espoused routine, whereas others did not.
Gylfe, Franck, Lebaron, & Mantere (2016)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Middle management and front-line employees	Coordination through "embodied bridging" where a middle manager performs a link between the expression of organizational strategy and the subordinate	Research on embodied cognition	A qualitative analysis based on video data of the daily work of middle managers at YLE, a Finnish Broadcasting Company	During strategy implementation, MMs deploy the practice of "embodied bridging" (i.e. linking a material expression of organizational strategy and the subordinate) in interaction episodes with subordinates to foster a sense of inclusion and to reinforcing compliance behaviors among employees.
Lee & Puranam (2016)	SMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Strategy creators and implementors	Coordination through strategy communication and performance feedback	Literature on organizational learning, innovation, and corporate entrepreneurship	A formal computational model	Given that beliefs and actions—i.e., strategies and their implementation—are separated across organizational actors, precise strategy implementation has benefits for the organization as it allows the exploitation of good strategies and enables the discovery of better strategies by allowing more effective learning from feedback on the value of current strategies.
Pors (2016)	OST	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle managers	Coordination through strategy narratives and "the ghostly" (moments in which, if only fleetingly, a familiar linear ordering of time collapses)	Freud's concept of the uncanny, Avery Gordon's work on ghostly matters in social theory, narratives	A qualitative analysis based on ethnographic fieldwork at the borderlands between municipal administration and schools in Denmark	A non-deliberate, embodied form of interruption and resistance in strategy implementation may arise, when the linearity of corporate strategy narratives collapses and other possible orderings of time open up, allowing organizational actors to come into contact with the broader social and political aspects of their work.
Vuori & Huy (2016)	ASQ	Enacting	Across levels: Top and middle management	Coordination through the structural distribution of attention, the company's historical context, and top and middle managers' shared emotions	Attention-based view, research on emotions	A qualitative analysis based on interview data with Nokia's top managers, middle managers, engineers, and external experts	The structural distribution of attention at Nokia and TMs' past aggressive behaviors generated different types of external and internal fear among TMs and MMs. These different types of fear caused decoupling interactions between groups of TMs and MMs, producing an assessment gap of organizational capability between TMs and MMs that contributed to Nokia's innovation underperformance.
Yi, Knudsen, & Becker (2016)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through organizational routines	Literature on organizational routines and adaptation	A simple theoretical model	An overlooked mechanism is identified by which inertia in routines helps rather than hinders, organizational adaptation by engendering the potential for exploration—temporal reordering of planned changes at the routine level. The proposed mechanism highlights that a reduced rate of change at the routine level may cause variations in the pace and sequence with which planned changes to the routines and their effects take place, and such reordering of the planned changes may open the door to further organizational exploration and adaptation.
Burris, Rockmann, &	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and employees	Coordination through employee identification and the content of voice	Social identity theory and self-categorization theory	A mixed-method approach including a qualitative field study of a US hospital's emergency department, a quantitative field study in two separate	Three dimensions of voice content are identified (i.e., the importance of initiating change, the required resources to enact the desired change, and the interdependencies involved in implementing the desired change) that

Kimmons (2017)						organizations, and an experimental study with respondents who were working full-time as managers	manifest differently depending on the strength of individuals' identification with their work unit versus their profession. Employees who spoke up with ideas related to their profession perceived more negative reactions by their managers in terms of explicit punishments or lack of action taken, whereas employees who spoke up with ideas centered on helping their work unit experienced more receptive managerial responses.
Harding et al. (2017)	OSt	Enacting	Within level: Senior management	Coordination through complex intra-actions of entangled discourses, materialities, affect and space/time	Judith Butler's and Karen Barad's theories of performativity, contemporary resistance theory	A qualitative analysis of interview data of strategy implementation in England's National Health Service	Resistance is inherent in the constitution of identities or self-hood, and is invoked when or if a demand for recognition is resisted and emerges within and through material/discursive enactments of resistance.
Heyden et al. (2017)	JMS	Conceptualizing	Across levels: Top management and middle management	Coordination through the change roles of top and middle managers	Upper echelons theory, middle management perspective, role theory perspective	A quantitative analysis based on survey data with participants of change management courses in Denmark, 3200 questionnaires from 602 organizations	Most employee support is garnered if change is initiated by middle managers and if top managers handle the change execution - even though that was the rarest configuration found in the research sample. A weaker positive correlation with employee support for change was found for the case in which MMs initiate and execute the change, while TM-initiated changes do not have a significant relation to employee support.
Jarzabkowski & Lê (2017)	OSt	Enacting	Within level: Organizational actors	Coordination through the micro-practice of humor that shapes the constructions of and responses to paradox	Practice approach, paradox theory	A qualitative analysis based on a longitudinal single case study of Telco, a regulated but publicly-traded European telecommunications company implementing a complex new strategy with inherently paradoxical elements	Using humor allowed actors to socially construct paradox, as well as—in interaction with others—construct potential responses to the multiple small incidences of paradox in their everyday work. In doing so, humor cast the interactional dynamics that were integral in constructing two response paths: (i) entrenching a response, whereby an existing response was affirmed, thereby continuing on a particular response path, and (ii) shifting a response, whereby actors moved from one response to paradox to another, thereby altering how the team collectively responded to paradoxical issues.
Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli (2016)	JOM	Enacting	Within level: Employees	Coordination through organizational change communication	Regulatory focus theory, research on job crafting behaviors, research on change communication	A quantitative analysis of a data produced in a three-wave longitudinal design among 368 police officers	Promotion focused employees increased job crafting behaviors (i.e., seeking resources and seeking challenges) when quality of organizational change communication was high. Prevention focused employees increased job crafting behaviors (i.e., seeking challenges) when organizational change communication was poor. From among the job crafting behaviors, seeking resources and seeking challenges were positively associated with employee adjustment to change (i.e., engagement and adaptivity), and reducing demands was negatively associated with employee adjustment.
Spee & Jarzabkowski (2017)	OrgSci	Conceptualizing and enacting	Management and employees	Coordination through a joint account as the means through which an agreement to change may be achieved that accommodates multiple, coexisting meanings that satisfy diverse constituents' vested interests	Sensemaking literature, discourse studies (especially studies adopting narratological approaches)	A qualitative study based on interview, observational, and document data of meaning making processes at a British university	Diverse actors in pluralistic contexts can achieve agreement on a proposed strategy by developing a joint account that bridges their multiple prevailing meanings and the new meanings conveyed in the proposed strategy.
Alcadipani et al. (2018)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels: Managers and employees	Coordination through the interplay between manifestations of domination and resistance	Research on domination and resistance in organizations, research on organizational discourse	A qualitative analysis based on a nine-month ethnographic study of Lean implementation in a UK printing factory	Domination and resistance went hand in hand during the implementation of lean practices. Actors engaged in multi-layered responses in which resistance manifestations expressed tacit presumptions about domination: Coercive features of Lean as sociotechnical were met with responses of practical resistance; interpretations of domination as ideological manifestations were met with resistance based on ironic discourses; and when these discourses were seen

							as lacking legitimacy, they were read as fantasies of authority, generating contempt from workers and prompting scorn directed at the agents of domination.
Jalonen et al. (2018)	SMJ	Conceptualizing and enacting	Within level: Management	Coordination through strategic concepts as central micro-level resources in strategy work	Research on sensemaking and organizational discourse, Wittgenstein's conception of language as social practice	A qualitative analysis based on a longitudinal case study of a medium-sized city over six rounds of strategic planning 2004-2006 based on observations of 181 strategy meetings, 113 interviews, informal conversations, and document data	Adopting the concept "self-responsibility" helped managers in a city organization to make sense of environmental challenges and to promote change. Such concepts involve ambiguity that can help managers to establish common ground, but can also hinder implementation of specific decisions and actions if ambiguity grows over time. Development of new strategic concepts may be crucial in helping managers to collectively deal with environmental changes and to articulate a new strategic direction for the organization.
Lawrence (2018)	OrgSci	Enacting	Within level: Teams of employees	Coordination through the launch of a new routine	Research on organizational learning and routines	A quantitative analysis of internal data from 294 stores of a large retail chain that implemented a new restocking process in its stores	On average, teams dramatically improve execution performance over time, and employee experience with the prior practice moderates the effect. Stores where employees had greater exposure to the old practice performed significantly worse than other stores at the outset—consistent with the notion of "competency traps." However, these stores also learned more quickly, which may be the result of increased efficiency in their coordination and communication when learning the new process.
Gibson, Birkinshaw, McDaniel Sumpter, & Ambos (2019)	JMS	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through employee perceptions	The ideas of the Carnegie School, research on perceptual differences in organizations	A quantitative analysis based on data from 4,243 employees across four levels in 38 business units	The notion of a hierarchical erosion effect is introduced whereby individual perceptions about specific practices become less favorable the lower one goes in the hierarchy. The size of this hierarchical erosion effect varies depending on the nature of the organizational practice being evaluated and the extent to which executives share strategic information widely. A lower hierarchical erosion effect is correlated with higher business unit growth.
