

**ORCHESTRATING ONGOING INTERACTION FLOWS OF STRATEGY
FORMATION IN AND BETWEEN MEETINGS**

MARIA SKOV, (msj@mgmt.au.dk), AARHUS UNIVERSITY

TOKE BJERREGAARD

JESPER ROSENBERG HANSEN

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ABSTRACT

Research has addressed how the practices and organization of strategy meetings shape strategy processes and outcomes. However, how interactive processes run between and feed into meetings—an integral aspect of how managers shape ongoing strategy emergence—remains relatively poorly understood. Through a strong processual-interactionist approach, we thus examine how in- and between-meeting practices interact and create combined effects in orchestrating ongoing flows of strategy formation. By considering strategy meetings as part of and punctuating chain-like, interactive processes of strategy formation, we develop understanding of how in- and between-meeting practices dynamically interact—they enable, balance the effects of, and shape one another through the interaction flows in which they are engaged. The longitudinal case study reveals and explains the role of cross-over effects and coalescing between multiple simultaneous interaction flows, thereby advancing extant research on how series of interaction sequences shape strategy emergence and evolution.

Introduction

Incited by the understanding of strategy as a social accomplishment (Jarzabkowski, 2008a), the past two decades have seen growing research interest in how meetings and workshops—as particular social practices of formal strategizing—shape strategizing processes and outcomes (Seidl and Guérard, 2015). Studies have shown how strategy structuration occurs through an array of formal practices such as meetings, with the potential to generate both variations in and stabilize strategic orientations (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). Strategy scholars (Hodgkinson et al., 2006; Whittington et al., 2006) have observed how softer and more participatory strategy-making practices, such as workshops (Seidl and Guérard, 2015), have gained increasing prominence in contemporary strategy work: they serve as key sites for injecting planned strategy emergence (Grant, 2003) into formal strategizing. This accentuates the problem of “managers’ involvement in shaping strategy in face of emergence” (Jarzabkowski, 2005: 5). Indeed, in complex and volatile situations, managers often have to constantly mobilize practices of coordinating, communicating, and shaping the ongoing emergence of strategy (Thomas and Ambrosini, 2015; Whittington et al., 2006), potentially reformulating strategy during implementation (Lê and Jarzabkowski, 2015). Allowing for, yet partially managing, emergence through meetings may allow variation to evolve, especially in complex or volatile organizations where standardized strategy is not necessarily optimal or attainable.

Most scholarly attention has focused on how practices and organization of meetings, including workshops and awaydays, shape the strategizing dynamics within them (Healey et al., 2015; Hodgkinson et al., 2006; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Seidl and Guérard, 2015). Recent research addresses how meeting practices within a chronological sequence of meetings cumulatively foster emergence of variation and (de)stabilize strategic orientations (Jarzabkowski et al., 2016; Seidl and Guérard, 2015). Hence, series of meeting practices combine in specific interaction pathways that shape the flow of strategy, including the

evolution of strategy issues over time (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). Few studies, however, have sought to explain how strategizing practices and dynamics in meetings are charged up and moderated by between-meeting interactions (e.g., Clarke et al., 2012; Hoon, 2007; McNulty and Pettigrew, 1999). Strategy scholars call for widening our portrayal of strategic agency as temporally and spatially diffuse and polyphonic (Vaara and Whittington, 2012). We still, however, have limited knowledge of how informal between-meeting practices inform and moderate strategizing dynamics in meetings through the flow of interactions in which they are effectuated and combined to shape strategy formation. For example, research is missing on how managers' informal yet potentially effortful work between meetings dampens or channels emergence into formal strategy episodes. Moreover, although strategizing processes and discourses in an organization tend to be multiple (Vaara and Whittington, 2012), research on how social practices are sequentially integrated into series of interactions has focused on consequentiality of singular series of meeting practices (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008) and chain-like interaction processes structuring singular issue domains (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). Hence, research is missing on how managers orchestrate multiple simultaneous interaction flows through which in- and between-meeting practices are sequentially combined in shaping ongoing strategy formation.

This article examines how practices within and between meetings are engaged by managers and sequentially combined to create interactional effects in shaping strategy formation. Accordingly, the overarching research question is: *How do in- and between-meeting practices interact and create combined effects in orchestrating ongoing flows of strategy formation?*

We ground the study of strategy meetings in theoretical inspiration from the sociology of interaction chains (Collins, 2005; Tavory and Fine, 2020) and recent advances in theorizing interactions in structuring processes (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). This allows us to research

strategy formation as an ongoing dynamic and interactive process punctuated by, but not beholden to, meetings. It focuses our attention on how the inherent quality and dynamics of social interactions over an issue leave traces in subsequent interaction situations, constituting a ‘chain-like’ process that animate and shape emergence (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). Our study deepens understanding by paying closer attention to the dynamics and characteristics of interaction flows that run through and between meetings and shape ongoing strategy formation. We thus show how the effects of meetings practices in strategizing depend on the processual enactment of agency as managers temporally balance and sequentially combine strategic practices in the ongoing becoming of strategy. We ground this strong interactionist perspective in a political understanding of organizations and strategy meetings (Seidl and Guérard, 2015; Weber and Waeger, 2017). This highlights the politics of strategy (Kaplan, 2008; Narayanan and Fahey, 1982; Lê and Jarzabkowski, 2015) through which multiple interest groups forge alliances, contest and interact over strategy in micro-political struggles for resources and influence—specifically in this research, over work conditions and content.

To answer the research question, we draw on a longitudinal case study of how managers shape and implement strategy in face of ongoing emergence in a Danish public school undergoing mandated changes in two issue domains: new working-hour rules related to conditions of work and a school reform focused on content of work. These changes allow us to show how managers orchestrate two simultaneous interaction flows to shape ongoing strategy formation in and between meetings in variable strategy domains.

This article’s core contribution is to scholarship on meetings in strategy processes (Seidl and Guérard, 2015; Whittington et al., 2006). The study carves new ground through an empirically-grounded theorization of how managers orchestrate multiple simultaneous interaction flows that animate and shape strategy formation in, but are not beholden to, meetings. These

interaction flows may sometimes weave together and coalesce, for example at key meetings, while running in parallel at other times. We advance research on meetings (Clarke et al., 2012; Hoon, 2007; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008) by theorizing the mechanisms by which in- and between-meeting strategizing practices dynamically interact and create combined effects in ongoing strategy formation through the interaction flows in which they are engaged. Importantly, the article enriches research on how strategy issues emerge and evolve through series of interaction sequences (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Soderstrom and Weber, 2020), by revealing and explaining cross-over effects between multiple flows of interactions shaping different strategy issue domains. For example, the article goes beyond extant research by explaining how meeting practices in one interaction flow may moderate the dynamics and effects of meeting practices in another interaction flow concerning a different, even unrelated, issue domain. We advance understanding of the political tactics (Lê and Jarzabkowski, 2015; Kaplan, 2008; Narayanan and Fahey, 1982; Weber and Waeger, 2017) through which managers maneuver between and orchestrate multiple interaction flows in different strategy domains, and thus exploit possible cross-over and coalescing dynamics at interstices of flows. In combination, these contributions advance theorizing of how in- and between-meeting practices of strategizing practices dynamically interact both within and across different interaction flows, and the tactics by which managers facilitate and exploit these dynamics to shape ongoing strategy formation. This has various theoretical implications for scholarship on meetings as social practices in strategy processes.

The next section outlines the study's theoretical background. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology. In the findings section, we narrativize two chains of interactions over different strategy issues that bind in- and between-meeting practices. The final section discusses the findings, considers the research contributions, and concludes.

Theoretical background: Shaping strategy in face of emergence as an ongoing interactive dynamic punctuated by meetings

Theories of practice are often ontologically underpinned by the notion of emergence as an ongoing dynamic constructed through the constant interactions of multiple actors. Practice-based studies of strategy have taken the analytical and methodological consequences of this, thus tending to bridge and relax traditional dichotomies of strategy scholarship, including formulation/implementation and deliberation/emergence as features of strategizing (Jarzabkowski, 2005). To theoretically ground our key conceptual resources on how meetings shape strategy formation, we draw on contemporary processual-interactionalist perspectives in sociology and on recent research on the role of interactions in structuring processes. By combining these literatures, we elaborate a conceptual lens that is sensitive to how minute details of interaction flows within and between meetings, and the formal and informal strategizing practices they integrate in chains, shape ongoing strategy formation. This theorization acknowledges the distinct spaces of meetings in shaping strategy formation but rebalances their consequentiality by emphasizing the informal practices engaged between meetings. As organizations typically are spaces for multiple strategizing processes and discourses (Vaara and Whittington, 2012), we further theorize how managers orchestrate their influence through multiple simultaneous interaction flows: at times, these may run relatively separately and in parallel, yet in specific situations such as central meetings, they may come together, spill over, or coalesce in forming strategy. We next review relevant literature to build and support a sensitizing conceptual background (Blumer, 1954).

The role of meetings in ongoing strategy formation

Research has examined how the organization, practices, artifacts, and analytic tools of meetings, workshops, and awaydays shape strategy processes and outcomes (e.g., Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Kwon et al., 2014). Besides this core focus on formal strategizing, some studies have considered how meeting and workshop practices seek to integrate and partially manage informal strategy emergence further down the organization. Referring to Grant's (2003) soft approach to strategy making in terms of "planned emergence," Johnson et al. (2010) and Hodgkinson et al. (2006) argued that strategy workshops are key vehicles for the planned emergence of strategy, potentially integrating top-down and bottom-up processes of strategy formation. This suggests that social practices of formal strategizing, such as workshops, awaydays, and meetings, may serve as "effective bridge[s] between formal design [of strategy] and informal emergence" (Hodgkinson et al., 2006: 480), thus involving deliberation in emergence.

Overall, research has showed how the variable practices and organization of meetings shape strategy formation, with various shades of emergence and/or managerial deliberation. Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) conceptualized different types of meeting practices: free discussion, restricted free discussion, restricted discussion, and administrative discussion. Free discussion has a self-organizing character, leading to a spontaneous atmosphere. In contradiction, restricted free discussion cannot be totally self-organizing. Restricted discussion excludes self-organizing debate and generates a formal atmosphere. Therefore, these meeting practices have different implications for the emergence and evolution of strategy issues.

Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) further added a processual perspective by demonstrating how such meeting practices across series of meetings cumulatively (de)stabilize strategic orientations. They posited that meetings form part of an ongoing flow of organizational

activity, for instance by giving rise to subsequent meetings (see also Schwartzman, 1989). Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) thus uncovered two meeting practices that build bridges to subsequent meetings—namely referring items through working groups and rescheduling — and two practices for terminating items discussion and resolving them for reintroduction to the organization, namely voting and stage-managing. Bridging practices may destabilize strategic orientations by maintaining and developing variations over series of meetings. We draw on these conceptual inspirations in our theorizing of meeting practices. We thus distinguish between restricted and free discussion in shaping strategy formation. While Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) advanced understanding of how series of meetings shape strategy evolution, they did not uncover the interdependent effects of informal interactions over strategy issues between meetings.

