THE STRATEGY AND IDENTITY RELATIONSHIP:

TOWARDS A PROCESSUAL UNDERSTANDING

John A.A.Sillince and Barbara Simpson

University of Strathclyde Business School, Department of Management,

Glasgow G4 0QU, UK.

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Abstract. The paradigmatic separation of the strategy and identity literatures constitutes an ongoing problem for the extension of either into more global contexts. They are distinguished by different disciplinary lineages, identity arising from a social psychological and social constructionist paradigm whereas strategy is largely influenced by economics. Despite this separation strategy and identity are closely related. Strategy constructs a stable sense of identity, whereas identity explains why a particular strategy is chosen. The fact that strategy and identity have been two separate lines of development has caused difficulties – first, of accommodating both flexibility and stability in the same theoretical frame and second, for theorising about the organization's ability to exert agency. The theorisation proposed in this chapter presents rhetoric as the means by which the 'strategy work' of reimagining future options and the 'identity work' of reformulating the meaning of past actions may be integrated in the present moment. By locating both strategy work and identity work within the continuity of experience, we suggest scholars will be better able to develop theoretically integrated, empirically grounded, and globally relevant studies of strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Although strategic management started out as a uniquely North American construct, more recently the field has been increasingly influenced by research communities around the globe. This has led to a proliferation of different theoretical and methodological approaches to the central problem of strategic management. Whilst it is tempting to remain within the safety of one's own intellectual comfort zone, there are undoubtedly great benefits to be derived from engaging with alternative points of view, difficult as this may be. In this chapter, we will suggest that this sort of engagement with alternative perspectives, and indeed the further globalisation of the field more generally, requires us to be able to understand those differences in identity implied by different intellectual traditions and different cultural settings. Furthermore, we argue that identity theory is needed in the theorising of strategy (and vice versa), but currently these two literatures remain largely independent of each other, with the result that it is difficult to engage theoretically with either the meaningfulness of strategy or the consequences of identity. This is partly a matter of different methodological and theoretical paradigms: the organizational identity literature tends to psychologise the organisation and generally assumes a social constructionist view, whereas the more realist strategy literature is largely quantitative and economic in its methodology and theorising.

To date, there has been very little scholarly work that has successfully related organizational identity and strategy. We propose two possible reasons for this. Firstly, there is a difficulty conceiving identities and strategies as fluid and changing when they are defined in contexts of 'organizations' and 'environments' that have clear and fixed properties and boundaries. These entitative constraints pose a challenge to

accommodating both flexibility and stability in the same theoretical frame. Secondly, there is a difficulty related to the extent to which different theoretical perspectives admit agency as an influence that shapes who we are (identity) and what we should do (strategy). In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, our approach will frame both identity and strategy as dynamic social processes that engage both actors and their situations in meaningful and productive work. By defining identity work as the retrospective re-formulation of meanings ascribed to past events, and strategy work as the prospective re-imagination of alternative futures we see actors continuously engaged in the simultaneous production of identities and strategies. We will argue that the intertwining of these two processes is integrated in the living present by means of rhetorical constructions that weave identity work and strategy work together. The specific contribution that we seek to make then, is a temporal re-theorisation that integrates the reformulating practices of identity work, the reimagining practices of identity work, and the rhetorical practices of the present.

We begin in the next section by elaborating the two major obstacles that we see to achieving a theoretical integration of the identity and strategy literatures, namely the problem of change and the problem of agency. We then proceed to develop an alternative theorisation that considers identity and strategy as forms of work that are both meaningful and productive. In building this argument, we draw on the tradition of pragmatist philosophy as well as recently emergent literatures that adopt a processual perspective to examine the dynamics of organisational practices. The classical rhetoric theory of Aristotle then informs our view of the function of rhetoric as a means of present-time integration of identity work and strategy work.

TWO THEORETICAL PROBLEMS

Problem one: The problem of change

The problem of change is concerned with how to reconcile both flexibility and stability in the same theoretical explanation. Links between strategy (actions by the organization as an actor in its environment) and organizational identity ("who we are as an organisation") have been postulated in terms of Albert & Whetten's (1985) three defining characteristics of organisational identity – uniqueness, centrality and enduringness. Uniqueness of organizational identity is a resource for strategy which is difficult to imitate and which therefore provides the firm with competitive advantage (Stimpert, Gustafsson & Sarason, 1998). Central or defining aspects of identity have strategic significance because they influence the firm's ability to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technology (Pralahad & Hamel, 1990; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998: 119). While enduringness of organisational identity can be a source of competitive advantage in a stable environment because of its easy comprehensibility and freedom from conflict (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998: 121).

With regard to the problem of change, it is this third aspect, the enduringness of organizational identity that is most obviously relevant. Although Albert and Whetten (1985), in their seminal article, emphasised its enduring quality, many scholars now suggest that organizational identity is constituted by what is central and distinctive about the organization and that this is a "potentially precarious and unstable notion, frequently up for re-definition and revision by organizational members" (Gioia,

Schultz and Corley, 2000: 64). Such a view of unstable, yet continuous identity has been reinforced by contingency approaches, which suggest various factors that make identity more easily changeable (Barney et al., 1998: 121), and by discursive approaches, which argue that organizational identity is constructed, maintained and negotiated through ongoing and possibly adaptive discursive interaction (e.g. Fiol, 2002; Chreim, 2005; Hardy, Lawrence and Grant. 2005).

When the stability of organizational identity is regarded as paramount, this has a constraining effect on flexibility to change, and thus some degree of path dependency of strategy (Arthur, 1995; Stinchcombe, 1965). This stability of organizational identity and strategy enables managers to direct the accumulation of necessary competencies (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989), giving the organization "something to 'aim' for" (Lovas & Ghoshal, 2000: 885). Indeed, it has been argued that the primary strategy of an organization is to maintain its identity "what they repeatedly commit to be, through time and across circumstances" (Whetten, 2006: 224). Such inflexibility may provide the necessary stability for resource accumulation (Dierickx & Cool, 1989) and the consistency and predictability of strategic direction that establishes legitimacy and thus access to external resources (Suchman, 1995). This can occur through a self-reinforcing virtuous circle in which financial success determines the ongoing stability of identity (Gagliardi, 1986).

