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#### Citation

CLARK, Timothy Adrian Robert. Strategy viewed from a management fashion perspective. (2004). *European Management Review*. 1, (1), 105-111.

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# **Strategy viewed from a management fashion perspective**

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Published in EUROPEAN MANAGEMENT REVIEW, 2004 Spring, 1 (1): 105-111

DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.emr.1500004

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Accepted version

## **Abstract**

This article argues for the greater inclusion of external agents within strategy research. Drawing on the emergent management fashion literature, it conceives of these as a group of actors operating within a management fashion-setting arena. The outputs of this community dominate conceptions of what are deemed legitimate strategic actions. They thus have a critical, if presently neglected, impact on the nature strategy. The roles of the members of the management fashion-setting community are described and three promising areas of research outlined.

## **Keywords**

Management fashion, management consultants, management gurus

## **Introduction**

There is general agreement that strategy is a crucial and time-consuming activity. To a large extent, it determines the fate of many key institutions within society as practitioners develop and pursue innovative strategies in order to out-compete their rivals and secure long-term survival within a dynamic and ever-changing world. It is also a labour-intensive activity not only consuming hours, days, weeks and months of senior and middle management time, but also that of auditors, management consultants, investment bankers, public relations consultants, workshop and conference organizers, shareholder representatives and so forth. It is thus a very intensive, and expensive, activity involving a full cast of players that extends well beyond the immediate confines of the management group within an organization. However, a review of the ISI Web of Knowledge database indicates that when researchers come to analyse and review the drama of strategy they highlight, almost exclusively, the role of internal management. The other players within the strategy process, regardless of their importance, are ignored. This would suggest that they are generally viewed as incidental and/or irrelevant with little direct impact on the character of strategies that emerge. Yet a plethora of advice givers have had a critical impact on the nature of organizational life for many years (Clark and Fincham, 2002; Kipping and Engwall, 2002). But how they impact on and influence strategy is presently little understood.

In this article, I argue that if we are to amplify, extend and deepen our knowledge of strategy, we need to begin to conceive of it as a process built on an extended division of labour. We cannot continue with over-simplistic notions of strategy as being the preserve of a single elite group of individuals. One way to facilitate this shift is to begin to examine strategy through the interpretive lens of management fashion. This views ideas as the output of a community of fashion-setters. Managers are but one of a number of important actors involved in their production. With this in mind, the next section briefly identifies and reviews the main themes within the nascent management fashion literature. I then briefly identify the key members of the management fashion-setting community and describe their respective roles before outlining three areas of future research.

## **Management fashion**

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the notion that management ideas and techniques are subject to swings in fashion in the same way that aesthetic aspects of life such as clothing styles, hair length, music tastes, furniture design, paint colours, and *so forth* are characterized by surges of popularity and then decline. Researchers have conceived of management fashions as ideas and techniques that fail to become firmly entrenched and institutionalized since organizations are attracted to them for a period and then abandon them in favour of apparently newer and more promising ones. These have included 'Excellence', Culture Change, Total Quality Management, Business Process Reengineering, Knowledge Management, Six Sigma and *so forth*. Drawing on Gill and Whittle (1993) these ideas are seen to progress through a series of discrete stages: (1) invention, when the idea is initially created, (2) dissemination, when the idea is initially brought to the attention of its intended audience, (3) acceptance, when the idea becomes implemented, (4) disenchantment, when negative evaluations and frustrations with the idea emerge, and (5) decline, or the abandonment of the idea. Within the extant management fashion literature three general strands can be discerned.