Although most strategy-as-practice research has focused on formal practices of strategy making, often at the organizational top and center (Vaara and Whittington, 2012), some studies have broken new ground in theorizing the practices involved in bottom-up, emergent strategy formation, often in the organizational periphery. Following Regnér's (2003) distinction between deductive strategizing at the center and peripheral inductive strategizing, Mirabeau and Maguire (2014) show how emergent bottom-up strategy from autonomous strategic behavior becomes the emergent portion of realized strategy through “practices of articulation.” Their research hints that emergence outside meetings may subtly feed into formal meetings, for example through discursively influencing top management's PowerPoint slide decks. However, the research provides less insight into how managers with formal responsibility for strategy seek to iteratively shape and implement strategy in the face of ongoing emergence as the natural potentiality of all strategy processes. Lê and Jarzabkowski (2015) demonstrated, however, that conflicts make even strategy implementation an emergent process. Formulation

and implementation thus become “an ongoing, mutually constructive process” (Jarzabkowski, 2008b: 621).

However, research focusing on meeting practices, on the one hand, and bottom-up practices of articulating strategy emergence, on the other, may not provide insights into how meeting practices combine with practices outside them, for example in managerial efforts to balance deliberation and emergence in strategy formation as an ongoing interactive process.

Within- and between-meeting practices in interaction flows of ongoing strategy formation

A few studies elucidate the significance of interactions outside meetings for strategy dynamics in meetings (e.g., Hoon, 2007; McNulty and Pettigrew, 1999). For instance, Clarke et al. (2012) called for more context-sensitive studies of strategy talk in meetings, analyzing such talk in light of its context—what they conceptualize as the “hierarchical contextual levels of influence” in which meeting talk is situated. Part of the context to consider is previous conversations. However, Clarke et al.’s (2012) empirical analysis refrained from diving deeper into, and actually revealing, the quality and characteristics of interactive processes shaping ongoing strategy formation within and between meetings. Emphasizing the significance of interactions outside meetings, McNulty and Pettigrew (1999) demonstrated that company directors’ influence on strategy processes is conditioned by informal dialogue among them between board meetings. Hoon (2007) listed informal conversation practices outside meetings that inform formal meeting discussions in a committee and shape strategy implementation. However, in characterizing and comparing managers’ different types of (in)formal strategizing activities, the study did not processually follow the specific flows of interactions across series of meetings and informal conversations, nor elaborate the significance of their variable quality and dynamics for strategy formation. For example, her study did not show how informal

strategy conversations actually feed into and moderate meeting dynamics through specific interaction flows over strategy issues.

These contributions open important new ground for the study of meetings and their role in strategy processes and for the present research, but also expose various blind spots. By engaging theoretical inspirations from strong interactionism in sociology, the present study goes one step further in theorizing and uncovering the character and dynamics of interaction processes that bind informal and formal strategizing practices, than previous studies on meetings in the practice of strategy.

We build on prior conceptual work (e.g., Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Hoon, 2007) by distinguishing between formal and informal interactions in the context of meetings. Formal interaction sequences include practices such as ordinary meetings, seminars, and workshops, which we conceptualize collectively as meetings (Seidl and Guérard, 2015), while informal interaction sequences comprise practices around and between formal meeting interactions (Hoon, 2007). To theorize and research how in- and between-meeting practices interact in shaping ongoing strategy formation, we ground these concepts in inspirations from radical micro-interactionist sociology, in terms of the sociology of interaction ritual chains (Collins, 2005), and in recent advances on how interactions animate and shape emergence (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020; Tavory and Fine, 2020). This allows us to assess details of how momentary encounters, within and between meetings, are charged up by processes of previous encounters that may form paths of interactional chains. The strategizing actor is conceptualized as “a quasi-transient flux in time and space” (Collins 2005: 4). Elements of situational interactions can be carried over to situations elsewhere, depending on their characteristics and dynamics (Collins, 2005). Single-situation interactions may thus generate trans-situational traces of positive or

negative emotional energy, alignment, interactional breaches, and potentially emergence of wider ruptures (Collins, 1990; Tavory and Fine, 2020).

Within the field of general organization studies, Soderstrom and Weber (2020) have recently taken up such concerns of radical interactionism by examining how chain-like interaction processes shape variation in emergence and structuring. They revealed how the inherent quality and dynamics of social interactions, as a foundation for micro-political issue mobilization, explain why some domain issues become formalized in emergent organizational procedures and structures whereas others do not. The trans-situational traces generated within an interaction situation animate emergence and explain possible variation in structuring within the same issue domain. Some, but not all, single-situation interactions leave immediate, provisional, and trans-situational traces, being the basic building blocks of structuring (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). Orientation toward issues is thus shaped by experiences of situational interactions that generate trans-situational traces of shared issue attention, confidence, understanding, relationships and intention to allocate time for future interactions (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). However, while research on interaction chains often has accounted for traces that comprise positive emotional energy, we also grant analytical attention to traces that involve negative emotional energy, such as frustration or anger (Boyns and Luery, 2015). We draw on this conceptualization to analyze how in- and between-meeting interactions combine in shaping the flow of strategy by leaving trans-situational traces within and across issue domains. The concept of interactional traces helps preserve “the fleeting nature of situational experiences” (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020: 259) while capturing their role in emergence and structuring across series of interaction sequences. It even allows us to capture the less obvious or visible between-meeting practices and their consequentiality in the flow of strategy, which merit more exploration (Jarzabkowski and Kavas, 2021).

Soderstrom and Weber (2020) do not analyze how actors navigate and orchestrate multiple, simultaneous interaction flows shaping issue formation within and across different domains. However, not least at central strategy meetings in organizations with multiple strategy discourses, multiple flows of interactions over different strategy issues may come together, spill over, or even coalesce in forming strategy. We may then theorize and find traces of situational interactions across domains and flows. Managers are thus confronted with orchestrating their influence in strategy formation across interaction flows. This compels us to explore possible dynamics across flows running through otherwise separate series of meetings. The quality and dynamics of interaction flows over different strategy issues and domains may vary within an organization. Likewise, emergence and deliberation in strategy formation may have varying characteristics and dynamics in different empirical contexts. For instance, some strategy issue domains may involve elements mandated by external regulation or stakeholders (Weber and Waeger, 2017), while others may be crafted and driven internally by discretionary strategic decisions. In this study, following multiple flows of interactions over different types of strategy issues allows us to make advance theorizing in two regards. First, we advance theorizing by teasing out the variable processes and dynamics of how strategy meeting practices sequentially combine with between-meeting practices to shape strategy formation in different domains. Second, and more importantly, we analyze and develop an empirically grounded theorization of how managers orchestrate in- and between-meeting practices across multiple interaction flows shaping strategy in different domains. Thus, we develop theoretical and empirical insights into how managers facilitate cross-over dynamics as practices in one flow moderate the dynamics and trans-situational traces of practices in other flows and even the temporary coalescing of flows.

By grounding this theorization in a political understanding of strategy and organizations (Kaplan, 2008; Lê and Jarzabkowski, 2015; Narayanan and Fahey, 1982; Weber and Waeger,

2017), this study also foregrounds strategy as a micro-political interactionist process of alliance formation, mobilization, and contestation. Within such processes, actors tactically interact over and seek to shape elements of strategy in struggles over resources and influence—in this research, over work conditions and work content. Meetings thus have a political character as spaces for advancing issues and interests, influence, and alliance formation (Seidl and Guérard, 2015). Elaborating this conceptual inspiration allows us to better analyze the minute details of how strategy issues are developed and contested, how they win support or disappear through interaction processes.

We thus advance a strong processual-interactionist perspective in order to link practices in and between strategy meetings and uncover the flow of interaction. It sensitizes analytical attention towards how dynamics of single-situational interactions over strategy issues leave trans-situational traces that feed into subsequent interaction processes, such as meetings, through chain-like flows. We next engage the above conceptual resources in empirical analysis.

Research context and methods

Case setting

This article is based on empirical data from a field study in Danish schools. The analysis focuses on one public school located in a small community in a midsize municipality. Data were also gathered from two other schools, demonstrating similar overall conflict-ridden processes, confirming the transferability of the presented insights. The main focal school has approximately 400 students, 30 teachers, and a management team comprising a headmaster, a deputy headmistress, and a department manager. The school is organized in three departments: A-house, B-house, and C-house, comprising the oldest, middle, and youngest students,

respectively. Specific details of the case are not disclosed and all participants are given pseudonyms to preserve anonymity. The study was conducted over 3.5 years as the school formed strategies in response to major new regulatory and reform demands: changed working-hour rules and a public-school reform.

The new working-hour rules were adopted after national-level negotiations between the public employers (represented by Local Government Denmark) and teachers (represented by the Danish Union of Teachers, DLF) had collapsed and been followed by a lockout of 70,000 teachers lasting almost four weeks (DLF, 2014). Core to the dispute was the union's refusal to sign a collective agreement giving headmasters more power to decide teachers' work schedules. With the union and Local Government Denmark unable to agree, the government intervened, forcing teachers to accept the new conditions (Refner, 2014). The new working-hour rules gave the management team greater autonomy to lead and distribute work in school, determining the ratio of teaching hours to preparation hours, and setting total working hours. The change was strategic in altering the deployment of the key school staffing resource, overturning the standard weekly maximum of 25 contact hours. Teachers were thus required to do more teaching hours (up to 30) and maintain full-time presence in school. It thus required changes in the domain of conditions of work (domain B). The regulatory change also provided relatively little leeway for local interpretation of the working-hour rules. For example, it mandated a specific minimum number of working days, allowed limited opportunity for flextime, and required teachers' full-time presence at school during work-time.

Concurrently, a new public-school reform was implemented, as the government reached a broad political agreement on improving standards in Danish public schools. Inspired by the US model, this accountability-focused reform had three main objectives: 1) the public school system must challenge all pupils to reach their full potential; 2) public schools must curb the

impact of social background on academic results; and 3) trust in schools and pupil well-being must be enhanced via respect for professional knowledge and practices (UVM, 2013).¹ It mainly concerned the domain of content of work (domain A). These objectives were pursued through numerous strategic initiatives, including longer and more varied school days and increased teaching quality in various subjects. More varied school days included, for instance, enhancing exercise and movement, objective-oriented teaching, and open schools (UVM, 2013). Thus, this very comprehensive reform fundamentally altered the current teaching strategy.

Table 1 shows six key strategic issues related to each change and summarizes the content of legislative initiatives. Central government only loosely specified how strategies and strategic initiatives should be formed locally in response to reform and regulatory demands. This left schools with discretion to determine, possibly in collaboration with the municipal administration, how to form and implement strategy for these issues. The reform change was thus more open to local interpretation, compared to the regulatory change.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Data collection

Longitudinal qualitative data were collected over 3.5 years² during the school's formulation and implementation of strategic changes. Data were triangulated by combining observations, interviews, and document analysis.

¹ UVM is the Danish Ministry of Children and Education.

² During the 3.5-year period, the authors had one year without any data collection.

The first author spent over 70 days at the school, observing meetings, seminars, and daily work. In total, 38 meetings were attended (2–5 hours each), generating 110 hours of observation. The first author also attended three seminars (6–9 hours each), including a strategy seminar. In addition, she engaged in other forms of on-site fieldwork, collecting observational data by regularly sitting in the office or staffroom, joining in informal discussions between meetings and talking with teachers and managers. The first author thus assumed different researcher roles with shifting degrees of participation and observation, encompassing informal pre- and post-meeting discussions and shadowing managers and teachers in their everyday work. Alongside daily observations, informal, open-ended, and unstructured interviews took place. Detailed field notes, including as many verbatim quotes as possible, were taken and typed up within 24 hours, following recommended practice (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

To complement our ethnographic observations, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the three members of the management team (nine interviews) and 22 of the school's 30 teachers, totaling 31 interviews. Initial interviews with management were relatively unstructured, aiming to gather background information regarding the management team and the organization. The second and third rounds of interviews with management and all the teacher interviews focused on the formulation and implementation of the two strategies. Each interview lasted 45–60 minutes and was recorded and transcribed.