When identity does not allow for alternatives that are adapted to new problems, then strategy and identity become a vicious circle that impedes change (Gagliardi, 1986). When flexibility is most important, then organizational identity is viewed as controllable, something to fashion as a changeable and useful image of the organization's and its environment's changing criteria of what constitutes success. Such a marketing-oriented strategy attempts to impose and control what is viewed as a flexible organizational identity that is tuned to the needs of the consumer and to the changing needs of the market (Christensen, 1995). Again, identity, largely because of its implicit nature, can be seen as an 'enabler of quick, decisive decision making' (Barney et al., 1998: 117) or as a resource to do something inimitable, superior or fad-resistant (Barney et al., 1998: 119).

Various scholars have developed frameworks that promise to resolve the paradoxical antithesis between flexibility and stability of organizational identity. One approach in the strategy literature has been to suggest that stability is aligned with planned strategies (Porter, 1996), whereas the need for flexibility is viewed as arising in the context of emergent strategies (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). The planning – emergence polarity therefore suggests a co-evolution between the structure provided by planned strategies and the agency manifested in emergent strategies.

Another approach has been to suggest that the strategy-identity constellation has an inner, continuous core and a changeable outer periphery. Organizational identities as inner core would be expected to alter less than the outer periphery of organizational procedures or business models, and this is to some extent the case (Hodgkinson, 1994). The strategy-making process circles around an inner, unchangeable core which individuals within the organization can use to provide an anchor point for personal and organizational identity. This suggests that strategy is the changeable output from interaction between individuals trying to secure a stable sense of identity and control (Sturdy, 1997) and that although strategists may experience a common identification

they may still disagree about an organization's strategy (Meyerson and Scully, 1995). Organizational identity can prevent change in strategy, so it is argued that some organizations develop 'platforms' or contexts that enable specific structures (e.g. markets, networks, matrix structures etc) to be improvised. Identity in such contexts involves after the fact rationalising of surprises, tinkering and bricolage. Under these circumstances there needs to be some intermediate, friction-tolerant structure such as supposedly exists between inner identity and outer strategy in a 'platform' organization (Ciborra, 1996). The inner identity – outer strategy model has been reinterpreted to say that inner identity is about labels, which stay the same, whereas outer strategy is about meanings, which are flexible and changeable and whose fluidity enables the organization to adapt (Gioia, Corley and Schultz, 2000; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). Again, Lilley (2001: 77) has suggested that peripheral strategy texts, because of their ambivalence between being humbly ready to be jettisoned in the name of flexibility and being resolutely faithful to a chosen direction, undermine any stable sense of core organizational identity.

However, this inner identity – outer strategy model has been contradicted by a view that says that the inner identity is dynamic and actually drives change in strategy. Examples of this view include the suggestion that the role of strategy is to realign inner-facing to fit outer-facing identity (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) or to realign actual to fit ideal identity (Balmer, Stuart and Greyser, 2003; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1994, Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Gioia, Corley and Schultz, 2000). Another version of this argument says that the outer periphery is strategic action, and this is interpreted in language that reassures anxious members by persuading them that things have essentially stayed the same: in this case it is the inner core that is socially constructed as a post facto rationalisation of the outer periphery of strategy (Chreim, 2005; Sharma, 2000): for example, Intel's strategy changed away from computer memory to microprocessors before top managers adjusted their view of Intel's identity (Burgelman, 1983).

In summary then, although scholars have begun to engage with the problem of flexibility versus stability by means of models that relate strategy and identity together, they disagree about what they mean by these concepts and this leads to disagreements as to which one is dynamic and which is stable.

Problem two: The problem of agency

The problem of agency is that there are inconsistent views taken by theorists about how much agency and control organizations possess with regard to who they are (identity) and what they should do (strategy). The identity question relates to how much identity is seen as inspectable and modifiable by organizational leaders and members themselves, or how much such matters are seen as existing below the level of awareness and conscious control. With regard to strategy, the question relates to how much control and power the organization has to influence the market conditions and networks of support within which it exists.

The concept of agency has often been framed in terms of an oppositional dilemma between determinism and voluntarism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Reed, 1988; Whittington, 1988). This dichotomy has characterised differences between voluntaristic economics-oriented rational actor theories and more deterministic

sociological theories of behaviour that emphasise constraints imposed by cultural norms and stable social identities and structure. One approach to this dilemma that assumes individuals are conscious of their identity has been to focus on the particular circumstances of managerial choice in upper echelons (Hambrick, 2007), strategic responses (Oliver, 1991), strategic choice (Child, 1972), attention (Hoffman & Ocasio, 2001), enactment (Daft & Weick, 1984) and strategic sensemaking in which people seek to 'make sense of events and situations [that] are always open to multiple interpretations' (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985: 727). One extreme view of agency is 'interpretive voluntarism' (Whittington, 1988: 527) in which the actor has unconstrained capacity for independently motivated action as suggested in early work by Weick (1969). However, because this views sensemaking as enacted self-belief, sensemaking becomes 'self-referential and self-confirming' (Caldwell, 2006: 159). The view that the environment 'is constituted by interdependent human action' (Weick, 1969: 23) so that 'when something is not attended to it does not exist' (Weick, 1969: 28) denies the importance of objective environmental constraints. In dissolving away constraints, however, the problem is created that preconditions 'which endow the actor with internal complexity and external resources' have also been done away with, as argued by Whittington (1988: 528). Although Weick (1995) has suggested that decision makers oscillate between controlled, conscious action and action that is unconscious and only retrospectively understood, his theory contains a self-contradiction because it generally implies a high level of agency and a low level of contemporaneous self-awareness. Sensemaking positions strategy as the action setting for the exercise of agency and identity as the focus of self-awareness, in a contradictory way. Sensemaking therefore, despite its interest in going beyond economics-inspired rational actor models of behaviour, retains the extreme voluntarism of these models. At the other extreme there is determinism or the directing of the individual's actions by outside forces or at the macro level the notion of historicism that claims that events are determined by conditions and inherent processes beyond the control of people. An example of a historicist theory of the identity – strategy relationship arises when identity is viewed as beyond the awareness or conscious control of members and thus generative of path dependent strategy.