The first stream is concerned to identify and explicate patterns in the life cycle of the management fashion discourse. The lineage of this literature can be traced to Abrahamson's (1991, 1996a,b) seminal papers on the management fashion-setting process. Drawing on the innovation-diffusion literature (Rogers, 1983) and neoinstitutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) his theory argues that groups of interrelated knowledge entrepreneurs and industries, identified as management gurus, management consultants, business schools, and publishers, are characterized as being in a 'race' to sense managers' emergent collective preferences for new techniques. Rational and progressive norms are seen as governing the choice of managerial ideas and techniques. Rational normative expectations are that management techniques will be rational (i.e., efficient means to important ends), whereas progressive normative expectations are that management ideas will progress over time (i.e., be repeatedly replaced by new and better techniques). The members of the fashion-setting community develop rhetorics that 'convince fashion followers that a management technique is both rational and at the forefront of managerial progress' (Abrahamson, 1996a). Their rhetorics must therefore articulate why it is imperative that managers should pursue certain organizational goals and why their particular technique offers the best means to achieve these goals. Thus, within this model the management fashion-setting community is viewed as supplying mass audiences with ideas and techniques that have the potential for developing mass followings. These may or may not become fashions depending on fashion setters' ability to redefine fashion followers' collective beliefs about which management techniques are state-of-the-art and meet their immediate needs.

The plethora of empirical studies emanating from Abrahamson's (1996a) model of management fashion have focused primarily on the diffusion pattern of a range of fashionable discourses within the print

media. Using citation analysis the number of references to a particular idea in a sequence of years are counted and plotted in order to identify the life cycle of a fashionable management idea.’ The results of these studies demonstrate that the life cycles of a range of fashionable management ideas are characterized by an initial period in which the frequency of citations increases, peaks and then declines; although the shapes of the curves for different ideas are not necessarily identical nor symmetrical (i.e., they do not necessarily rise and fall at the same rate) and vary between countries (Abrahamson and Fairchild, 1999; Benders and van Veen, 2001; Spell, 2001; Gibson and Tesone, 2001). Furthermore, while the lifespans of recent management fashions are considerably shorter than those for ideas which came to prominence in earlier periods, their peaks are much higher. Carson *et al.* (2000) show that the period of time between the introduction of a fashionable management idea or technique and the peak in its popularity has fallen from a mean of 14.8 years in the 1950~–1970s, to 7.5 years in the 1980s, to 2.6 years in the 1990s.’

The second broad strand of literature has focused on identifying those factors that account for the popularity of particular management books and the ideas they seek to promote. Some commentators have focused on what Grint (1994) has termed the ‘internalist’ approach. That is, the popularity of a book is related to its novel and superior content when compared to previous ideas. Others have adopted the ‘externalist’ approach by seeking to determine ‘*why* the package is effective in its particular envelope of space and time’ (Grint, 1994). From this perspective the key question is why do some ideas take off and engage particular audiences at certain times and not others? In answering it, the popularity and success of a book and its ideas is related to its ability to resonate with and be in harmony with the expectations and understandings of its target audience. If a book fails to convince its target audience of the plausibility and appropriateness of its ideas then it will probably not be bought in the quantities necessary to become a best-seller.<sup>3</sup> According to Grint (1994) ‘for the “plausibility” to occur the ideas most likely to prevail are those that are apprehended as capturing the *zeitgeist* or “spirit of the times”’.

Several writers have combined the two approaches distinguished by Grint (1994). For example, Kieser (1997) and Furusten (1999) have identified a number of common elements in best-selling management books. These include: a focus on a single factor; the contrasting of old ideas with the new such that the latter are presented as qualitatively better and superior; the creation of a sense of urgency such that the introduction of the ideas is presented as pressing and unavoidable; the linkage of the ideas to highly treasured management values; case studies of outstanding success, and a stress on an ideas’ universal applicability. Even if all these elements are present, Kieser (1997) writes that they ‘are useless if the timing is not perfect’. Hence, best-selling management books must not only present their ideas in certain ways, they must also appear plausible by speaking to their readers’ immediate concerns.