Finally, we analyzed internal documents such as minutes and agenda items of all meetings attended, strategic plans, calendars, budgets, and executive profiles, allowing additional data triangulation. These documents were used as a secondary data source and gave a supplementary perspective on the implementation process, which was useful for engaging interviewees in discussion.

Analysis

All data were imported into the qualitative software package NVivo 10 to facilitate analysis. We gradually constructed and analyzed conceptualized empirical narratives (Berends and Deken, 2021). The analysis followed an iterative process of five stages (Corbin and Strauss, 1990), involving back and forth between analytical tasks, empirical data, and established concepts. Rather than relying on a standard analysis template (Pratt et al., 2020), our approach combined different analytical stages with various tasks tailored to answering the research question that emerged. In this process, we sought to balance structure/procedure with creativity to achieve quality (Jarzabkowski et al., 2021). The iterative analysis process can best be described as abductive, combining in-vivo codes that emerged with conceptual inspirations of extant research enfolded in the process, aiming to understand and explain the substantive empirical puzzle that emerged from the study. The final analysis process largely formed a conceptualized composition, involving conceptualized empirical narratives, producing a process model (Berends and Deken, 2021). The five stages were as follows.

Stage 1: Writing case stories. The first author began by writing two chronologies narrating the process of forming and implementing strategy in response to the two external influences (Langley, 1999). These case stories aimed to describe, in rich detail, the everyday interactions related to implementing changes, so thick description was used (Geertz, 1973). The data revealed sequences of in- and between-meeting interactions involved in shaping and implementing strategies; based on these situational interactions, the two stories captured the unfolding interactions between managers and employees.

Stage 2: Identifying and characterizing employees' acts of strategy support, contestation, and proposed variation. During strategy meetings and between-meeting interactions, employees proposed variations that might, if adopted, constitute emergent portions and modifications of

realized strategies. We coded these proposed variations, distinguishing between those aligned and not aligned with the general strategic orientation. To fully understand the employee dynamics, we coded positive (supportive) and negative (undermining) employee statements related to strategic changes. These employee acts constitute emergence and contestation of implementation, and we became interested in understanding how managers seek to shape and implement strategy amid ongoing emergence.

Stage 3: Coding in- and between-meeting practices of managers. We next analyzed how managers responded to the employee acts identified in stage 2 to shape strategy formation. For this purpose, we analyzed tactics meetings and the practices engaged by managers in and between meetings. The interactions have a political character, as multiple interest groups tactically ally, mobilize, and contest in seeking to shape strategy elements to secure resources and influence. Between meetings we coded practices such as resolving conflicts and forging alliances; within meetings, we coded practices such as free and restricted discussion.

Stage 4: Analyzing the interplay of in- and between-meeting practices through flows of interaction over strategy. We then analyzed how in- and between-meeting practices were informed, shaped, and enabled by past interactions, thus focusing on the dynamics of interaction between these practices. It involved the further development and analysis of conceptualized empirical process narratives using key concepts of restricted/free meeting practices, trans-situational traces, tactics and strategic orientations. We conceptualized the immediate, trans-situational traces of single-situation interactions, such as shared issue attention, (mis)alignment, and negative/positive types of emotional energy. Second, we analyzed how the coded trans-situational traces feed into subsequent interaction processes, such as meetings, and shape their dynamics and effects through chain-like flows.

Stage 5: Identifying multiple flows of interactions, cross-over dynamics, and coalescing mechanisms. Finally, we analyzed how multiple interactions, and the practices enacted within them, came to constitute a longer flow of interactions over strategy issues through their traces in subsequent interactions. We identified two overall flows of interactions pertaining to the open mandated change (higher discretion) and the regulatory change (lower discretion). By identifying overall flows of interactions over strategy, we could reveal how managers orchestrate multiple simultaneous interaction flows to partially manage emergence in and between meetings in variable strategy domains. We also identified and analyzed cross-over and coalescing dynamics between the two overall flows of interactions. Our analysis distinguishes situational interactions where the two flows run separately, coalesce, and generate cross-over effects.

Findings

The school managers initiated processes of forming and implementing new strategy under the open mandated change for work content (issue domain A) and the regulatory change for work conditions (issue domain B), with different levels of local discretion. We narrativize two overall chains of interactions over different strategy issues, respectively pertaining to the open mandated change (flow A) and the regulatory change (flow B), together with their characteristics and dynamics as they unfold across and integrate multiple between- and in-meeting interactions. We examine how in- and between-meeting practices of strategizing dynamically interact, as they are enabled by, balance, and shape one another, depending on the flow of interaction in which they are engaged. This reveals how variable dynamics of situational interactions within and between meetings, and processes of sequential combination, occur within different strategic domains, characterized by different shades of strategy

emergence, involvement, and top-down implementation efforts. The narrative also uncovers how, to shape ongoing strategy formation, managers must orchestrate multiple interaction flows simultaneously, thereby deflecting, shaping, and channeling emergence into meetings. Those flows may run separately, for example between meetings, but at times also coalesce and spill over during particular meetings where managers seek to orchestrate multiple interaction flows to shape strategy in the face of emergence.

The interaction processes comprise various types of situational interactions. Within closed tactics meetings, managers discuss how to tactically orchestrate and prepare responses to interaction dynamics across in- and between-meeting practices. Between-meeting interactions involve various informal practices of actors seeking to moderate strategizing dynamics in upcoming strategy meetings, including how emergence is channeled into meetings, or the effects of recent meeting practices. At strategy meetings, in- and between-meeting practices dynamically interact with various effects in shaping ongoing strategy formation.

We zoom in on four sequential sub-flows (see Figure 1). Within each sub-flow, we have analyzed the quality and dynamics of the single-situation interactions processes to assess how they come to leave trans-situational traces that feed into subsequent situations. The temporal combinations of sequential practices shape the evolution of interaction dynamics and strategy over time in the two domains. In sub-flows 1 and 2, managers proactively seek to partially manage emergence in order to shape and implement strategy under changes with variable local discretion. In sub-flows 3 and 4, managers coordinate and facilitate cross-over and coalescing dynamics of meeting practices between the interaction flows shaping different issue domains.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Sub-flow 1: Partially managing emergence to shape strategy under open mandated change

Managers sought to form and implement a new strategy under the school reform, placing demands on work content (strategy domain A). This triggered considerable conflictual emergence, perceived by managers as chaotic. In contesting the strategic orientation, employees acted on perceived challenges to their professional autonomy and interests. In meeting interaction 1.1 shaping this strategy formation, employees contested the strategic orientation and contributed to the emergence of proposed divergent variation. In this sub-flow, managers sought to tactically manage such conflictual emergence at a strategy meeting (interaction 1.1) by sequentially combining in-meeting and between-meeting practices. In particular, managers attempted to dampen conflictual emergence and how it would be channeled into an upcoming strategy meeting (interaction 1.6) through tactics meetings (interactions 1.2 and 1.4) and different between-meeting practices (interactions 1.3 and 1.5).

1.1 Conflictual emergence at a free discussion strategy meeting

The school board underscored that reform demands on exercise and movement (domain A) were not being sufficiently addressed by local strategy and associated initiatives. Seeking to partially manage conflictual emergence, managers held a strategy meeting with all employees on forming a strategy for the reform, focused on the issue of exercise and movement (domain A). In this meeting, managers employed practices of free discussion, during which teachers voiced resistance and pushed for divergent proposals in response to the reform. Managers consequently perceived the meeting as “chaotic”:

In response to the headmaster, Julia (union representative) asked, “You do not really mean that they should run for 45 minutes?” The headmaster answered, “I must have expressed myself incorrectly. They just need 45 minutes on average and we must be able to document it.” Emma (working environment representative) responded, “It has consequences for teaching.” The headmaster answered, annoyed, “Now, listen to what I say: Exercise must be incorporated into the teaching.” Michael [teacher] then suggested, “We can just name the breaks movement and exercise.” However, the headmaster responded firmly, “It is intended to be part of the teaching.” (field observations)

Michael’s proposed variation might, if adopted, constitute a modification of the strategy that diverges from the strategic orientation. Hence, despite constraints on the school’s discretion to modify and work around the mandated change, practices of free discussion involved resistance and the proposal of divergent variations that contradicted the existing strategic orientation. However, another employee, Peter, actively supported the strategic orientation. For example, he suggested how movement could be incorporated into mathematics, “My feeling is that it is especially the teachers [teaching] the youngest pupils who are good at it [incorporating exercise and movement].” Besides a few employees expressing their support, the free-discussion meeting practices led to resistance and conflictual emergence of divergent variation from the strategic orientation.

1.2 Tactics meeting on managing emergence ahead of the next strategy meeting

At the closed meeting the following day, managers interpreted what happened during the strategy meeting (1.1) and agreed on how to jointly manage resistance and emergence through specific political tactics.

The headmaster opened the tactics meeting: “I would like to start by talking about yesterday’s meeting. We are far from finished. It’s funny that one of the most experienced employees [Emma] acts up the most.” The deputy headmistress continued, “It is especially problematic because of her [role] as a work environment representative and her idea of wanting to be union representative—then you have to know your task. As a teacher, she [Emma] is under enormous pressure because she feels she is losing some of her freedom.” (field observations)

Based on their experiences of interaction dynamics, managers built political tactics for informal, between-meeting interactions with employees to counteract undesired emergence and resistance ahead of the next strategy meeting (1.6). First, they discussed tactics of involvement:

The department manager argued, “We have to manage her [Emma] reaction—otherwise she will create a culture where it can seem okay.” The headmaster responded, “But I wonder if she will come to me today, and otherwise I will try to catch her.” The deputy headmistress proposed an idea: “One possibility is to try to involve her more. Make her feel more heard. Maybe it will prove to be

worth the effort, so we can avoid such behavior.” (field observation; see interaction 1.3.1)

Second, perceiving that Julia (union representative) acted to undermine the strategic orientation, managers discussed a tactic of exploiting support in one issue domain (B) to build support in a contested issue domain (A):

The headmaster said, “I’ll probably just have a chat with Julia, too.” The deputy headmistress argued, “But Julia is more questioning. She does not create insecurity among the staff.” The headmaster responded, “But we have to deal with the problem. We have a commitment [to implement enough exercise and movement] and are simply not succeeding.” The department manager then suggested the tactic of exploiting Julia’s support for reducing the number of lessons [domain B] to counteract her resistance toward incorporating exercise and movement in teaching [domain A]. (field observation; see interaction 1.3.2)

Third, finding that exercise and movement were not being implemented in A-house, managers discussed tactics of alliance formation around the issue, specifically turning Peter into an ally to deal with other employees’ resistance in the upcoming strategy meeting (1.6). The deputy headmistress said it was clear “Peter was actually trying. He just needs some support.” The headmaster then suggested, “Maybe we can get him to take charge of exercise and movement in A-house?” (see interaction 1.3.3).

1.3 Parallel between-meeting tactics to moderate upcoming strategy-meeting dynamics

Managers subsequently effectuated the coordinated tactics between meetings to moderate strategizing dynamics at the upcoming strategy meeting (1.6). They orchestrated multiple interaction flows over strategy issues through three main tactics. These involved temporally balancing involvement between meetings (1.3.1) with restricted free discussion within them (1.6). The managers also exploited support for a strategic issue in one domain to build support for a contested issue in another domain at the upcoming meeting (1.3.2). Finally, they forged alliances with selected employees between meetings to manage emergence in meetings (1.3.3). These informal between-meeting interactions unfold nearly simultaneously and in parallel.