Whether organizations can be said to exert agency on their own behalf as social actors is a problematic issue. Such organizational-level agency implies the members of the organization have some self-awareness of and some degree of independence and control over its environment, an assumption that is fundamental to regarding strategy as effective and even possible. It has been argued that conceiving of organizations as individual-like identities paints them as social actors (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006) with human characters (Czarniawska, 1997) that can be narrated in moral terms (Barney, 1998; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). Identity exists at multiple levels such as organizational and individual levels that have effects on strategy. For example, conceiving of oneself as a vigilant monitor of operating expenditures and as a friend of the company works both at the individual level for board members who must decide strategy but also forms their shared perception of what the company means as a collective entity (Golden-Biddle and Rao, 1997). Yet the concept of organizational identity is derived from its initial application as an individual construct. Organizational identity is therefore an anthropomorphism – the organization is being unrealistically represented as an individual. It has been argued that this reifies organizations and ignores "how collectives such as organizations are produced and reproduced" (Cornelissen, 2002: 264). Organizations are not simply scaled up

versions of individuals. For example, the link between strategy and identity varies depending upon where the individual is located within the organizational hierarchy. Although it could be said that top managers' individual work identity is strongly bound up with their organization's strategy, this is less the case for lower level personnel (Corley, 2004). This charge is particularly acute from the point of view of the researcher seeking sophisticated explanation. Equally it has been argued that it is less of a problem when one considers how organizations are viewed by the average customer or member of the public who seeks a synecdoche in the form of a 'unifying' organizational identity (Barney, 1998: 109) or by the average decision maker who needs to know 'who you are before you can take action' (Barney et al., 1998: 113). As one of the directors of a start-up company commented: 'Fancy market plans and the like have no purpose unless you find out who you are' (Carlsen, 2006: 139).

The concept of agency assumes deliberate choice and intentionality. But strategy may not be the result of deliberate agentic choice and instead may be due to unconscious identity (Beech and Johnson, 2005) or emergence (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). Those who argue that organizational identity is largely unknowable, unconscious and difficult to define suggest that it only takes specific shape in unusual circumstances such as a threatening crisis (Albert and Whetten, 1985). As theorists have sought to operationalise organizational identity, however, and thus make it empirically graspable, they have also developed an instrumental orientation in assuming that managers could reflexively use such knowledge to manipulate organizational identity. For example Reger et al. (1994) have suggested that strategy should be framed as middle range change in order to be large enough to overcome identity-oriented inertia but not so large that resistance is caused.

According to structural contingency theory, the design of organizations is determined by their environmental and internal contingencies (Donaldson, 2001), yet this view has been challenged by the argument that managers can in practice choose organizational forms that fit with their preferences and thus that they do demonstrate free agency (Child, 1997). It has been argued that 'managers matter' (Hambrick & Finkelstein, 1987: 370) and this implies that an individual's perceived sense of control is the same as the individual's perception of his/her ability to make a difference (Giddens, 1984). At the macro level of analysis agency is a sense of ability to control and predict on behalf of the organization – that is, individuals' perception of their ability to make a difference for their organization's chances of success and survival, within the organization's environmental constraints. This is because controlling and predicting occurs through managers' interpretation of environmental feedback (Daft & Weick, 1984; Gist & Mitchell, 1992: 186) that tells them how much influence and understanding they indeed do or do not possess. Acting influentially and knowledgeably on behalf of one's organization may be subject to differing views depending on the circumstances. It is important because members' views of the best strategic action for their organization to take are influenced by their perceptions of their organization's freedom of action.

These considerations have largely been about external agency that reflects power and control over one's external environment as might most easily be observed by agents who are distinct from the focal organization e.g. by competitors or market analysts. Internal agency, on the other hand, is the subjective experience of power and control by the focal individual or organization. Mintzberg argued that the senior manager may

view herself as a 'puppet' but also that she 'can exert control' by successfully positioning the identities of others as having obligations to her (1971: B102). This subtle blending of internal and external empowerment has inspired later scholars seeking to show that strategy discourse does not position identities so as to totally strip them of agency (e.g. Laine and Vaara, 2007). Nevertheless, this debate continues to be dominated by assumptions that locate agency as the actions of isolated individuals whilst strategy remains largely at an organizational level of analysis. This disconnect constitutes a significant obstacle to any integration of identity and strategy theories. A potential way forward is, however, suggested by the formulation of agency as social action (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Simpson, 2009), which recognises that actors are socially constituted selves.

TOWARDS RESOLUTION OF THESE PROBLEMS

Underpinning each of these problems there is an ontological dualism that separates stability from change, or individual level analyses from collective, or organizational level analyses. Whilst such dualisms promote in-depth analyses of distinct theoretical constructs, they deny the possibilities that arise from seeing these polar opposites as elements of the same process. For this reason, we propose an alternative theoretical approach that privileges neither one nor other pole of these dualisms. Rather than focussing our analytical focus upon the entitative qualities of strategy and identity, we consider them holistically as dynamic social processes that engage both actors and their situations in meaningful and productive work. Specifically, we frame identity work as the retrospective re-formulation of meanings ascribed to past events, and strategy work as the prospective re-imagination of alternative futures. These two forms of work each produce phenomena (i.e. identities and strategies) that are continuously re-evaluated and expressed through the lived experience of the moment by moment passage of the present. These two complementary dynamics of work draw on Pragmatist ideas of interaction as a social process where both self and other are constituted in gestural conversations, the importance and meaning of which are shared by all interactants as 'significant symbols' that enable empathic understanding (Mead, 1934).

Precedents for this approach already exist in the emergent literatures on strategy-as-practice (Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl, 2007) and identity work (Alvesson, Ashcraft & Thomas, 2008). Strategy-as-practice is concerned primarily with what it is that strategic managers actually do (Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003), and why. It focuses attention on the social practices that constitute strategizing, where these practices are consistent with the notion of work adopted here. The future orientation of strategy work is particularly evident in scenario planning (van der Heijden 1996) in which projected futures are evaluated in the present in order to guide strategic actions. On the other hand, identity work is retrospective. The retrospective orientation of identity work has been shown, for instance, where identity work is prompted or intensified by practical difficulties (Beech, 2008; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Watson, 2008), by radical transitions such as socialisation of new members (Ibarra, 1999), by specific events, encounters, transitions and stressful situations (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008) or by encounters that challenge self-concepts (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). It has been suggested that several processes of reconstruing take place when people do identity work. For example, arising from the insight that considering identity invokes anxiety and insecurity (Collinson, 2003), identity work

evokes and expresses self doubt and self questioning (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008) as well as emotions such as fear, excitement, embarrassment and the desire to avoid conflict (Beech, 2008: 69). Furthermore, the process of identity work involves continuous and conscious re-evaluation and reconstruing of past events (Simpson & Carroll, 2008; Carroll & Levy, 2008), while Maguire and Hardy (2005: 16) have viewed identity work as 'a loosely connected set of narratives that are constructed, maintained, and challenged on an ongoing basis in a particular context'.