The final strand of literature focuses on the individuals who are identified as the authors of popular management books and the progenitors of many fashionable ideas – the management gurus. It argues that the success and impact of their ideas is due to the form in which they are presented - their powerful public performances. To date, academic studies of the public performances of management gurus have largely consisted of theoretical discussions which, using the work of Lewin (1951) and Sargant (1997), have depicted the gurus as experts in persuasive communication who seek to transform the consciousness of their audiences through powerful oratory (Huczynski, 1993; Clark, 1995; Jackson, 2001). More recent research has begun to empirically examine the live presentational techniques through which gurus convey their messages (Greatbatch and Clark, 2003a, b).

## **The importance of external agents**

While there are undoubtedly a number of deficiencies with existing conceptual and empirical work on management fashion (see Clark, 2004), viewing strategy through this particular interpretative lens crucially foregrounds the importance of a previously ignored group of external agents who have impacted significantly on the evolving character of strategy within the modern organization. Fundamental to existing strategy theory and research has been the view of organizations as bounded, discrete and isolatable entities. Within these, managers are generally viewed as independent, self-sufficient agents with singular and absolute control over the process of strategy development and implementation. Whether research examines the identification of strategic issues, the initiation of strategic debates, the process of selecting between strategic alternatives, or the selling of key issues to decision makers, the focus is on the activities and roles of managers, more often than not the top management team. While a range of external influences, usually in the form of environmental contingencies, are identified as impacting on the shape and form of strategy, the role of external agents within strategic management has been almost completely neglected (for an exception, see Schwarz, 2003). This is despite the crumbling of organizational boundaries in response to the rise of what Castells (1996) has termed the 'network society'.

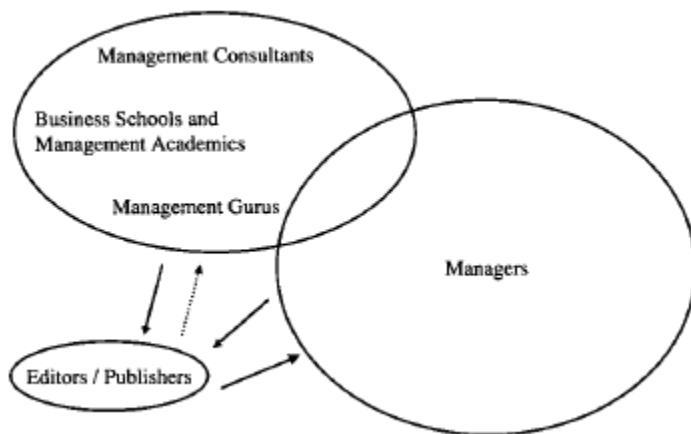
This disregard for the role of external agents in the strategy making process is strange given that some external agents have been in existence for as long as the modern corporation (Kipping and Engwall, 2002). For example, the origins of modern management consulting lie in the efficiency and time-and-motion studies pioneered by Charles Bedaux, Harrington Emerson, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, and Frederick Taylor at the turn of the last century (McKenna, 1995; Kipping, 2002). Furthermore, strategy consulting, and its pre-eminent firms such as A.T. Kearney, Booz Allen & Hamilton, Boston Consulting Group, and McKinsey, was the prominent form of consulting activity between the 1930s and 1980s (Kipping, 2002). The activities of these firms have had a considerable impact on the nature of the bets that managers place on the future, the supporting investment, and the consequent directions that organizations have followed.