1.3.1 Involving employees between meetings to generate positive emotional energy toward an issue

Between meetings, the headmaster attempted to restrict free strategic discussion at the upcoming strategy meeting (1.6) by tactically involving the employee Emma, who undermined the strategic orientation of the exercise and movement issue during strategy meeting 1.1. As the headmaster had anticipated, Emma visited his office to discuss the previous day's strategy meeting.

Emma invoked the students to legitimate her resistance to exercise and movement (domain A). The headmaster responded, "We need to concretely define what exercise and movement are. We have to decide what it means in our school. This

is where you have some freedom of method—in deciding how it should be defined and helping to create a strategy for how it should be done.” (field observations)

Inviting Emma to contribute to strategy formulation evoked more positive emotions toward the issue that could later, as a trans-situational trace of positive emotional energy, feed into strategy meeting 1.6: “When they rarely involve us, it impacts on our ownership and motivation. After all, we are the experts here” (interview, Emma).

1.3.2 Exploiting support in one issue domain to counteract emergence in another issue domain at upcoming strategy meeting

Though a parallel situational interaction, the headmaster engaged political tactics to exploit support in one issue domain to build support in a contested issue domain at strategy meeting 1.6. Knowing that Julia supported a decision on the length of the school day, management took advantage to build support for the strategy issue of exercise and movement.

The headmaster (Tom) said to Julia, “We have decided to cut one lesson each day ... so, in the future, the exercise element must be incorporated into teaching.” Julia indicated her disappointment and disgust; shaking her head, she asserted, “It is simply the wrong focus to mandate 45 minutes of exercise every day.” Tom knew that Julia supported cutting a lesson, and tactically emphasized this: “When we cut a lesson, there will not be enough time to do exercise in separate lessons.”

Finally, after a very conflictual interaction, Julia stated with irritation, “I suppose, then, we must try to incorporate the 45 minutes of exercise,” then left the office.
(field observations)

In this situational interaction, Tom tried to make Julia feel she had a say over cutting a lesson, aiming to build support for the contested exercise issue that would later feed into strategy meeting 1.6.

1.3.3 Creating an ally between meetings to deal with employees’ anticipated resistance at upcoming strategy meeting

During a third informal interaction process between meetings, occurring in parallel, the headmaster (Tom) sought to find an ally with a suitable employee. At the coffee machine in the staff room, Tom approached Peter, who had supported the strategic orientation at the previous strategy meeting.

Tom said, “I hear from Rebecca [deputy headmistress] that the exercise is going well.” He then introduced the plan to incorporate more exercise into teaching. Peter responded very positively: “It sounds like a great idea!” Two days later, Tom told Peter, “I need someone to be responsible for exercise in A-house.” Peter answered immediately, “Frankly, there is only one thing to note about exercise in A-house: You’ll have to pull in somebody who doesn’t want to be pulled in.” He then asked, “What about Lisa and Sara? They know something about exercise.

What can I do that they can't?" Tom answered, "With your attitude, you can handle the resistance." (field observations)

Peter thus accepted responsibility for exercise in A-house and for pulling in contesting employees, though he expressed concern that it would go against his wish for building good collegial relationships. The situational interaction described here generated an alliance that as a trans-situational trace would feed into the upcoming strategy meeting (1.6), as part of managers' tactics to handle resistance and the possible emergence of divergent suggestions.

1.4 Tactics meeting: Moderating upcoming strategy meeting through between-meeting agenda-setting and dividing contesting employees

At the subsequent closed tactics meeting, managers organized the upcoming strategy meeting (1.6). They allow somewhat free discussion in order to win support and indirectly sought to moderate the restricted free discussion. Based on experiences of interaction dynamics, management foreshadowed that A-house would dominate the meeting with negative emotional energy and contestation, whereas other departments would remain silent. Managers interpreted this silence as signaling support for the strategic orientation. They thus arranged to put employees who often undermine the strategic orientation in different groups, aiming to avoid complaints and conflicts during sessions and keep discussions on track. Management selected educational committee members as facilitators of discussion groups at the upcoming meeting, in the hope they could help convince other employees or even oppose key contesting employees. This tactic also provided a stronger power base for employees supporting the strategic orientation, by giving them the opportunity to be heard.

Furthermore, managers discussed how to tactically moderate the upcoming group discussions by coordinating informal interactions to influence employees. The headmaster suggested resolving conflict with a resistant employee: “We should also ask Julia, so we are sure things will not get out of hand. It might just allow her to reflect a little” (field observation; see interaction 1.5.1). The deputy headmistress also advocated a subtle approach: “I think it would be advantageous to let slip that we are cutting a lesson and that movement needs to be integrated into teaching. This could give us a sense of what they [teachers] think of it” (field observations). Accordingly, the headmaster then tactically leaked a strategic decision between meetings to subtly influence employees’ orientation (see interaction 1.5.2).

1.5 Moderating upcoming strategy meeting: Partially shaping conflictual emergence through parallel between-meeting interactions

Following on from interaction 1.4, management tactically attempted to balance between-meeting practices of pre-emptively resolving conflict (1.5.1) and leaking a strategic decision to consolidate it at the strategy meeting (1.5.2). These two single-situation interaction processes unfolded in parallel and were intended to jointly moderate strategy meeting 1.6.

1.5.1 Influencing a resistant employee with informal power before upcoming strategy meeting

To achieve alignment, management engaged practices of influencing a resistant employee (Julia), who held a strong power base among employees as union representative. The headmaster explained, “I used the union representative a lot as she carries [much] informal clout. She and I together made things work, even when we disagreed. The employees would

then follow suit” (interview, headmaster). Therefore, the day before strategy meeting 1.6, the headmaster discussed matters with Julia.

Julia: You just have to remember that it’s hard when you come in and push for something and then say that it must be like this.

Headmaster: But Julia, that’s why we want your input on *how* we can do it!

Julia: That may well be so. But we all have to adhere to the same rules. It’s a problem when you come in and undermine our ability to act on what we believe is the best way to do things. (field observations)

In response, the headmaster created a narrative of how the employee Peter has been successful with movement in mathematics, seeking to influence Julia and pre-emptively reduce conflict at the strategy meeting. Such conflict-resolution practices left trans-situational traces of alignment around an issue that fed into strategy meeting 1.6.

1.5.2 Leaking a strategic decision to consolidate it at the strategy meeting

Through this tactic, management sought to proactively manage the emergence of divergent strategy variation. During a lunch break some days ahead of the strategy meeting, the headmaster let slip that one lesson per day would be cut to shorten the school day.

The headmaster revealed, “Fortunately, the plan is to soon have slightly longer breaks.” A teacher responded, “That sounds nice.” Another countered, “Yes, unless it just means longer school days.” The headmaster explained that they could start to look forward to one fewer lesson, then added, “But it also means we must become better at thinking along new lines, and get something like exercise and movement incorporated into teaching. Otherwise, it cannot work.”

(field observations)

When interviewed, the manager described the practice as follows: “I’m good at sowing seeds. I plant a lot of everything, about all sorts of things, when I believe somebody will join me in the boat.” Hence, the informal discussion over lunch exhibited “sowing seeds”, thus generating shared attention to the strategic issue that feeds, as a trans-situational trace, into strategy meeting 1.6.

1.6 Damped conflictual emergence during restricted free discussion in the strategy meeting

The interaction situations 1.2–1.5, through which managers allowed for yet partially moderated emergence as an ongoing dynamic, left trans-situational traces that fed into and informed meeting practices and their dynamics at the subsequent strategy meeting. These trans-situational traces of informal between-meeting interactions included motivation (interaction 1.3.1), support (1.3.2), alliances (1.3.3), alignment (1.5.1), and shared issue attention (1.5.2). Furthermore, the meeting was moderated by trans-situational traces of alliances from other meetings’ practices. However, despite managers’ political tactics of orchestrating multiple

interaction flows, they still encountered unanticipated emergence diverging from the reform's strategic orientation.

At strategy meeting 1.6, management's decision to cut one lesson every day (domain A) and instead incorporate exercise and movement into teaching (domain A) topped the agenda. However, the management team only wanted participants to discuss *how* a relevant strategy could be formed, given that the reform allowed local interpretation. Engaging restricted free discussion practices, managers drew on a relatively fixed structure and directly managed the flow of strategic discussion through an agenda.

However, even though management had tactically leaked this decision before the meeting (interaction 1.5.2), it still met resistance from some employees: "If this should make any sense in the older classes, then it is something that takes a really long time to prepare: time that we do not have." The headmaster, in turn, sought to handle contestation by invoking the educational committee's support for the decision, secured before the meeting: "It was okay with the school board, and we also discussed it at our last educational committee meeting." (field observations)

Before strategy meeting 1.6, management had met with department coordinators on the educational committee. During this observed meeting, managers counteracted committee members' contestation of strategy content and practices and prepared them for their role as discussion facilitators. The strategy meeting demonstrated that this between-meeting interaction had influenced the committee's alignment toward the reform's strategic orientation: getting them on board as discussion moderators evidently reduced resistance. The headmaster

explained, “When we encounter resistance, I will want to exploit that the educational committee can see itself in this” (interview, headmaster).

Management partly restricted free strategy discussion within the meeting, despite resistance from some employees. One employee commented, “But what do you want to hear? You have already made the decision” (field observations). To moderate the flow of discussion, management split employees into breakout groups and asked each employee to propose ideas on how exercise and movement could be incorporated into teaching, based on a round-table discussion. Managers tactically used the educational committee members as allied strategists to anchor issues during the meeting, guide the discussion, promote specific strategic initiatives, and convince other participants. Thus, managers exploited their support—secured before the meeting—to counter employees inclined to undermine the reform’s strategic orientation.

Despite managers’ considerable efforts to deflect it, proposed variation to the strategic orientation nonetheless emerged during breakout group discussions. The headmaster had talked to Emma after the previous strategy meeting, inviting her to provide input on exercise and movement (interaction 1.3.1). However, in strategy meeting 1.6, Emma said, “I simply do not think it’s right that the time we should spend on math is devoted to mandatory exercise. This will harm the subject and there is a curriculum they [students] have to get through” (field observations). Because educational committee members were aligned around the decision, they contributed to keeping the discussion on track, and established a step-by-step process for handling and managing its flow. When Emma contended that exercise and movement would not work in A-house, the facilitator attempted to keep the conversation on track: “In the preparatory classes in C-house, I think that pupils generally like to exercise during teaching—and that does not mean you need to end up all sweaty” (field observations). Hence, this group

discussion illustrates that dynamics in the meeting were moderated by other meetings' practices.

An interaction in another breakout group also demonstrates moderation of the strategy meeting by allies (interaction 1.3.3), specifically by an employee (Peter) aligned with the strategic decision.

Peter: The long breaks are well spent.

Michael: I do not understand why the 5-minute break [does not count as] movement—because they use the breaks to move.

Peter: Maybe we could gather a group of teachers from C-house and brainstorm how it can be done for older pupils without compromising on teaching. (field observations)

This interaction over the exercise and movement issue also demonstrates the effect of taking advantage of positive orientation toward another strategic issue (i.e., school day length) between meetings. Julia brought her support for and positive emotional energy around this issue from between-meeting interaction 1.3.2 into the strategy meeting. This trans-situational trace is further supported by her pre-meeting discussion with management (interaction 1.5.1), which helped achieve alignment around decision-making. Referring to domain B, Julia argued, “Now we have seven instead of eight lessons. This is a sign of moving in the right direction” (field observations). This shows that management successfully subdued Julia before the meeting, thus minimizing her undermining influence in the meeting. When interviewed

informally after strategy meeting 1.6, the headmaster explained, “It was clear that I had talked to Julia before the meeting. Now, Peter also dared to speak out against them [the resisting employees]. It was great that we succeeded in having them more active than earlier.”