Although these two streams of literature certainly develop a dynamic view that challenges the conventional separation of individual and organizational levels of analysis, there has still been little effort to bring the two together.

INTEGRATING STRATEGY WORK AND IDENTITY WORK

Here we provide an integrated rhetoric-based account of identity work and strategy work as continuously inter-weaving dynamics. These dynamics inter-relate, one or other occupying the foreground at different stages of the change process.

Identity work involves present moment rhetorical re-construction of past experience: 'selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 971). Those past patterns are based on social conventions and pre-existing habits and the person's reflexive self-awareness of them constitutes an objective self (since introspectively knowable) or 'me' (Mead, 1934). We define identity work to be the continuous process of re-construction of patterns of rhetoric and other actions in terms of past problematic experiences that render such actions non-habitual. Although identity has been previously viewed largely as an individual process, our concern here is to view identity work as a conversational accomplishment (for example within a strategy team) that achieves collective action by means of rhetoric. Table 1 shows how rhetoric is used to express some examples of thematic preoccupations about the past as enabler or barrier to the collectivity realising its potential, and ways of addressing these preoccupations through persuasion and shared identification.

INSERT TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE PLEASE

Identity work involves rhetorical processes to reconstrue and reformulate meanings of past events and actions. It is important to ask what is the purpose of identity work, bearing in mind that it is often involved in bringing problems to the surface and that this is unlikely to be easy or pleasant. People do identity work when they use questioning and advice seeking rhetoric to attempt to understand in what way their behaviour is constrained by their past experience. That activity brings to the surface problematic aspects of their self concept. Because people get ontological security from experiencing continuity, they use rhetoric to reformulate past experience in a way that maintains a continuous self concept or they may use rhetoric to repair problematic aspects of self concept in a way that makes the path from past to present appear more continuous. Both these purposes draw on past experience and historical events.

However, maintaining continuity with the past is not a comprehensive explanation of how people use rhetoric. Although identity helps us understand the taken for granted

beliefs that lie behind rhetoric, it has little value for understanding really novel or spontaneous rhetoric. This suggests that identity work does not offer a complete solution to the question of what kinds of rhetoric people use. Thus it is worth asking how identity work relates to creative rhetoric. An important point is that creative rhetoric is based on imagining future action, and so the meanings of that rhetoric are generated by anticipation of the consequences of future action. This is at variance with currently dominant views that the meaning of action is based on retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 1995).

We argue that creative rhetoric is based on imagining the future. The process of doing this and of imagining the problems generated by one's actions in the future is what we call strategy work. A central argument in our view of strategy work is that strategy involves relating anticipations of the future to current activity (Sztompka, 1991) and that change occurs where there is invalidation of these anticipations by experience (Mead, 1934). Strategy work involves the continuous process of anticipating future problematic consequences of action. Rhetoric creates vivid images of the future and brings them into the present in front of others. Strategy work is the rhetoric people use to understand the problematic implications of future action in terms of issues such as the problem of privileging alternatives or prioritising actions, whether or not actions will lead to goals, and whether future actions will have enough resources.

Strategy work invokes that dimension of agency which involves rhetoric that achieves present moment re-imagining of the future: 'imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 971). It involves a subjective 'I' that is the spark of creative inquiry and individualistic divergence from social conventions and from pre-existing habits and thus constitutes spontaneous action (Mead, 1934). Those conventions and habits are represented by the 'me' or objective self. We define strategy work to be the continuous use of rhetoric for anticipating future problematic consequences of action. Again we regard it as a social, interactive process that involves rhetoric. Table 2 shows some examples of how rhetoric is used to express thematic preoccupations about the future viewed as potentially problematic.

INSERT TABLE TWO ABOUT HERE PLEASE

Both identity work about the past and strategy work about the future are manifest in the experiencing of the present moment. Dunford and Jones (2000) showed how integration was performed by rhetoric that represented experience as a '1000-day journey' that was framed around the images of a round-the-world yacht race and the kiwi emblem that represented an ability to change quickly. Such images were able to link together past, present and future (Dunford and Jones, 2000; Laine and Vaara, 2007: 33). Both identity work and strategy work are evaluated when acting in the present moment. Thus all three comprise one simultaneous mode of engagement, which we define as rhetoric.

Rhetoric invokes that dimension of agency that is focused upon the evocation of an awareness of the present moment: 'practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 971). Strategy work, arising from the 'I' or subjective self, can be reflected on using rhetoric with others and thus can become part of the objective or public self or 'me'.

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This process thus involves a subjective or private self that informs strategy work, by means of creative rhetoric and that constitutes an 'I' by reacting divergently to social conventions and pre-existing habits represented by the 'me' or objective self. The objective self informs identity work by reflecting on how the 'I' of strategy work, in one's rhetoric with others, becomes reified and accepted as taken for granted, and thus how it is made into an objective 'me' (Mead, 1934). We define rhetoric as the interactive co-construction of commitments to deal with problematic aspects revealed in both identity work and strategy work. Rhetoric is therefore used in the present to integrate identity work (reformulating the past) and strategy work (reimagining the future). Table 3 shows some examples of how rhetoric is used to express thematic preoccupations relating past and future together.