What I am questioning here possibly goes back to the origins of strategy and the foundational work of Alfred Chandler and his early successors. I am not so much concerned with the continuing epistemological resonances of these works and the constraints they may impose on contemporary research (see Whittington *et al.*, 2002). Rather my focus is on problematizing the notion implicit within this work, and much of that which has followed, that observed strategic choices and outcomes are exclusively the result of managerial action. Instead, I wish to highlight the importance of a range of external agents, which I shall term the management fashion-setting arena, in establishing the dominant strategic discourses and thus constraining and influencing management action. This group of knowledge entrepreneurs is concerned with the creation, fabrication and dissemination of ideas and techniques to the managerial audience. We should be under no illusion as to their influence since it is the ideas produced by this community that have come to dominate contemporary notions of the strategic ideal (Barley *et al.*, 1988; Gerlach, 1996; Whittington *et al.*, 2003). Their outputs govern to a large extent what is valued within the strategy field. As such they have a huge impact not only in determining the repertoires that are made available to academics and practitioners, but also the choices that are deemed legitimate. Theories and studies of management fashion are useful in that they both privilege and differentiate the role of the various agents within this community since, following Abrahamson (1996a), management fashions are conceived of as 'the product of a management-fashion-setting process involving particular management fashion setters - organizations and individuals who dedicate themselves to producing and disseminating management knowledge.' Within the lens of management fashion key strategic discourses, therefore, emanate from a management fashion-setting arena, the members of which are typically identified as management gurus, consulting firms, business schools and management academics, and publishers (see

also Suddaby and Greenwood, 2001; Ernst and Kieser, 2002): Generally, by scrutinizing the dynamic interplay between different sets of management fashion-setters and the management/client community, we will develop better insight into why particular strategy discourses emerge and become incorporated into the corporate repertoire. This will help us understand not only why certain bets are deemed more appropriate than others, but also how their relative merits are first evaluated and then enacted. In the remainder of this section, I briefly identify the key members of the management fashion-setting community and describe their respective roles as they are presently understood before outlining three areas of future research.

Figure 1 depicts the key actors within the management fashion-setting arena and their relationship to the managerial audience. It differs in two important respects from previous conceptions of this arena. First, some fluidity with respect to the role and relationship between the members of the arena is acknowledged. This is because, as I develop below, multiple and simultaneous roles are possible. Second, the managerial audience, rather than being viewed as a passive, recipient audience, separate from production, is instead positioned in such a way as to recognize its active and mutual complicity in the co-fabrication of management ideas.

Figure 1: The dynamics of the management fashion-setting arena



### Management gurus

Management gurus are often viewed as the creators of innovative ideas. Through the publication of best-selling books, articles in leading business journals and talks on the international lecture circuit they have become the outstanding producers of popular strategic ideas. They are often the point of origin in the life cycle of a popular management idea. While it is mistaken to believe that they are solely responsible for the ideas they produce (Clark and Greatbatch, 2002, 2004), they nevertheless have a critical role in making particular ideas accessible and legitimate. Three types of management guru are commonly identified: (1) ‘academic gurus’ (e.g. Charles Handy, Gary Hamel, Michael Porter, C.K. Prahalad); (2) ‘consultant gurus’ (e.g. Peter Drucker, Michael Hammer, Tom Peters); and, (3) ‘hero managers’ (e.g. Lee Iococca, Luis Gerstner, Jack Welch). Thus, gurus cannot be compartmentalized into a single role. Rather, they straddle a number of communities depending on whether they derive their ideas from academic, consulting or management work. In this sense, gurus play a vital role as “boundary spanners” translating management ideas between different communities.

## Management consultants

Consulting firms are both significant consumers and producers of management knowledge. It is too simplistic to argue that they only draw upon the ideas that gurus create since many consultancies are in the business of positioning themselves as 'thought leaders' by actively creating in-house gurus. Furthermore, the larger firms have significant research capacities and systems of personal development - for example, the 'big four', in addition to niche firms such as Bain, McKinsey, Monitor, Strategos - which enable them to develop proprietary products that contain powerful and influential notions of strategy. They also draw upon the individual experience of consultants with clients for the benefit of the whole firm (Werr, 2002). This has been described as a 'people to documents approach' whereby experience is 'extracted from the person who developed it, made independent of that person, and reused for various purposes' (Hansen *et al.*, 1999). Consultancies contain powerful knowledge creation/management systems that support the generation of management knowledge that can be converted into commodified and commercial products. The outcome of these processes may be that a consultancy either 'builds a coherent arrangement of well-elaborated techniques around a leading mode' or 'builds up a collection of different, loosely coupled and multi-purpose tools that enhance flexibility and support the handling of a range of organizational problems' (Heusinkveld and Benders, 2002-3). In this sense, consultancies are fundamentally in the business of producing 'boundary objects' (Star and Griesemer, 1989). Knowledge is abstracted from a number of sources, codified and made portable so that it may be translated and reused in a broad range of situations. The resulting package is often reduced to a number of broad principles that lack situational precision since they remain ambiguous and vague. Such qualities ensure that consultancy knowledge is highly adaptable and so has meaning among very different communities thus ensuring the broadest range of client opportunities.