Overall, strategy meeting 1.6 demonstrates how in-meeting strategizing practices and dynamics were charged up and moderated by other in-meeting and between-meeting practices, with multiple flows of informal interactions feeding into this formal strategy interaction. This combination of in- and between-meeting practices dampened conflictual emergence. Thus, despite allowing somewhat free discussion in order to win support in face of considerable employee contestation, emergence of proposed variation from strategic orientation in meetings was counteracted due to the orchestration of multiple between-meeting interactions and their traces.

Sub-flow 2: Partially managing emergence in shaping strategy under the regulatory change

The second sub-flow of interactions over strategy formation binds in- and between-meeting interactions within the less discretionary strategy domain B (regulatory change concerning conditions of work). These interactions differ in characteristics and dynamics compared to those of domain A (open mandated change). The second sub-flow demonstrates how managers engaged meeting practices of restricted discussion (interactions 2.3 and 2.6) in less discretionary formation of strategy following the initial chaotic emergence at the free strategy discussion meeting 1.1. The meeting practices of restricted discussion were moderated by tactics meetings (2.1 and 2.4) and between-meeting practices. The combination of practices counteracts unwanted variation in and between meetings to shape interaction dynamics under

a regulatory change. This illustrates that managers balanced deliberation and emergence in variable ways relative to each domain.

2.1 Tactics meeting: Interactional dynamics of domain A issues inform restricted discussion practices for domain B issues

In organizing upcoming strategy meeting 2.3, managers were careful about agenda items and decided to include, among other things, team collaboration conditions (domain B). Because domain B pertains to regulatory change, less open to interpretation, managers engaged meeting practices of restricted discussion. To tactically handle and influence strategy formation in situational interactions of domain B, management retrospectively evaluated conflictual emergence in sub-flow 1 while navigating sub-flow 2. Sub-flow 1 gave managers an understanding of the dynamics of contestation in strategy formation for work content, including exercise and movement, with transsituational traces of negative emotional energy toward an issue continuously being generated from interactions. Managers' experiences of conflict-ridden emergence in sub-flow 1 informed tactics of building shared issue understanding and alliances through between-meeting work on a proposal, together with the union representative and work environment representative. When interviewed, the department manager explained that "we then have some who pull in that direction and feel they have some ownership of what we come up with." Hence, this meeting demonstrates how managers tactically sought to moderate restricted discussion of domain B issues based on experiences of interactional dynamics over domain A issues.

2.2 Between-meeting tactics of building shared issue understanding and alliances to moderate upcoming meeting dynamics

The managers subsequently effectuated the coordinated tactics between meetings to moderate strategizing dynamics in the upcoming strategy meeting (2.3). As indicated by the dialogue in tactics meeting 2.1, the management team co-developed a proposal for team collaboration conditions with particular employees holding formal and informal power. The aim was to gain support for specific strategy elements and deflect non-aligned emergent strategy components advanced by other meeting participants. Specifically, the management team decided to involve Julia (union representative) and Emma (working environment representative). Developing the proposal together with these powerful employees left trans-situational traces of shared issue understanding and alliances that fed into strategy meeting 2.3. It influenced in-meeting activities and practices of restricted discussion and deflected the expected influence of other employees.

2.3 Deflecting conflictual emergence at a restricted discussion strategy meeting

In strategy meeting 2.3, participants were involved in restricted discussion of team collaboration conditions. The management team presented a proposal and gave employees the opportunity to ask questions. Hence, the discussion was controlled by management's agenda and structured turn-taking, enabled by between-meeting practices of proposal development that left trans-situational traces of alliances and shared issue understanding. The headmaster's opening comments were as follows:

The union representative, the work environment representative, Rebecca [deputy headmistress] and I have collaboratively created a proposal of how team collaboration should proceed in future. So, we agree. For professional teams, we

would like it [team collaboration] to run differently, so that the hours are allocated to it. We have agreed on 10 hours. (field observations)

Thereafter, an interaction process unfolded between participants, the dynamics of which were informed by involving the union representative in proposal development before the meeting. In this vein, managers were aligned with previously involved key employees, which strengthened their position within the meeting to influence strategy formation and deflect emergence. During the meeting, employees proposed discussing other strategic issues, such as the number of teacher meetings and working days. However, managers engaged practices of referring these emergent strategic issues to another meeting.

Jane: But what about teacher meetings?

Headmaster: We will return to that another day.

Jane: We lack such discussions [free discussions] —it is futile to provide input when the decision has already been made.

Headmaster: It may well be that we need to discuss it, but not right now. (field observations)

Such meeting-bridging practices support restricted discussion in strategy meetings concerning domain B. Besides deflecting conflictual emergence, such practices also generate traces of negative emotional energy due to the formal atmosphere and lack of opportunity for self-organizing debate.

2.4 Tactics meeting: moderating traces of negative energy and agenda-setting for upcoming strategy meeting

During a subsequent tactics meeting, management built and coordinated tactics on how to respond to the dynamics that unfolded in strategy meeting 2.3, relying on their experiences of interactional dynamics. Meeting 2.4 shows managers' tactical considerations about refusing to discuss divergent strategic suggestions in meeting 2.3. The deputy headmistress pointed out that, "In relation to Jane, who wants to discuss teacher meetings, I think it was good you said this was not [the right time] to talk about it" (field observations). The department manager responded, "You have to be appreciative and say it may well be a discussion [for the future], just not right now" (field observations). The deputy headmistress then pointed out that to counteract traces of negative emotional energy from one strategy meeting (2.3) feeding into the next (2.6), management must remember to return to the issue of teacher meetings. Therefore, managers decided that the headmaster should talk informally with Jane between meetings (see interaction 2.5).

Furthermore, managers built their tactics of agenda-setting, planning to follow up on conditions of team collaboration (domain B) and determining teachers' tasks (domain B) in strategy meeting 2.6. Although the orientation of these issues would be mostly decided before the meeting, management resolved to give employees the opportunity to ask questions and provide input through a restricted discussion:

At the last strategy meeting, some employees had asked about the number of working days and called for it to be discussed. Therefore, the deputy headmistress asked, "What do we do in relation to the number of working days?" The headmaster responded, "Let's make it the last agenda item. We will not reach it anyway, and then we can discuss it at the next department meeting instead." (field observations)

Hence, the misaligned strategic issue—number of working days—was placed last on the agenda to enact a practice of referring to a subsequent meeting. Management tactically put open school (domain A) on the strategy meeting agenda. This coalescing of interaction chains over different strategy issues was another tactical way of rejecting discussion of emergent strategic proposals and postponing this to subsequent interactions.

2.5 Taking up a discussion of proposed variation rejected at the strategy meeting

During a subsequent between-meeting interaction, the discussion paused in strategy meeting 2.3—to avoid complaint- and conflict-driven meeting sessions—was informally taken up by the headmaster. The aim was to moderate negative traces from the recent strategy meeting (2.3) and generate traces of understanding. The headmaster asked Jane why she felt there were not enough teacher meetings. This between-meeting interaction highlighted the employee's resistance to restricted discussion and to management not allowing self-organizing discussion in meetings. It also demonstrates tactical variation in managers' sequential enactment of in- and between-meeting practices in the two sub-flows. In sub-flow 1, the between-meeting practices of discussing misaligned strategic issues moderated upcoming strategy meeting dynamics, thus generating less emergence of proposed variation despite the restricted free discussion practices. In sub-flow 2, discussion of proposed variation was paused and occurred after the strategy meeting where the range of participants were smaller. This difference in the sequential use of in- and between-meeting practices to handle initial conflictual emergence reflected different levels of local discretion in the two issue domains.

2.6 Contesting restricted discussion practices in the strategy meeting

The subsequent strategy meeting comprised a restricted discussion of specific agenda items: team collaboration conditions (domain B), determination of teachers' tasks (domain B), open school (domain A), and the number of working days (domain B). During the meeting, employees showed frustration and resistance toward practices of restricted discussion, informed by trans-situational traces of frustration and contestation generated at the previous strategy meeting (2.3). Employees pointed out that they lack the opportunity for self-organizing discussion and are subject to excessive one-way communication.

Jane: When will WE have the opportunity to discuss how it should be?

Headmaster: We simply cannot see what we need to discuss. We do not see how else it can be done.

The top agenda issues were discussed for most of the meeting's allotted time, and instead of talking about the number of working days (domain B), managers tactically decided to discuss open school (domain A) and, thereby, reject discussion of emergent strategic proposals. Hence, management sought to orchestrate and exploit the coalescing of different domains' interaction flows within the two strategy meetings. Through this political tactic, managers exploited domain A meeting interactions to restrict unwanted discussion of proposed variation and deflect emergence of domain B issues. However, this approach generated resistance against the meeting practices, with employees voicing their frustrations, and such experiences of interaction dynamics informed managers' orchestrating of subsequent interactions.

Sub-flow 1 and 2 have demonstrated tactics of sequentially combining in- and between-meeting practices to handle ongoing emergence in shaping strategy under variable local discretion. In sub-flow 1, managers sought to shape strategy in face of conflictual emergence by engaging restricted free discussion meeting practices, seeking to create feelings of participation and support. In sub-flow 2, under the lower discretion afforded by the regulatory

change, managers enacted restricted discussion practices, which in the organizational context of conflictual emergence, however, generated traces of negative emotional energy. Enacting these different types of meeting practices in the context of ongoing emergence were tactically done by sequentially combining them in different series of practices.

In the following two sub-flows, we zoom in on tactics by which managers seek to orchestrate meeting practices across multiple simultaneous flows, particularly as they seek to induce and exploit cross-over effects between and coalescing of flows.

Sub-flow 3: Balancing meeting practices of restricted and free discussion across flows in different domains

The third sub-flow relates to strategy domain A. It demonstrates how managers tactically orchestrated strategy meeting practices across multiple flows of interactions over strategy issues, and how they tactically engaged free discussion practices in strategy meeting 3.3 in order to later run restricted discussion in strategy meeting 4.1, related to strategy domain B. By temporally differentiating practices of otherwise unrelated strategy meetings, management sought to counteract possible adverse effects of restricted discussion practices in the face of ongoing emergence of proposed variation to strategy.

3.1 Tactically enabling free discussion within one flow to counteract adverse effects of restricted discussion in another domain

In this tactics meeting the two chains of interactions coalesced as management discussed and built tactics for moderating group dynamics and counteracting the potential emergence of

unwanted variation in upcoming strategy meeting 3.3. Learning from sub-flow 2 that employees demanded more free and self-organizing discussion, managers decided to momentarily engage such meeting practices at strategy meeting 3.3 on the open mandated change (domain A), aiming to facilitate use of restricted discussion at strategy meeting 4.1 on the regulatory change (domain B). Hence, managers balanced strategy-discussion meeting practices across flows in otherwise unrelated domains as a temporal dynamic of making trade-offs. Management hoped that this coordination of practices across domains would moderate the trans-situational traces of strategy meeting 3.3 (domain A) that fed into upcoming strategy meeting 4.1 (domain B).