Kellogg (2019)	ASQ	Enacting	Across levels: Across the organizational hierarchy	Coordination through managers' use of subordinate activation tactics (i.e., a change mechanism in which the initiating party A engages a third-party C who is subordinate to rather than superordinate to targeted party B)	Research on micro-level institutional change in professional organizations, theory on social networks	A qualitative analysis based on a two-year ethnographic study of the primary care departments in two U.S. hospitals	Managers can accomplish micro-level institutional change in professional organizations using "subordinate activation tactics". Influence agents (e.g., managers) with an unfavorable structural position vis-a-vis targets (e.g., doctors) can accomplish informal influence triadically rather than dyadically by providing members of a third-party group (e.g., MAs) who do have a favorable structural position vis-a-vis targets with both empowerment that gives third-party members the willingness to activate their structural position and positional tools that give them the ability to do so.
van Grinsven, Sturdy, & Heusinkveld (2019)	Ost	Enacting	Within level: Management	Coordination through identity work that through which individuals shape (and are shaped by) the translation of management concepts	Translation theory, research on identity Work and Identification	A qualitative analysis based on data from a study of managers tasked with the implementation of Lean in Dutch hospital contexts	The role of identity work in the "translation" (i.e., the modification and variation of ideas as they travel the 'distance' between source and new 'recipient' settings) of management concepts is examined. A conceptual model of translation-as-identity-work is developed that identifies different types of identity work (i.e., externalizing, professionalizing, rationalizing and proselytizing) through which both the concept and agent are co-constructed.
Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen (2020)	Ost	Enacting	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through the relations between talk and action	Theories of communicative performativity, research on aspirational talk	A conceptual paper	Using corporate social responsibility as recurrent exemplar, talk-action dynamics in four different modalities of aspirational CSR talk are addressed: exploration, formulation, implementation and evaluation. By conceptualizing the precarious relationship between talk and action in each of these modalities, talk and action are disentangled, all the while acknowledging that the two are mutually intertwined.
Hengst, Jarzabkow	AMJ	Enacting	Across levels: Management	Coordination through working through tensions in action, which	Literature on integration of dual	A qualitative analysis based on a three-year study of the processual	Despite the legitimacy of the sustainability strategy at the organizational level, actors experience tensions with its

ski, Hoegl, & Muethel (2020)			and organization level	reinforced the legitimacy of the co-enactment of two strategies at the organizational level	strategies, research on legitimization processes and strategy implementation	dynamics of implementing a sustainability strategy alongside an existing mainstream competitive strategy	implementation at the action level vis-a-vis the mainstream strategy, thus creating the potential for decoupling. Working through these tensions on specific tasks enables actors to legitimate the sustainability strategy in action and to co-enact it with the mainstream strategy within those tasks. Cumulatively, multiple instances of such co-enactment at the action level reinforce the organizational-level legitimacy of the sustainability strategy and its integration with the mainstream strategy.
Keum (2020)	SMJ	Conceptualizing	Within level: Organization level	Coordination through interdependencies in corporate strategic activities	Research on interdependencies in corporate strategic activities and interdependencies as barriers to adaptation	A quantitative analysis based on 74,726 firm-year observations related to the staggered adoptions of employment protection laws in the US intended to constrain one specific adjustment to one specific resource: dismissing employees	Executing even a seemingly straightforward improvement requires piecing together a series of interdependent corporate strategic activities. As a result, a constraint on just one is sufficient to foil a successful firm response. Underestimating the complex and interdependent nature of these activities can lead to bias-for-action and contribute to implementation failures, such as cost overruns, schedule delays, and a post-merger integration process that fails to realize expected synergies.
Porck et al. (2020)	JOM	Enacting	Across units: Interdependent teams	Coordination through organizational and group identification, which shapes intergroup strategic consensus	Social identity theory, literature on intergroup strategic consensus	A quantitative analysis based on data from 451 intergroup relationships between 92 teams within a service organization and 191 intergroup relationships between 37 teams from another organization	Drawing on social identity theory, a lens to understand what influences the degree of intergroup strategic consensus is offered. A tension between organizational and group identification is unveiled such that organizational identification enhances intergroup strategic consensus, whereas group identification reduces it. Organizational identification and group identification interact in predicting intergroup strategic consensus, such that organizational identification is positively related to intergroup consensus only for lower levels of group identification.
Sasaki, Kotlar, Ravasi, & Vaara (2020)	SMJ	Enacting	Within level: Management	Coordination through the use of the past to establish a sense of continuity during strategic change	Research on the uses of the past in strategy making, research on strategic identity statements	A qualitative analysis based on archival material and interviews from 25 Japanese firms	Strategy makers' attempt to reconcile change initiatives with organizational values and principles laid out long before, still encased in strategic identity statements such as corporate mottos and philosophies, are examined. Three discursive strategies that strategy-makers use to establish a sense of continuity in time of change are revealed: elaborating (transferring part of the content of the historical statement into a new one), recovering (forging a new statement based on the retrieval and re-use of historical references), and decoupling (allowing the co-existence of the historical statement and a contemporary one).

Journals: AME = Academy of Management Executive; AMJ = Academy of Management Journal; AMR = Academy of Management Review; AMP = Academy of Management Perspectives; ARP = Annual Review of Psychology; ASQ = Administrative Science Quarterly; JIBS = Journal of International Business Studies; JOM = Journal of Management; JMS = Journal of Management Studies; MS = Management Science; OSt = Organization Studies; OrgSci = Organization Science; PAR = Public Administration Review; SMR = Sloan Management Review; SMJ = Strategic Management Journal