INSERT TABLE THREE ABOUT HERE PLEASE

Rhetoric is integrative because it is used to contrast a past anticipation about the future with a present outcome. When past anicipations are different from presently experienced outcomes then change occurs (Mead, 1934; Peirce, 1998). However, identity work may be used to forget the anticipations that were made, or to overlook the contradictory present evidence. The problem of forgetful decisions shows the importance of rhetoric to integrate identity work about what is past with strategy work about future possibilities. The problem can be appreciated when we consider how reformulating the past by means of distortion can lead to forgetful decisions that have catastrophic consequences. A study of the incremental social construction of acceptable risk in the lead up to the Challenger disaster has described how again and again, 'the limits of acceptable performance were expanded to include something new and unexpected' (Vaughan, 1996: 143). Each time a new type of erosion of the O-rings occurred, it was explained and was made familiar and seemingly safe and thus became part of the ever-widening notion of 'acceptable erosion' (Vaughan, 1996: 140). This shows how progressive anticipations were not contrasted with successive outcomes in a sufficiently sceptical way. This suggests the proposition.

> Proposition 1. When past anticipations are not contrasted sufficiently sceptically with present outcomes then forgetful decisions are made.

Lack of contrast between past and future also inhibits learning. Equivocation of past and future, or considering the future to be a seamless projection from the past, may serve to render collective agreement on strategy more likely. In this case, however, when strategy work is used to re-imagine the future in a timid way so that anticipations involve little change, there is insufficient contrast between past anticipations and outcomes to enable learning to occur.

> Proposition 2. When past anticipations are rhetorically presented as involving too little change then learning will not occur.

Rhetoric may exaggerate the importance of present experience over past anticipations. Rhetoric can be used to exaggerate the details of the object of our attention by making the object become immediately or vividly present (Aristotle, 1991: 238; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 115-7). Such exaggeration can be countered by 'defamiliarization' (Barry and Elmes, 1997) which creates '*imaginative distance*'

(Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 971). The problem of over valuing present experience suggests the following proposition.

> Proposition 3. When the importance of present experience is over emphasised in rhetoric, there is insufficient opportunity for any contrast effect with past anticipations to be perceived and thus the potential for learning is not realised.

In the foregoing the past, the future and the present have been treated as significant categories. Their relative significance will vary during an individual's experience of events and during interaction with others (Mead, 1932). We express the likelihood of such variations in the following propositions.

> Proposition 4. When the flow of time is interrupted by an event that offers new, emergent possibilities the relative importance of past and future will shift towards the future and thus towards strategy work.

> Proposition 5. When the possibility has been acted on and already has moved into the past, its place among all the other aspects of the past self becomes a focus, shifting importance away from the future and towards the past and thus towards identity work.

There has been considerable interest in time and process within strategy theory to reflect the contributions of process philosophy (Whitehead 1920; Rescher 2000). Farjoun (2002: 571) showed how the representation of strategy as a planned and stable position (Porter, 1996) is mechanistic and static. He compared that approach unfavourably with one that is process-oriented and 'organic' (Porter, 1991; Melin, 1992; Academy of Management, 1997; Van de Ven and Poole, 1995). Moreover, the literature on organizational becoming (e.g. Calori, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Chia, 1996, 2002, 2003; Chia and King, 1998; Chia and MacKay, 2007; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Weick, 1969, 1995) attempts to construct a dynamic, process ontology in which change is important, and takes a phenomenological position of describing subjective experiences of change. Indeed, the becoming literature uses a 'strong' process theory that holds that process, movement, flux and change are ontologically more fundamental than entities, structures and persistence (Rescher, 2003). Our approach argues that discontinuities and disruptions are events that come in and break up the process in such a way as to alter how it is experienced, in particular, how the relative importance of past, present and future are metaphorically expressed and re-constructed. Individuals emphasise first one temporal dimension and then another depending on the source of the current disruption. This may be done by means of bringing an event to the foreground or pushing it to the background in their rhetoric (Ford and Ford, 1995). For example, individuals may use dissociation of two categories (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969) such as emphasising looking ahead (being 'performative') rather than using peripheral vision (being 'synoptic'), and one of the categories is foregrounded and the other backgrounded at different times depending upon circumstances (Bergson, 1946: 137; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002: 570).

In classical rhetoric theory *pathos* and emotion are crucial to understanding this foregrounding and backgrounding process. The section on the emotions in the *Rhetoric* (Aristotle, 1991: section 6) is a theory of rhetorical contexts as produced by

psychological state, provoking event and the character of the human actors. Rhetoric therefore provides us with the ability to understand, moment by moment, how we are led from the potential of events as they befall us (i.e. strategy) to what we actually make of such possibilities in interaction with others and how we reconcile that with what we know about ourselves (i.e. identity). How can this help us to understand how past identity and future strategy can be integrated into present action? The clue to the integration process lies in the actor's emotions. Aristotle non-pejoratively defined passion as that which alters judgement. We find in Aristotle's time-sensitive account of the emotions a clue as to how to bring the three time dimensions together. Let us select fear, defined as 'a pain or disturbance due to a mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future' (Aristotle, 1991: 153) as an example. Fear becomes vividly present to us not by direct experience but through our imagination, through a discursive announcement and signs rather than through facts. 'The tense is the future, the voice is the subjunctive, the mode is the possible. It is still not really here, and it might not happen, yet it still has an intimacy, or nearness' (Streuver, 2005: 109). Also, fear is based on a historically constructed disposition: 'if one has neither done nor suffered wrong' (Aristotle, 1991: 156). Note, in this illustrative example of fear, the strong link between present (vividly experienced, 'intimacy', 'nearness') and future ('evil in the future') and past ('neither done nor suffered wrong'). In balancing past, present and future considerations the individual becomes a political actor who uses emotion to articulate strategic choice.

As we suggested, an emotion such as fear refers to past and future, but at a specific moment one tense is foregrounded e.g. the past as the reason for being fearful, or the future as when the feared event may occur. We reconstrue the world when our past anticipation is invalidated by our current experience (Mead, 1934; Peirce, 1998). That invalidation requires justification and comes from a recalcitrant situation that unsettles our prior beliefs (Dewey, 1929). Inquiry is then the self-conscious attempt to regain a settled state of belief (Putnam, 1994) given the Pragmatist acceptance that all knowledge is tentative. We define emotion as awareness of a change in one's construing (Kelly, 1955). Anticipation (when it involves reimagining future scenarios in the light of past history) and reconstruing (reformulating the past in the light of forthcoming events) are therefore both experienced as emotions. For example, those emotions can involve hopeful anticipation which may be invalidated as having been too timid, leading to confident or proud reconstruction, or as having been too optimistic leading to disappointed, angry or hostile reconstruction (depending on whether one viewed the invalidation as one's own fault, someone else's fault, or untrue). This suggests the following proposition:

> Proposition 6. Whether or not strategy work or identity work is foregrounded by rhetoric will depend on whether the overriding preoccupying emotion is portrayed as occurring in the past or in the future.