In tactics meeting 3.1 the headmaster presented an agenda for strategy meeting 3.3, requiring each department's employees to discuss homework assistance (domain A) and academic immersion (domain A). However, the headmaster's proposed practices of free and self-organizing discussions in three department groups were challenged by the deputy headmistress and department manager. Their argument was based on their experience of free-discussion meeting practices in sub-flow 1 causing resistance and the emergence of undesirable variation in issue domain A. Therefore, the deputy headmistress and department manager suggested splitting employees into smaller groups. They specifically highlighted power struggles between employee groups and pointed to competition between individuals. The headmaster argued determinedly, "There is value in allowing them to share this. They have demanded it. And this is one place where we can make room for free discussion" (field observations). However, as their authority over turn-taking would be suspended by opening an agendum to discussion, managers thought that self-organizing discussions would be difficult to avoid. Therefore, they discussed and developed tactics for moderating the different group dynamics in strategy meeting practices and addressing the potential for undesired emergence.

Department manager: I think it will be difficult to avoid them talking time and framework conditions [self-organizing discussion].

Headmaster (a little annoyed): Yes, I know. We must prepare for these discussions. We have to appoint one employee in each department to take the lead and help keep the conversation on track.

Deputy headmistress: It's probably a good idea to just round them up before the meeting. Especially Jane [who they intended to lead the discussion in A-house]—because it will not be an easy task. (field observations)

This situational interaction illustrates managers' tactics for influencing strategy-meeting discussions through in- and between-meeting practices. Besides seeking to charge up and moderate practices and dynamics at upcoming strategy meeting 3.3, managers hoped that between-meeting interaction 3.2 would leave trans-situational traces that cross over and feed into the upcoming strategy meeting in flow B (4.1).

3.2 Involving selected employees to moderate upcoming strategy meetings in both domains

Even though management tactically planned to engage free discussion at strategy meeting 3.3, they also sought to subtly influence and moderate group dynamics through between-meeting practices. Management sought to reduce Jane's resistance on the number of teacher meetings and working days (domain B), by selecting her to help initiate discussions about homework

assistance and academic immersion (domain A) in the A-house group at strategy meeting 3.3. They reasoned that making Jane an ally would increase the likelihood of seemingly free discussion in meeting 3.3 unfolding as management considered appropriate. At a between-meeting interaction with Jane, the headmaster introduced the strategy meeting and told her she would be facilitating the group concerned with older pupils: “We think you should be a facilitator at the next teacher meeting [3.3]. We need someone to make sure the agenda is followed” (field observations). Management hoped that assigning Jane this role would help change her attitude toward the regulatory change and also have a cross-over effect by generating trans-situational traces of positive emotional energy that feed into strategy meeting 4.1.

3.3 Difficulties in using allies to moderate meeting practices of free discussion

At the subsequent strategy meeting, an ally who management believed they had won over was unable to keep the meeting discussion on track or moderate free discussion, even when she intended to. Participants initially divided themselves into departments and then started discussing homework assistance and academic immersion (domain A). However, the employee Christina drew on her informal power to quickly take control, turn the discussion away from the two domain A issues:

Christina: We need to take reality into account. It’s nonsense that we must not talk about it.

Jane: That’s because they do not want us to think negatively.

Christina: But we lack time and resources, yet must not talk about that.

Sofie (building on Christina's argument): But that makes it difficult because the preparation time is not sufficient. It inhibits us—and that is our reality.

Jane tried again to get the discussion back on track, but Christina said (unrelated to the agenda): I would like to see them scheduled not as a fixed day of the week but alternating from week to week. We've done that before. Then we tried to target the days that were special anyway, such as Shrovetide and Exercise Day. At that time we did not have many special subject days.
(field observations)

Constantly trying to pull back her colleagues, Jane said their discussion should be aligned with the strategic orientation. Although management's choice of and interaction with the facilitator before the meeting clearly had effects, this meeting interaction process demonstrates the facilitator's difficulties in keeping the discussion on track. Hence, while sub-flow 1 demonstrated that apparent allies of management do not necessarily follow their expectations, this strategy meeting shows that employee dynamics may limit a willing ally's ability to do so. Despite managers' efforts to tactically orchestrate multiple interaction flows over strategy issues, and thus partially shape how emergence is deflected or challenged in the strategy meeting, unanticipated emergence occurred because of participants' agency. However, the meeting practice in this sub-flow (domain A) formed part of managers' temporal tactic of making trade-offs in meeting practices across different interaction chains. This becomes visible through cross-over effects on meeting dynamics in sub-flow 4.

Sub-flow 4: Facilitating uncontested restricted meeting discussions in flow B following free meeting discussions in flow A

The fourth sub-flow relates to strategy domain B. It demonstrates how managers tactically and temporally differentiated practices across strategy issue domains to balance deliberation and emergence. More specifically, when managers momentarily enabled free discussion and dialogue in a meeting in sub-flow 3, it produced cross-over effects in moderating dynamics and subsequent trans-situational traces of meeting practices in sub-flow 4. Whereas management encountered resistance to restricted discussion in sub-flow 2, the free discussion practices in sub-flow 3 (domain A) allowed managers to engage restricted-discussion practices in sub-flow 4 (domain B) without provoking resentment. To demonstrate these cross-over dynamics, we zoom in on a single strategy meeting (4.1), even though the sub-flow also involves other situational interactions, such as a tactics meeting, department meeting, and between-meeting interactions.

4.1 Restricted discussion practices in one domain moderated by free discussion practices in another domain

During the strategy meeting, a restricted discussion unfolded about determining teachers' tasks (domain B) and the number of working days (domain B). Management presented decisions and allowed employees to provide limited inputs. Even though management's communication concerned decisions on some (previously) misaligned strategic issues, employees did not express substantive objections or frustrations. Thus, sub-flow 4 featured less contestation and divergent strategy suggestions than did sub-flow 2, suggesting that the meeting practices of free discussion in sub-flow 3 (domain A) subsequently reduced resistance in the meeting practices in sub-flow 4 (domain B).

Between-meeting practices in issue domain A left trans-situational traces in domain B. In particular, between-meeting interaction 3.2 (domain A) demonstrates that tactics of involvement created trans-situational traces, such as positive emotional energy and motivation, that reduced resistance to restricted discussion in domain B. This cross-over effect was reflected in strategy meeting 4.1. Ahead of that meeting, the number of working days (domain B) had been discussed at a department meeting.

The headmaster said, “In B-house, they wanted us to maintain 210 working days” [207 is mandated, while the last three days were decided by management]. One teacher argued that staff should be allowed to cut down on work-hours some days if they worked more hours on other days. However, the headmaster insisted, “If it is only 207, then you work more than 40 hours a week, and [work quality is affected on such long days].” Jane supported the headmaster: “We also need to think of ourselves. It is not good to work more than 40 hours.” (field observations)

This shows a potential effect of creating an ally on one issue (interaction 3.2, domain A): in contrast to previous interactions, this interaction saw the ally support management on a terms of work issue (domain B). Thus, between-meeting interactions in one sub-flow can leave traces in another sub-flow across domains, which enabled managers to deflect conflictual emergence in domain B by tactically orchestrating multiple interaction flows.

In summary, the consequentiality of strategy meetings’ practices depends on the chains of practices in which they were integrated. Managers engaged different political tactics to

facilitate and exploit this dynamic interplay of in- and between-meeting practices in issue domains with different characteristics and across different interaction flows to shape ongoing strategy formation. In the context of ongoing emergence, pre-meeting practices sought to counteract the tendency of relatively free discussion practices to produce divergent variation. Restricted discussion practices were more smoothly engaged in one issue domain by exploiting higher level of discretion in other issue domain. In addition, informal post-meeting practices sought to dissolve trans-situational traces of negative emotional energy and contestation.

Discussion and contributions

This article confronts the question of how strategizing practices and dynamics at meetings interact with practices engaged by managers between meetings to create combined effects in orchestrating multiple interaction flows shaping strategy. We contribute to the understanding of social practices of formal strategizing, such as meetings, which have attracted growing attention amongst strategy scholars interested in the social accomplishment of strategy (Seidl and Guérard, 2015). More specifically, we advance research concerning how the effects of meetings in the flow of strategy are dependent on how they are integrated into a series of practices (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). The core contribution of this article is novel theoretical-relevant insights into how managers orchestrate multiple ongoing interaction flows of strategy formation that run through and between strategy meetings. Situating the study of how strategizing practices of meetings interact with practices between them in a strong processual-interactionist perspective opens a range of analytical opportunities, which in the case of the present research furthers the extant body of strategy research as follows.

The findings lead us to an empirically-grounded modelling of the dynamics and tactics by which chains of in-and between-meeting practices interact. For the sake of clarity, we zoom in on different sets of dynamics in two models (see Figure 2.a and 2.b) that abstract our core findings. These two models could be analytically combined to show the full picture.

Figure 2.a accounts for dynamics of interactions between in- and between-meeting practices, and the tactics by which managers orchestrate these dynamics to create combined effects in strategy formation. Figure 2.b contributes to the meeting literature on how series of interaction sequences shape strategy emergence and evolution by revealing and explaining tactics by which managers seek to induce and exploit cross-over dynamics and coalescing of flows of interaction over otherwise unrelated strategy issues. In the following, we discuss these contributions.

Meetings in ongoing interaction flows shaping strategy

First, the study advances theorizing of how strategy meetings are situated in and charged up by ongoing interaction flows shaping strategy. Considering strategy meetings as part of and punctuating ‘chain’-like, interactive processes of ongoing strategy formation holds important implications for the theorization of the role of meetings in strategy processes (Seidl and Guérard, 2015). Particularly, it allows us to advance understanding of how meeting practices interact with and are shaped by informal practices between meetings and the consequential effects for strategy formation. The majority of research focuses on how the organization and practices of meetings shape the strategy activities occurring within them (Healey et al., 2015; Hodgkinson et al., 2006b; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Seidl and Guérard, 2015). We explain how the dynamics and effects of meeting practices are dependent on the often mundane, yet critical informal work of managers between meetings.

Seidl and Jarzabkowski (2008) provided compelling insights into how meeting practices' consequentiality for (de)stabilizing strategic orientations is dependent on the way they are sequentially integrated into a series of meetings (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Seidl and Guérard, 2015). Situating the study of strategy meetings in recent advances in theory on interactions in structuring processes (Collins, 2005; Soderstrom and Weber, 2020), we make a theoretically-relevant contribution to this line of inquiry. Our empirically-grounded theorization and models explain how the dynamics and effects of meeting practices depend on a host of other practices in informal interactions between meetings as well as practices of other meetings. Hoon (2007) characterized how closed, informally organized interaction situations, in terms of 'unofficial', behind-the-scenes strategic conversations, serve particular roles in comparison to formal meeting practices in shaping strategy. The present research goes a significant step further in clarifying the theoretical mechanisms by which informal between-meeting interactions, through trans-situational traces, actually feed into and dynamically combine with subsequent meeting practices with various (un)intended effects. A theoretical insight of this study thus concerns how meeting practices generate variation and (de)stabilize existing strategic orientation not only depends on how they are integrated into a pathway of consecutive meeting practices (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008), but also on the wider flow of informal between-meeting practices that they form part of.

Figure 2.a demonstrates different ongoing flows of interactions over strategy issues in different domains (see Figure 2.a, flow A and B). In- and between-meeting interactive dynamics of strategy formation generate trans-situational traces that charge up strategizing dynamics within subsequent meetings, thus forming chain-like interaction processes that shape ongoing formation of strategy around an issue (Weber and Waeger, 2017).