## Business schools and management academics

Like management consultants, this group is viewed as an important consumer and producer of management ideas. The ideas of, for example, Barney (1991), Hamel and Prahalad (1994), Mintzberg (1991) and Porter (1980, 1990) have been very influential within the strategy field. Several of these writers have attained guru status and the associated rewards, as well as establishing successful consultancy firms. However, the findings of a number of studies suggest that possibly due to the lengthy peer review process and high rejection rates of academic journals, there is a tendency for many fashionable ideas to emerge initially in the business press (Barley *et al.*, 1988; Gibson and Tesone, 2001; Spell, 2001). In terms of reporting on fashionable ideas, the academic literature is generally seen to lag that of the business press. In this respect, academic theory and studies are perceived as following, rather than leading, management progress. Hence, those ideas with popular appeal and being disseminated by media organizations are primarily created by management gurus and consultants. In contrast, the ideas developed by business scholars are perceived to be less valid with the consequence that they are increasingly viewed as peripheral. Indeed, academic research tends to lag the popular management press, so that the research agenda is not being set by academics. Management academics increasingly research the outcomes of management actions that are influenced by the ideas of a small number of consultants and gurus.

## Publishers

Publishers are concerned with identifying, producing and distributing ideas that are likely to have a mass appeal. In this respect, the role that book editors play in ‘discovering’ potential authors and popular ideas is similar to that of ‘contact people’ in other cultural industries. Publishing, film and music companies all employ people to locate new manuscripts, new film scripts and new singers. These people essentially go out into the field and act as scouts attempting to identify potential stars from the existing pool of talent that can then be signed up by their organizations. Book editors are key gatekeepers whose decisions can either facilitate or block the career of a would-be guru and idea with potential mass appeal. Editors work closely with authors helping shape their ideas prior to publication. Given the difficulty in predicting shifts in consumer tastes, it is not possible to determine with any degree of certainty what is likely to be a best-seller. Editors therefore minimize this uncertainty by producing books in accordance with rules about what has been successful in the past (Clark and Greatbatch, 2002). It is these conventions, based on their understandings of past successes and failures, which they seek to convey to authors during the writing process. In this way, they aim to produce a book that at least meets the expectations of the managerial audience, and hopefully exceeds them so that it becomes a best-seller.

## Three areas for future research

### Who does what?

In outlining the composition and roles of the members of the management fashion-setting arena the nature of the relationship with the management/client community has been overlooked. I have done this on purpose since we presently understand very little about the dynamics of the nexus of relationships between the community of knowledge entrepreneurs identified above and managers. There is a voluminous literature on the nature of the consulting industry, its history, and prescriptions relating to the management of the client-consultant relationship. There is an emerging literature on the management guru phenomenon. However, there is presently a void with respect to the role of the members of this arena in strategy. Given this lacuna there is a need to find out which members of the fashion-setting arena are involved in developing and implementing strategy. Why are they used and at what point? How do they all relate to one another? What facilitates and impedes the transfer of knowledge? To what extent is the character of the strategic ideas that emerge the responsibility of one or other, or both parties? What is the role of other groups, such as conference and workshop organizers (see Whittington, 2003)? By casting an intensive light on this system of actors, we will become more cognisant of the ways in which strategy emerges as the result of a series of collaborative relationships with a number of usually unseen heads and hands.