DISCUSSION

Strategy and identity have strong links. Organizational strategy is a way of 'stabilizing intention' (Lilley, 2001: 76) and this helps the organization to construct a stable sense of identity that enables legitimate, reliable and predictable relationships with external agents. Organizational identity offers one way to explain why a firm

chooses one option amongst many possible options (Stimpert, Gustafson and Saranson, 1998: 89). Members' beliefs about shared identity have strategic significance because it facilitates co-ordination, communication and learning (Eisenhardt and Santos, 2001, Fiol, 2001, Kogut and Zander, 1996, Reger et al., 1998), and these beliefs provide a frame for emphasizing, prioritising, and deploying resources (Glynn, 2000). An example of the strong link between professed or projected identity (Moingeon and Soenen, 2002) and strategy is shown by the fact that firms without a coherent product identity, and thus without a strong corporate identity, face pressure from market analysts to diversify so that their stock is more easily understood (Zuckerman, 2000). Identity influences strategy not merely through unconscious habit or conscious heuristic, but because members act according to what kind of organization they believe they belong to: 'Meaning, understanding and learning are all defined relative to action contexts, not to self-contained and abstract structures. But it is because learning is situated in a (collective) identity that it is also difficult to unlearn' (Kogut and Zander, 1996: 510).

Despite these suggestive links between strategy and identity, much of the current theorizing about strategy largely ignores identity. For example, Jarzabkowski's (2005) account shows that much strategy theory draws on past experience in terms of biases and recursive practices, as well as a heuristic element implied by defining it as 'an active form of social construction, involving intent, skill and knowledge in the selective recognition and implementation of ongoing activity' (Jarzabkowski, 2005: 31). However, she notes that this tends to overlook the practical-evaluative wisdom through which actors exercise localized judgements within the context of the here and now (p. 32). This view does not allow for the dynamic nature of identity as a source of 'baggage' from the past that underlies and explains 'inertia, competency traps, core rigidities' or the interactions between these and the continuous adaptation implied in more emergent views of strategizing (Jarzabkowski, 2004). However, she does not deal with how issues of identity shape this interplay between recursive and adaptive strategy practice. By way of contrast we will argue that viewing such influences from the past as identity resources frees us to understand how people continuously reformulate their notions of the past.

Other strands of literature draw an indirect link between identity and the content of strategy in discussions of strategy styles (Bourgeois and Brodwin, 1984; Maguire and Hardy, 2005: 14; Mehta, Dubinsky and Anderson, 2003). Strategy styles that draw on and reflect identity are viewed as contingent upon the purpose of the strategy. For example, when the strategy is to champion change, an appropriate identity for an organization's leader might be that of commander or designer (Ginsberg and Abrahamson, 1986), whereas when the strategy is to develop new initiatives, a more appropriate identity would be the entrepreneur (Burgelman, 1983). Such contingency based typologies of strategy styles do not allow us to theorise about changes either in identity or in the purpose or content of strategy. This is because the literature does not relate identity to any processual view of how strategizing is done. In our view, the links between strategy and identity are best explored in processual terms, where both strategy and identity are seen as forms of work that continuously intertwine and interact in the actions of the present moment.

We have suggested that the lack of an integrated view of strategy and identity means that two big problems in the literature have remained unaddressed. The first problem

is that of stability versus change and affects the literature of both strategy and identity. Strategy must be flexible yet also the population ecology literature has suggested that organizational survival lies in stability rather than change. Identity provides ontological security derived from a sense of continuity with the past, yet also identity is continuously co-constructed in interaction with others. Rhetoric addresses this problem by viewing both identity and strategy as social constructions that carry meanings of stability when this is desired. At the same time however, both strategy and identity are continuously subject to negotiation and reformulation, as implied by the notion of 'work'. Rhetoric is effective when it is appropriate to the emotional context of use. Each context has its own emotional colouring or 'mood' depending on the nature of the change in construing that individuals become aware of. That change in construing is from what we know about ourselves (i.e. identity) to the potential of events as they befall us (strategy). Therefore we regard strategy and identity as sources of both stability and change. In this way we avoid the contradictions generated by many theorists who have argued that one of the identity-strategy constellation is stable and one is unstable.

The second problem, that of agency, relates to the exercise of power and control in defining who we are and where we are headed. We address this problem by arguing that freedom of action in the present moment is exercised through rhetorical integration of both identity work, which continuously reformulates the individual's notion of how agency is constrained or enabled by the past, and also strategy work which continuously re-imagines how future possibilities either constrain or enable. Thus although we separate out agency into its temporal dimensions, we offer a framework that makes sense of how these temporal dimensions are integrated in present rhetoric. By separating out identity work as relating to the past, strategy work as relating to the future, and rhetoric as in the present, we are able to deal with the constraining or enabling effects of identity and strategy separately, and provide a nuanced view of the agency problem as one of trade-off between past identity and future strategy and show that the trade-off can be continually revised in the present moment using rhetoric. Also the degree to which agency is constrained or enabled is subject to the individual's discretion to use rhetoric for varying the emphasis between identity (effortfully and perhaps painfully reconstruing the meaning of the past) and strategy (imaginatively reconstruing the meaning of future possibilities).

The question of whether an organization can be said to exercise agency is related to a view of the organization as a kind of individual. Researchers who are philosophically averse to this notion raise the issue of anthropomorphism and of the separation of levels of identity. We have approached this issue in the following way. Our concept of 'work' is rooted in our view that process is more significant than structures. Therefore we view identity work and strategy work as rhetorical processes in which the past is reformulated and the future is re-imagined between individuals who use social interactions to enable them to perform collective action. Thus identity is continually present within the rhetoric as a set of levels such as exist for individual or organizational identity. Who one is as a board member is mutually dependent on conceptions of who we are as a board and as an organization. Similarly strategy is continually present within the rhetoric as a set of levels such as individual strategizing and organizational strategy, that are mutually informed and constituted within rhetoric. Therefore although much previous theorizing has tended to regard levels of identity as important and as problematic, viewing identity work and strategy work as

an ongoing, rhetorical process shows that the levels problem derives from viewing identity and strategy as static and reified. Such theorizing has represented levels as problematic and thus has provided grounds for arguing that the concept of organizational identity is anthropomorphic. Our view is that individuals in their ongoing interactions do this transition between levels and what the subjects of our research do (perhaps expressing anthropomorphisms in their rhetoric) should weigh more heavily with us than what we as researchers say we should do (e.g. that as philosophically sophisticated social scientists we should avoid anthropomorphisms).