[INSERT FIGURE 2.a ABOUT HERE]

In these interactive flows of strategy, managers use political tactics of facilitating and exploiting how in- and between-meeting practices moderate each other and create combined effects. As illustrated in Figure 2.a, Box A.2 and B.2, managers' experiences of in- and between-meeting-interaction dynamics inform tactics of orchestrating flows of interactions. The sequential interplay of in- and between-meeting practices may evolve and be orchestrated differently under different conditions, such as in different issue domains. In an issue domain characterized by higher discretion, managers responded to challenges of shaping strategy in the face of conflict-ridden emergence through free strategy discussion practices. Through these practices they sought to reduce conflict and win support to strategy under formation. In a domain allowing a lower level of discretion, managers responded to conflictual emergence by instead enacting restricted strategy discussions. In such a context, restricted discussion practices of meetings, however, had the potential to generate trans-situational traces of negative emotional energy. However, the different types of meeting practices in the two interaction flows were moderated by traces of different between-meeting practices (see Figure 2.a, Box A.3, A.4, B.3, B.4). Between-meeting practices include practices that shape how ongoing emergence is deflected and channeled into meetings, practices for moderating upcoming meeting dynamics as well as practices dealing with trans-situational traces of recent meeting practices. As managers are compelled to exert some influence over strategy processes under mandated change, meeting practices of free discussions (Flow A) were combined with between-meeting practices (such as leaking decision, creating alliances, conflict resolution and involving, etc.) seeking to subtly shape how emergence was channeled into as well as moderating dynamics at the meetings. This combination sought to win support to strategy under formation through more free discussion generating traces of positive emotional energy while moderating these practices tendency to generate proposed variation through between-meeting practices.

These insights thus expand existing theorization of meeting practices by explaining how the likelihood of free discussion practices leading to variation (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008) is dependent on traces of between-meeting interactions. As demonstrated in the present study, leaking a decision may generate shared issue attention, creating alliances fosters support towards issue, conflict resolution generates alignment towards issue and involving potentially generates positive emotional energy towards an issue (see Figure 2.a, Box A.3 and A.4). Through such tactics of orchestrating interaction flows between meetings, managers may actively seek to counteract the tendency of free discussion practices to generate proposed variation (see Figure 2.a, Box A.5), even in an organizational context otherwise characterized by conflictual emergence.

More restricted discussion practices (Flow B) were moderated by flows of other types of between-meeting interactions in which they were engaged (see Figure 2.a, Box B.3 and B.4). In the present study between-meeting practices such as moderating issue development generates traces of shared issue attention, involving tend to foster positive emotional energy towards meeting practices of restricted discussion. Informal post-meeting practices sought to dissolve traces of negative emotional energy and contestation from engaging restricted discussion practices in the context of conflictual emergence. For example, through between-meeting interactions, managers may seek to involve and form alliances with particular employees, and within such alliances allow a moderate evolution of understandings and issues. Such moderate evolution of strategic issues between meetings may serve to reduce unwanted variation within meetings, thus smoothening top-down implementation in the face of emergence (see Figure 2.a, Box B.5). Hence, different types of between-meeting practices are engaged to influence the flow and leave different trans-situational traces.

The study, in this vein, advances understanding of the tactics by which managers proactively seek to deal with ongoing emergence of proposed variation between strategy meetings. Recent research demonstrates how emergent strategy forms from autonomous projects at a distance from the management responsible for formal strategy through bottom-up practices of discursive articulation (Mirabeau and Maguire, 2014), which eventually appear in formal meetings. The present research expands the understanding of how managers continuously seek to shape strategy in the face of emergence as an ongoing interactive dynamic and natural potentiality of strategy processes, in what Lê and Jarzabkowski (2015b) refer to as the emergent process of strategy implementation. However, following the flow of interaction also reveals how unanticipated meeting dynamics may occur from political tactics between meetings. For instance, the pursuit of own interests during meetings by some allies was not anticipated by management, while in other situations an ally failed to extend managers' subtle influence into free strategy discussions, partly because of the power base of other participants. This shows that while managers may employ various political tactics of sequentially combining in- and between-meeting practices, this agency is best theorized as an orchestration of interaction flows that animate strategy formation at meetings by channeling them between meetings. Hence, interaction flows cannot be controlled.

Research has showed how meeting practices shape the participation of people in strategy (Kwon et al., 2014). Yet, scholars have noted that strategic participation may not imply that people participate equally (Dobusch et al., 2019; Whittington et al., 2011). Instead, strategic participation often involves specific participants' influence, while others may lose their voice in the strategy process (Laine and Vaara, 2007). This study demonstrates how participation through meeting practices are temporally balanced with between-meeting participation in ongoing strategy formation. Thus, managers employed tactics of balancing allocation of participation within and between meetings. Different types of meeting practices were balanced

with varied tactics of orchestrating participation between meetings. Influence through free discussion practices was moderated between meetings, where participation sought to achieve positive emotional energy around the desired strategic orientation while managers attempted to restrict influence that would lead to divergent strategy variation. Managers sought to limit actual employee influence during restricted discussion practices by pausing discussion and postponing their influence to between-meeting interactions where a lower range of participating employees was involved in restricted evolution of issues. For example, between-meeting interactions generate experiences of influence for (powerful) participants who were frustrated by reduced participation within meetings.

Tactically exploiting lower ranges of participating actors between meetings may thus seek to moderate conflictual emergence. Finally, a tactic involved granting supportive participants greater influence at meetings in facilitator roles. Hence, the dynamics of participation and influence at meetings (Kwon et al., 2014) co-evolve with between-meeting participative practices. Existing research has shown how influence is distributed (Dobusch et al., 2019; Tavella, forthcoming). Our article thus contributes by demonstrating how ongoing oscillations in the range of participating actors in and between meetings as a flow may be central to efforts to manage and exert influence in strategy formation.

Orchestrating multiple simultaneous interaction flows

Second, the study leads us to a theorization of how multiple simultaneous interaction flows that shape strategy formation at times not only run in parallel, but also generate cross-over effects, come together and coalesce (see Figure 2.b). Particularly, the study unveils the political tactics by which such dynamics at the interstices of flows may be induced and exploited. This theorization advances the extant body of strategy and organization research on how series of

interaction sequences shape trajectories of (issue) emergence and evolution (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). It does so by revealing and explaining cross-over dynamics between simultaneous interaction flows, even between very different and otherwise seemingly unrelated issue domains. Research on how series of interactions animate and shape emergence and evolution of issues has theorized the explanatory mechanisms of combinations of meeting practices in singular interaction pathways (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008) or chain-like interaction processes structuring singular issues (domains) (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). This study furthers extant research by explaining two sets of dynamics as theoretical mechanisms working across multiple interaction flows, namely cross-over dynamics and dynamics of coalescing. Cross-over dynamics pertain to situations where dynamics in one interaction flow have implications for dynamics in another flow, but the two flows do not momentarily come together in an interaction situation. Dynamics of coalescing comprise dynamics that occur when different flows of interaction feed into the same interaction situation.

[INSERT FIGURE 2.b ABOUT HERE]

As illustrated in Figure 2.b, we find different types of cross-over dynamics and tactics for orchestrating them. We firstly demonstrate how experiences of interaction dynamics inform political tactics across flows (see Figure 2.b, ii). Managers drew on their experiences of interaction dynamics within one flow while revising their understanding of interactive strategizing and proceeding with organizing strategy meeting practices within another domain of strategy issues. For example, they drew on experiences of support and/or resistance to issues and meeting practices of restricted discussion in one flow to reconsider meeting practices in another flow. Moreover, we account for the cross-over dynamics (see Figure 2.b) through which in- (iii) and between-meeting (iv) practices in one interaction flow moderate the dynamics and trans-situational traces of meeting practices that form part of another interaction

flow, even in a very different and otherwise seemingly unrelated issue domain. Tactics of orchestrating cross-over dynamics between flows involve temporal coordination of meeting practices so that practices in one flow moderate dynamics and traces of meeting practices in another flow. It demonstrates tactics of temporally differentiating meeting practices over different types of strategy issue domains to balance deliberation and emergence. Momentarily engaging in free discussion in one flow, for example, counteracts possible adverse effects of resorting to meeting practices of restricted discussion. For example, it may simultaneously reduce contestation and divergent strategy suggestions in a flow of interaction over different strategy issues. In the context of conflictual emergence, restricted discussion practices were more smoothly engaged in one issue domain by exploiting a higher level of discretion in another issue domain allowing for more free discussion practices. Thus, accounting for dynamic interdependencies of in- and between-meeting practices counters the risk of studying meeting practices singly and in isolation (Jarzabkowski et al., 2016). This goes well beyond the commonsensical point that strategic issues or decisions may be interrelated. Instead, it shows that series of social practices (here meetings), even in otherwise unrelated domains, have consequential implications for the evolution of social dynamics across the respective series of practices.

Dynamics of coalescing occur when interaction flows interweave and inform the same interaction situation, frequently in our study at central meetings. In interaction sequences where flows coalesce, such as key strategy meetings, we find other kinds of mechanisms shaping the flow of strategy. Figure 2.b shows coalescing at a tactics meeting and a strategy meeting. For instance, as the different interaction flows coalesce at a strategy meeting, a political tactic involves sequentially organizing interactions over different issues within the meeting in such a way that conflictual emergence of proposed variation is deflected in one of the domains. Coalescing at a closed tactics meeting informs the creation of political tactics for orchestrating

cross-over effects and situations of coalesced interaction chains. One may find various dynamics of coalescing of interaction chains in other empirical contexts.

More generally, the study thus enhances theorization of interactions as micro-foundation for emergence and structuring of issues. Soderstrom and Weber (2020) recently provided a theorization of how the quality of interactions around an issue, in terms of experiences of successful interactions, is generative of trans-situational traces that inform further interactions around issue development. These traces serve as a transformative mechanism that translates fleeting situational experiences into different emergent structuring of issue domains (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). Soderstrom and Weber (2020) analysed and theorized singular trajectories of issue development through such separate interaction chains, and within one issue domain. The theoretical implication of our study concerns how analysis of tactics and trans-situational traces shaping issues and emergence can benefit from including the co-evolvement of multiple flows of interactions over different, potentially even unrelated issues and domains (see Figure 2.b). For example, the likelihood of interactions being experienced as successful, prompting further interactions around an issue fuelled by traces of positive emotional energy, may be moderated by interactional dynamics in another flow of interaction. Indeed, being confronted with multiple interactive flows of ongoing strategy formation not only presents possible challenges for managers, not least between meetings where flows may possibly diverge, but also constitutes an important space of political maneuvering in influencing emergence. Tactics in interactions processes structuring issues in one domain may thus be constructed in light of tactics in other interaction flows.

Conclusion and future research

In conclusion, we have demonstrated the analytical value of engaging theoretical inspirations from strong processual-interactionist perspectives (inspired by Collins, 2005) in the study of meeting practices, and what goes on between meetings, in shaping the flow of strategy. These insights may induce scholars to pave a research avenue into not only the interplay between meetings, as previously called for by Seidl and Guérard (2015), but also the seemingly mundane between-meeting interactions that may be critical to meeting dynamics. We particularly focused on the practices and tactics of managers in orchestrating multiple flows of interactions that bind in- and between-meeting practices together. Future research could benefit from diving deeper into practices and tactics of employees of navigating multiple simultaneous flows.