### Is external advice a source of competitive advantage?

It is widely recognized that Barney’s (1991) paper on the resource-based view of the firm has become the most influential framework for understanding strategy (Barney *et al.* (2001). In this article, he argued that sustained competitive advantage derived from the resources and capabilities a firm controls that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and not substitutable. These resources and capabilities can be viewed as bundles of tangible and intangible assets, including a firm’s management skills, its organizational processes and routines, and the information and knowledge it controls.



When examining the role of external agents in the strategy process, researchers need to consider whether the use of these external resources contributes to a firm's competitive advantage. In order to answer this general question, research is needed that not only examines firms' capability with respect to selecting appropriate advice but also how this advice is generated in the relationship between the two parties and, where it is generic, adapted to meet the particular needs of the client. Conducting such research will enable us to determine the extent to which firms generate and sustain their own resources and capabilities and whether this in itself is of strategic significance.

What is the nature of the output from the management fashion-setting arena?

In turning our research gaze onto the activities of external agents within strategy, there is a critical need to examine the nature of their outputs. The intensity of competition and the rapid churning of products mean that producers within this arena have to generate almost instant positive customer awareness. This has a major impact on the nature of the ideas that are disseminated to the target audience. The successful actors - management consultants and gurus - capture managerial attention by producing ideas and techniques in which image predominates over substance (Clark and Greatbatch, 2004). More specifically, those ideas that gain popular appeal tend to express and exemplify broader social trends to which they are inextricably linked. They represent a central feature of communication in modern society, the pre-eminence of the image (Boorstin, 1961; Debord, 1967; Kellner, 2003). During production their connection to a concrete understanding of organizations is loosened as the form of presentation predominates since in an image-driven society perceptions of objects are more important than their actual substance. In the process of fabrication, the distinction between what is real and what is not becomes blurred. The 'real' is increasingly replaced by pseudo-forms, which are presented as authentic and whose content is governed by an entertainment/media logic. As such, these ideas are manufactured contrivances that are designed to have maximum impact on the intended audience and so gain broad appeal with the consequence that the contents are vivified and presented as a 'spectacular and glittering universe of image and signs' (Best and Kellner, 1999). They are thus packaged to be concrete, immediately graspable and most importantly to have instant impact. This is achieved by creating a realistic conceit (i.e., the 'pseudo' is presented as 'real') in which a product is produced in accordance with a set of general conventions so that it is what it is claimed to be. For example, convention dictates that ideas are designed in such a way that the intended audience believes that they will have a positive impact on their organization and working life. Thus, what is critical is not that the ideas actually work but that they are perceived to be of practical benefit and relevance.

Such a view of the character of the management ideas produced by sections of the management fashion-setting arena has several implications for strategy research. First, there is a pervasive notion that those strategy ideas that become adopted are initially evaluated in terms of being efficient and positive means to valued ends. They are therefore deemed to be superior to other competing ideas according to some objective criteria. Although fashion-setters extol the practical benefits of ideas and this is reinforced with references to and case studies of well-known successful organizations, their accessibility, immediacy and simplicity are also considered vital. Thus the form in which ideas are presented is as important as their technical content. Indeed, in an image-driven world the former is more important. The production system in seeking to enhance the aesthetic attractiveness of ideas is engaged in a process of beautification. If we are to better understand the impact of ideas and the choices that managers make, we need to move away from a focus on rational explanations and start emphasizing the aesthetic. The point here is not that theory can beautify the organizational world, as in the case of scientific management informing the principles of modernist architecture (Guillen, 1997), but that the very appeal of ideas may relate to their impact on our emotions and senses. To what extent are they viewed as beautiful or ugly and how does this impact on

their selection? Exploring aesthetic judgements within strategizing represents a promising area for future research.