CONCLUSION

The globalisation of the strategic management field is obstructed by the proliferation of several literatures that have become disconnected from each other. An example is the literatures of strategy and identity that have remained separate partly due to being based within different paradigms. Identity theory is largely based in a social constructionist paradigm whereas strategy is largely influenced by economics. Yet strategy and identity have many potential links. Strategy may be used to construct a stable sense of identity, whereas identity may be used to explain why a particular strategy is chosen because members act according to what kind of organization they believe they belong to. However, current theory in strategy and identity is pursued largely as two separate lines of development. This has led to two problems, first difficulties of accommodating both flexibility and stability in the same theoretical frame and secondly difficulties in theorising about the organization's exercise of its power and control within its environment. The theorisation proposed in this chapter provides a new way to interpret the relationship between identity and strategy by seeing the rhetoric used in the present moment as integrating the 'strategy work' of reimagining future options with the 'identity work' of reformulating the meaning of past actions. By placing strategy and identity within the same field of experienced reality, related but distinct temporal dimensions of agency, the new theorisation enables the development of more integrated theoretical and empirical investigation of strategy.

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Table 1. Identity work as rhetoric.

Identity as the problem: Thematic preoccupations about the problematic past	Rhetoric as the solution: Organizational rhetoric that re-constructs or revalorizes past experience
People need a sense of security provided by a great and stable past. The past provides security and can be a source of pride.	The past can be presented as sacred in order to reify it so it can form a protected zone or reference point (Bakhtin, 1981: 14-15). This is achieved by the rhetoric of symbols of a golden past, epic histories, and by the path dependence argument that identity is a historical cause. Path dependence can be continuously enacted through repetitive rituals. Portraying the past as a time when we were more successful makes it real and exemplary (Carlsen, 2006: 143).
People need otological security involving controllability, continuity, predictability and holistic meaning derived from the past (Erikson, 1968)	Ontological security is provided by markers of membership and of boundaries of stable and meaningful collectivity (Pratt, 1998). Conviction politicians rely on followers' need for ontological security by portraying themselves as predictable (Charteris-Black, 2005: 141-168).
People need to re-interpret past social conventions (Berger and Luckman, 1967)	Synecdoche stands for cultural values and thus provides meaningful signals e.g. nurses use uniforms to distinguish between routine and emergency (Pratt and Rafaeli, 1997).
People need to come to terms with the (painful) past	Rhetorical responses include (a) revalorizing past experience e.g. commemoration ceremony or (b) normalising the past as in 'normal accidents', (c) forgetting past in order to 'move on' e.g. ironically referring to 'the bad old days' so that the past appears forgettable, invisible, unmentionable or unreal
People rely mostly on unselfaware practical consciousness based on habit and social convention (Giddens, 1984)	Argument from precedent justifies present action based on what happened in the past (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 354)
Reflexivity requires work on the self (Giddens, 1991)	Self-aware rhetorical construction of self is viewed as resource for renewal and re-invention (Hardy, Palmer and Phillips, 2000; Simpson et al., 2002: 1216)
Reflexivity requires censor of the self	Disciplining practices e.g. interviews; rhetoric of self-mastery and self-suspicion

(Foucault, 1979)	(Foucault, 1979)
Trustful interactions require continuity	Continuity is achieved by enactment of empathy which involves honouring interpersonal expectations (Goffman, 1959) and developing a reciprocity of perspectives between interaction partners (Schultz, 1964)
People need explanations that make sense of past experiences. Explanation (Garfinkel, 1967); and sensemaking (Weick, 1979) are retrospectively enacted	Retrospective probability in historical reasoning – explain what has been by what could have been (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 265)
Organizations need to manage a tarnished external image and identity (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991)	Excuses and apologies and 'image restoration strategies' limit damage from past (Benoit, 1995). Coming to terms with atrocious past also involves identity work as a 'purgative-redemptive' rhetoric of atonement (Burke, 1965)
Organizations need people to take control but blaming destroys risk- and initiative-taking.	Individuals rewrite history to switch between advantages of extra responsibility and vulnerability to blame for failure (Sillince and Mueller, 2007).

Table 2. Strategy work as rhetoric

Strategy as the problem: Thematic preoccupations about the problematic future	Rhetoric as the solution: Organizational rhetoric that anticipates future problematic consequences of action
Collective action in professionalised and pluralistic organizations is problematic. Leaders seek to inspire organization members and get their buy in to strategy	The leader claims a connection to the organization's telos, or sacred purpose, where improvement will continue forever The leader benefits from claim to having superior ability to see the future and to possessing a heroic character
Often the means to an end are inadequate. Top managers seek to achieve a strategy, and to make means fit the end or vice versa, and seek to make means become adequate for ends.	Ends and means is a clear argumentation scheme that provides an agentic and logos based structure that can easily be communicated to others (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 273)
Crises are situations in which awareness of best future action is problematic. Crisis requires that strategy should focus on one urgent problem (D'Aveni and MacMillan, 1990; Kiesler and Sproull, 1982); crisis can be 'proactively constructed' by rhetoric (Kim, 1998: 506) crisis can lead to mobilisation of action (Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee, 1992: 290).	Kairos justifies action on an opportune and appropriate future occasion (Miller, 1994) . A situation of urgency induces resoluteness (Bitzer, 1999). Timeliness of an event may refer to its uniqueness as an opportunity, its precariousness, or its irremediability (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 92).
Competition between firms that copy each other suggests a firm needs to be distinctive to steal an advantage. Creative, flexible and novel strategy is a rare resource required for competitive advantage (Barney, 1991: 107).	Trope of metaphor represents the future in terms of similarity with the present (Oswick, Keenoy and Grant, 2002) by reframing what is familiar and by putting it in a new light (Cornelisson, 2005: 753; Morgan, 1980; Sackmann, 1989: 464). Destabilizing rhetoric emphasises deviation (e.g. from a performance norm) and gets the hearer to develop implications (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996). Argument by example shows that others have been able to act in some way and this demonstrates that action's feasibility (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969).
Organizations need to constantly refresh their strategies. Criticism (Dooley and Fryxell, 1999; LePine & Van Dyne,	Trope of irony criticises status quo by contrasting e.g. good intention and bad outcome (Hoyle and Wallace, 2008) in order to show its incongruity (Manning,