Research on how interaction chains animate emergence and the structuring of issues has previously focused attention on single issue domains, though scholars call for research on interdependencies between different interaction processes over issues and issue domains (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020). We have contributed new knowledge on the dynamics and tactics by which different chain-like interaction processes shaping strategy issues spill over and coalesce. This study may inspire future research on how managers and employees combine practices and tactics of navigating multiple interaction flows of strategy. We also encourage further research on how within-domain tactics are developed in light of tactics in other issue domains. Further research may cast light on different contexts for chain-like interaction processes. We have uncovered consequentiality of series of social practices in shaping strategy under two simultaneous mandated changes. Future research may address flows of interactions where an existing strategy flow meets a new strategy flow. In addition, research could illuminate contexts characterized by substantial, spatial dispersion of an interaction flow. This may involve series of physical and online meeting practices, or situations where the geographical sites and people engaged in strategy flows are more diverse. Overall, such

research efforts could build into broader research on how social practices are integrated into series of practices shaping strategy.

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Table 1. Strategy domains and key strategic issues.

Open mandated change Reform: Work content	Regulatory change Working-hour rules: Term of work
<p>1. Exercise and movement: Exercise and movement must be integrated into all students' school days for an average of 45 minutes daily; full discretion on content.</p>	<p>1. Number of working days: School management/municipality determines the number of days that teachers must work (minimum 207 working days); limited discretion.</p>
<p>2. Homework assistance and academic immersion: Time must be allocated (2–3 hours weekly) for students to have academic lessons clarified, receive help with homework, and be immersed in particularly difficult or interesting subjects.</p>	<p>2. Determination of teachers' tasks: Management prepares a task overview indicating what tasks a teacher is expected to complete (e.g. team collaboration and meetings).</p>
<p>3. Open school: Schools must cooperate with the local community via involvement in sporting, cultural, and business activities; full discretion on content.</p>	<p>3. No maximum contact hours: School management determines the teaching hours to preparation hours ratio, and total working hours (including start time and breaks according to timetable).</p>
<p>4. Varied teaching: Traditional blackboard-based teaching must be combined with practical and assisted learning activities that challenge and motivate students; full discretion on activity types.</p>	<p>4. Full-time presence: Teachers have the duty to be present full-time in the workplace throughout working hours.</p>
<p>5. Objective-oriented teaching: Learning objectives, student plans, and quality reports introduced as new requirements.</p>	<p>5. Scheduling of working time: Work is organized from Monday to Friday during daytime hours. Daily working hours must, to the extent possible, be continuous, rather than split shifts or entailing preparation outside working hours.</p>
<p>6. Longer school day: Weekly school hours changed to 30 for the youngest, 33 for the middle, and 35 for the oldest students.</p>	<p>6. Flextime restriction: Teachers have no or only very limited flextime.</p>

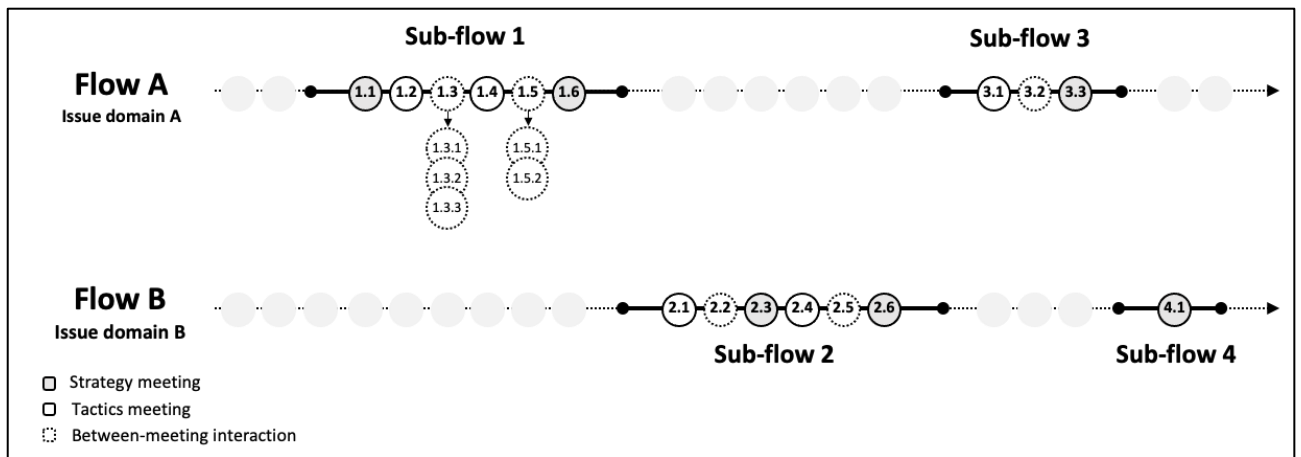


Figure 1. Overview of flows, sub-flows, and single-situation interactions

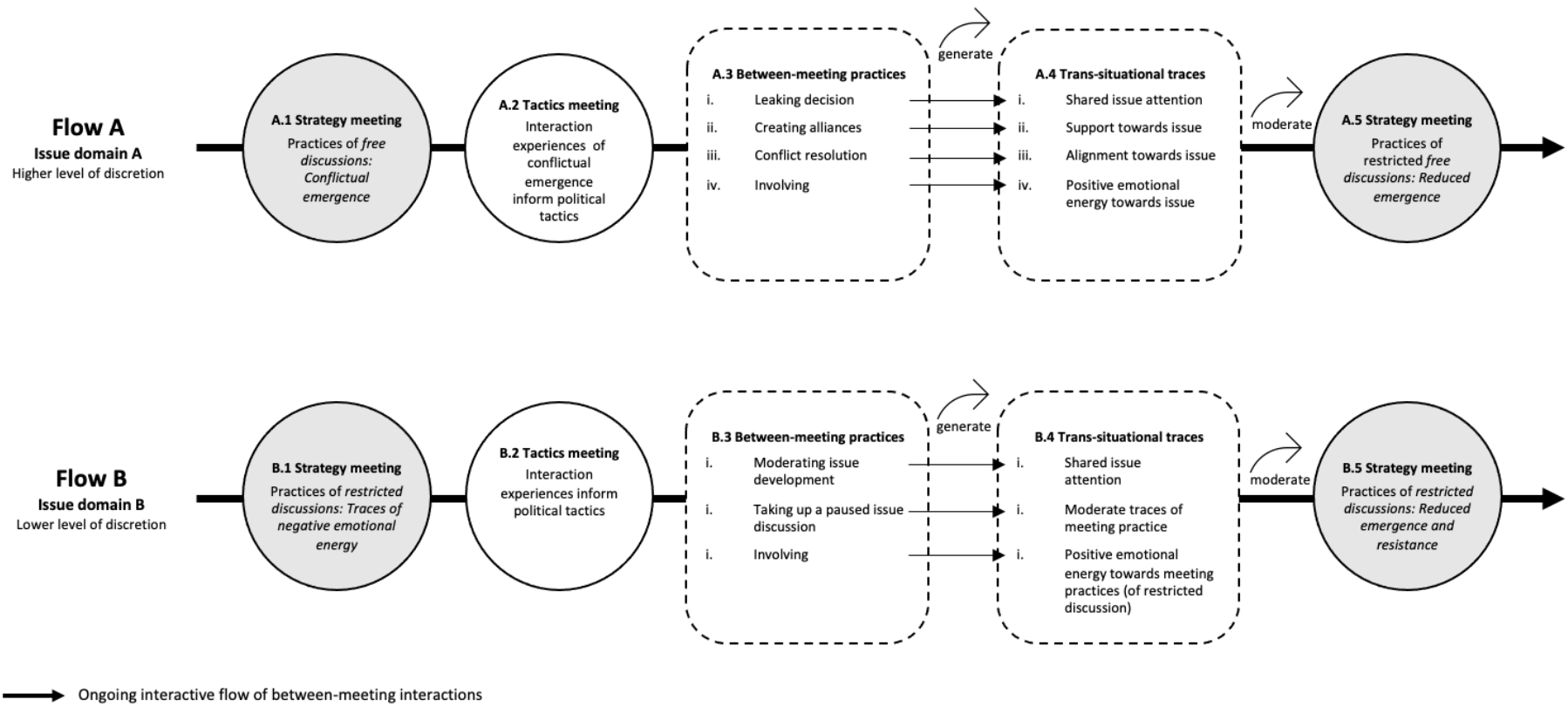


Figure 2.a Tactics of sequentially combining in- and between-meeting practices

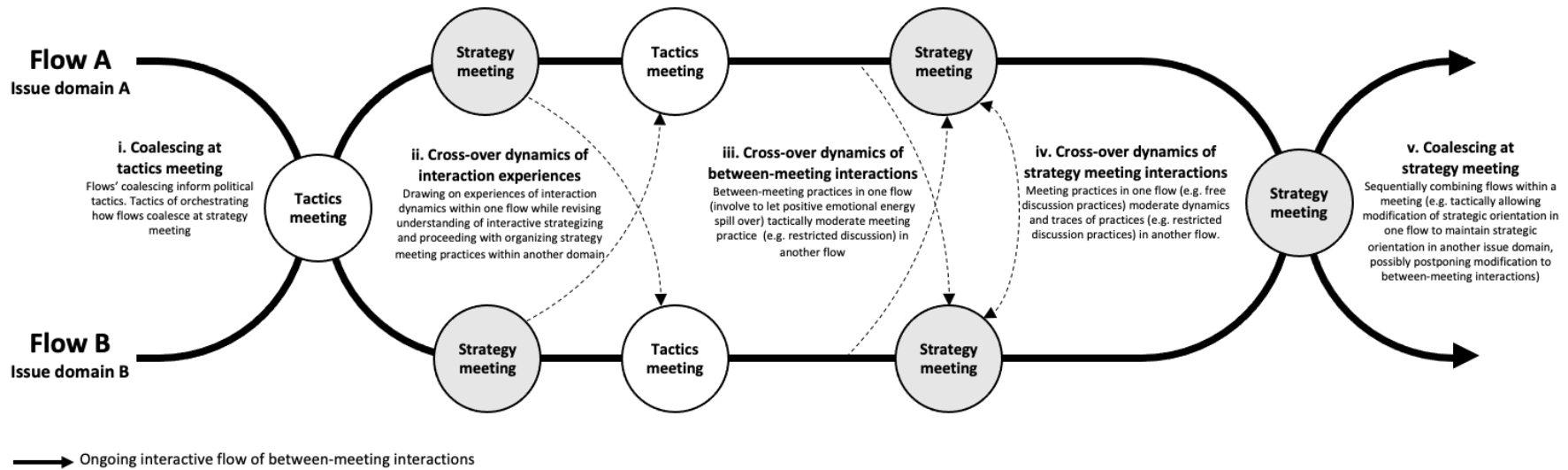


Figure 2.b Tactics of orchestrating multiple simultaneous interaction flows: Coalescing and cross-over dynamics

Maria Skov, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Management, Aarhus University. Her primary research interests focus on the dynamics of strategizing, particularly in pluralistic contexts. She has a particular interest in using a practice lens to address the practices and processes through which organizational actors enact strategies.

Toke Bjerregaard, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management, Aarhus University. His research addresses the strategies and practices mobilized by organizations and their multiple actors in navigating and managing complex contexts, such as under institutional and cultural complexity. The research falls within the fields of international management and organization studies.

Jesper Rosenberg Hansen, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Department of Management, Aarhus University, Denmark. His research focuses on public management and differences between public and private organizations. Among other things, he has studied strategic management, organizational behaviour, leadership, contracting out, and sector switching.