Second and relatedly, by aestheticizing strategy research the conventions deployed by the producers of popular ideas are foregrounded. It is these conventions that are at the heart of the spectacularization of fashionable management ideas because they determine the form in which they appear. They are based upon generalized beliefs about what makes a legitimate and successful management idea. As such they offer an opportunity to identify producers' understandings of the ingredients of a successful idea with the target audience. Such information may enable managers to make more discriminating decisions with respect to the authenticity and actual benefits of the ideas that are on offer. At the same time, the function of business school scholars will be elevated by providing a due diligence function in which academic research is 'devoted to testing the validity and reliability of managerial "concepts in use"' (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

This article has argued for the greater inclusion of external agents within strategy research. Drawing on the emergent management fashion literature, it has conceived of these as a group of actors operating within a management fashion-setting arena. It is the outputs of this community that come to dominate conceptions of what are deemed legitimate strategic actions. They thus have a critical, if presently neglected, impact on the nature strategy. In order to fill this lacuna in strategy research three promising areas of research were outlined. However, to pursue this agenda a double shift in the priorities of strategy researchers is required. The first is to extend their notions of who is involved in the process of selecting, making and implementing strategy. This article has highlighted the usefulness of the management fashion perspective in supporting such a shift. The second relates to the nature of the research approach adopted. Whittington *et al.* (2002) have argued that strategy research is characterized by growing torpor and stagnation as it congeals around a modernist orthodoxy. They point out that the field is dominated by a deductive approach dependent upon large databases and sophisticated statistical tools which is unable to fully apprehend and understand the 'messy, shifting world of practice' (p. 476). This paper contributes to their general argument for a greater inclusion of inductive thinking, which they term 'after modernism', since to change what is being studied we also have to change the way it is viewed. Pursuing the three research agendas outlined in the article requires researchers to examine how strategy is produced, negotiated, transformed, and mobilized within a complex and shifting nexus of relationships. We thus need to pay attention to the actual practice of strategy, what Whittington (2003) refers to as the 'labour of strategy'. What localized skills and resources do people draw upon in order to achieve the work of strategizing? What are the embedded understandings that underpin the choice of partners and then enable people to work together? What are the features of relationships that facilitate and inhibit effective collaboration? How are the outputs of these collaborations consumed and communicated? Such questions imply a limited number of appropriate methodologies that are likely to be shaped by practical considerations such as time, available access, and in particular the unpredictable form and dynamics of live, emergent action and relationships. But whichever combination is chosen they will be inductive in character.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am very grateful to David Greatbatch, Mirela Schwarz and Mike Wright for their insightful comments on an earlier draft. The usual disclaimers obtain.

## Notes

1. Elsewhere I have pointed out that citation analysis is not without serious problems (Clark, 2004). Unless each article is read, it cannot indicate whether the idea is central or peripheral to the main topic or whether it is referred to positively or negatively. But, of greater importance is whether citation analysis actually captures the complete life cycle of an idea. Citation analysis is limited to the counts of references to an idea in selected sections of the print media, mainly leading academic journals, semi-academic journals and the popular management press. Such a method cannot determine the degree to which ideas are 'adopted' by organizations. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in the literature to assume that there is a symbiotic relationship between the pattern in the volume of discourse and trends in the adoption and rejection of ideas by organizations.
2. See note 1 for limitations of these data.
3. The processes that underpin people's decisions to purchase management books are complex. Gladwell (2000) has highlighted the importance of 'connectors', people who bring new products to the attention of large groups of people and persuade them of their importance. It is the actions of these individuals, he argues, that tip a product from being a minority taste to a mass fashion.
4. This is a very simplified view of the membership of the management fashion-setting arena. I have argued elsewhere that agents, book editors, conference organizers and ghost writers are also important (Clark, 2004).

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