1998) facilitates organizational survival and prevents them retaining old competences that then become liabilities (Barnett and Hansen, 1996).	1979: 663) and generates new meaning for future (Green, Li, and Nohria, 2009: 32). Criticism can be institutionalised by using a dialectical process, a 'devil's advocate', and by sympathetic receptiveness to pathos of underdog (Kim, 1998) and of outsider (Carlsen, 2006).
Distinctiveness is necessary to obtain competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).	Distinctiveness uses dissociation from other organizations (Cheney, 1983; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 411), ethos of unique personality of leader, specialness of organization's strategic intent (Hamel and Prahalad, 1989)
Ambivalence (e.g. between pride about the past and anxiety about the future) is needed to stimulate unlearning (Pratt & Barnett, 1997) and to creatively perceive a situation from a different angle (Piderit, 2000: 790).	Contradictory messages from management can create ambivalence in workers (Piderit, 2000).
Organizations contain powerful groups who use ambiguous language about agreeing to future collective action that protects their interests.	Ambiguity is used as a smokescreen to preserve and privilege a group's future position (Middleton-Stone and Brush, 1996: 647; Price, Gioia and Corley, 2008: 180; Sillince & Mueller, 2007; Vaara, Kleymann & Seristo, 2004)
Getting conflicting groups to agree to act is problematic. Future collective action is facilitated by participation.	Ambiguity is used by the source of a message and enrols the recipient into the co-creation of its meaning (Davenport and Leitch, 2005; Eisenberg, 1984) by inviting future participation (Keleman, 2000: 486).
Organizations are pluralistic and so means are needed for generating agreement to act collectively.	Ambiguity is used by the source and encourages future recipients to agree with a message even when they hold different opinions in order to appeal to multiple conflicting audiences (Sellnow and Ulmer, 1995: 141)
Organizations need to attend to or ignore a future, disruptive event (Marcus and Nicol, 1999)	Warnings use appeals to fear (Sillince, 1999: 597) or are mixed ambiguously with reassurance (Sillince, 1999: 607) and are used when the speaker does not have power (Sillince, 1999: 601).
Sometimes it is better to delay present action into the future	Rhetorical strategies for minimising commitment include avoiding small commitment as it is a 'slippery slope' to larger commitment, not committing politically in order to 'keep one's powder dry', and avoiding confrontation in order to 'live to fight another day'. The future (and therefore the superiority of acting in the future rather than now) can be privileged over the present: e.g. '*I wonder what*

	sense they will make of the decision in ten years' time'. Action can be avoided by getting acquiescence by followers using promissory rhetoric (Edelman, 1966) and by prevarication (finding impediments to action).
Organizational leaders need to make resolute strategic decisions. Confidence is crucial for propelling executives into action (Eisenhardt, 1989: 573)	Highlighting a strategy makes real the dominance of future over present (Potter, 1996). The future can be represented as familiar and thus as easily approachable and imminent or as unfamiliar and yet credible, thus highlighting the need for effective strategy (Barry and Elmes, 1997).

Table 3. Rhetoric as the integration of identity work (past) and strategy work (future).

Identity and strategy as the joint problem: Thematic preoccupations about the problematic past and future	Rhetoric as the solution: Organizational rhetoric that integrates past and future
For something to happen, the future must be made more real than the present (Potter, 1996; Aristotle, 1991; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969).	The future invites urgent intervention and thus becomes amenable to strategic action when it is represented as both unfamiliar and credible (Barry and Elmes, 1997) 1. Unfamiliar (action is necessary therefore for change to happen). For example, metaphor is used such as 'threshhold', 'watershed', 'barrier', 'gap', that separates present from future using some marker of significant change. 2.. Credible (action is possible). For example, the future is envisioned as feasible and real by already having happened by use of the future perfect tense (Gioia, Corley and Fabri, 2002).
Organizations need leaders who will bridge between past and future (Chreim, 2005)	Leaders' ethos or character is judged from past actions but contains an implicit promise for the future (Aristotle, 1984: 2157; Aristotle, 1991: 141, 172; Miller, 2003).
There is the danger of escalation of a modest, past, failing course of action into a huge, future over-commitment of resources (Staw, 1997)	Argument from waste argues that because huge past effort already invested we should continue in same direction in future (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 279). Slippery slope argument warns against getting sucked into a situation you cannot get out of (Walton, 1992).
Leaders need to avoid taking a project into the future too fast and thus losing political capital accumulated from the past (Denis, Langley and Cazale, 1996).	Device of stages says that if the whole argument put people off in past, break it down into palatable bits and slow-feed them in the future (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 283).

Discontinuity required in strategy because future action needs to be different from the past action. Links to the past must be destroyed to accomplish something new (Zerubavel, 2003; Biggart, 1977).	Philosophical pairs such as positioning the past as unreal and the future as real (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 415), exaggeration of contrast (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969: 411) and 'semiotic markedness' (Chandler, 2004: 93) dissociate (bad) past from (good) future. Future is made different from past or present by device of defamiliarisation (Barry and Elmes, 1997).
How to resolve the dilemma between keeping narrowly to (the presently true) strategy versus flexibly changing to fit what is likely to happen in the future (the probable).	Rhetoric promotes the probable rather than claiming the truth and thus promotes what is feasible or probable in the future over any current truth (Kerferd, 1999: 82).
It is necessary on occasion to decide whether to be cautious or resolute.	Paired, contrary mottos such as 'Look before you leap' versus 'Strike while the iron is hot' exist that help a person to justify one position or the other (Billig, 1987: 236)
Sometimes e.g. to resist change, it is necessary to say that change is improbable.	Comparison of the past and future using 'then…now' and claiming that things are 'still' the same as they were so that 'things always stay the same'