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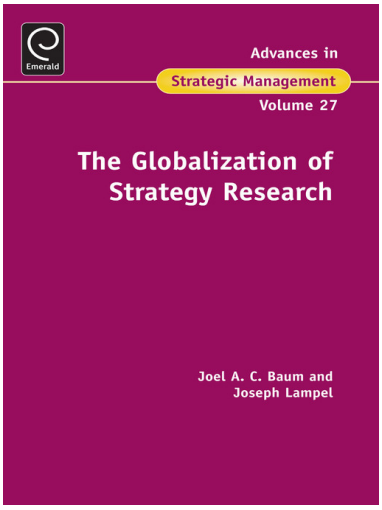

Baum and Lampel address the emergence of research perspectives, alternatives to the current North American field which is considered dominant in strategic management today. As introduction, the editors present a narrative of the emergence of strategic management that defines its contours (objects, appropriate methods) and thus, gives it legitimacy. This narrative, which considers the 1977 Pittsburgh conference as a founding event for the field, contributes to the consecration of North American research, and with it a definition of strategy as a sequential process (formulation, implementation), an object to be studied using the canons of logical empiricism.

Yet, it is this relatively limited definition of strategic management, along with online access to European publications (in particular, Organization Studies, Journal of Management Studies) that gave rise to increasing research debate. As this growing debate is located outside North American borders, the publishers do not hesitate to speak of a "globalization of strategic management research", despite the essentially European origins of the contributors.[1]

In order to justify the necessity of alternative perspectives, Baum and Lampel underline the variety of strategic discourse employed by the authors united in this work, yet also observe a certain fragmentation in the field of strategic management. This fragmentation would undermine dialogue among researchers, dialogue that this work intends to regenerate.

1. Among 31 contributors, 24 work in a European institution (including among them, 13 in Great Britain, 4 in France and 3 in Finland) and 7 in a North American institution.

CONTRIBUTIONS

In the part one, "Perspectives: strategy as …", three concepts of strategy are developed. Using Foucault as a base, Hatchuel, Starkey, Tempest and Le Masson view strategy as a discourse characterized by instrumental rationality as much now, in newer developments, as

in the old schools. The authors then point out that this domination would be detrimental to both the development of the firm's capacities as they would be directing their efforts on what exists, as well as, for the "subject" lulled by the illusion that he is master of his future and can attain infinite satisfaction for his desire for riches.

Instead of this conservative rationality, the authors suggest seeing strategic management as a process of conception oriented toward innovation (innovative design). This would entail a process in which concepts and knowledge would be mutually questioned and defined. Illustrating their ideas using the development of innovative products at Saint Gobain (i.e. the European leader of automobile glazing), the authors emphasize the co-evolution of the organization itself, as the new concepts and knowledge that are questioned call for the renewal and/or review of organizational forms, boundaries and methods. Thus the authors propose a new concept of strategic management that is imaginative, flexible and more humane.

In the following chapter, Vaara takes up the notion of strategy as discourse in order to emphasize its variety and complexity. It is true that for the most part research using this perspective consider that discourse (i.e., the manner in with language is used orally or as written text) are social practices essential to the reproduction and transformation of organized phenomenon and strategy. However, a closer look at these works allows us to distinguish three facets or levels through which this strategy's discursive dimension is embodied. With Knights and Morgan (1991), strategy can be seen as knowledge, a group of concepts, methods and practices marking conversations and narratives used in the organizations. For Vaara, this knowledge is tied to other bodies of knowledge (military, financial even spiritual) giving way to different strategic conceptions and practices (more or less participative, Mantere and Vaara, 2008). Following that, strategy is built through narratives, narratives that give sense and legitimacy to actions that have been taken or will be taken within the organization. Both the issue and locus of power phenomena, the construction of these narratives are the result of multiple, often contradictory, fragments (what Boje, 2001 calls "ante-narratives"), a necessary step before an official version can emerge; an official version that, in fact, will never really completely overshadow all alternative narratives (see Boje, 1995). These different narratives are developed and reproduced through conversations among the members of the organization, through which some will create their own privileged position (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) or even propose a counter-discourse in order to maintain room to maneuver when faced with strategic discourses considered as hegemonic (Laine & Vaara, 2007).

Through this panorama, Vaara calls for the conception of strategy as a place where multiple discourses are reproduced and transformed, a concept in which all "dominant discourse" only serves to mask this multiplicity and thus is open to debate.

The following chapter exposes the issues and difficulties facing the strategy-as-practice movement. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan first treat the specificities and contributions of this extremely heterogeneous trend (see Regnér, this volume). Using varied theoretical sources, the researchers

inscribed in this movement consider that social phenomenon, of which strategy is a part, takes form and structure in micro-actions, activities and interactions among actors. Interest is focused on the multiple actors who participate in the fabrication of strategy, on activities (workshops, seminars), on the various tools and models that support the strategy and concretize practices and on the results of the strategy itself (Regnér, 2003).

In spite of its potential contribution, the strategy-as-practice movement has not had much exposure in the top American journals. There are two reasons for this: on the one hand, its interpretative anchor confronts the classic reticence of all qualitative and inductive research; on the other hand, the notions of strategizing in terms of the classic dichotomy between formulation-implementation, and the recourse to essentially Northern European social theories does little to convince. Given this, the authors suggest several directions: conduct research in American firms, more strongly link the contributions of this research to classic questions in strategy (success, failure of fusions, for example), more rigorously specify and justify the chosen units for analysis.

The second part of the work, titled "Perspectives: strategy and …." regroup two chapters that dig deeper into the discursive dimension of strategy. Ezzamel and Willmott contrast the Foucaldian concept of discourse (qualified as poststructuralist) and the so-called rational and interpretative perspectives of strategy. While these two perspectives can be aligned to objectively describe strategic processes, the Foucaldian concept breaks with all ambition to reconcile "words and things", representations normally transmitted through scientific discourse and the world. This does not mean however that discourse has no effect. For Foucault (1991) discourse constitutes knowledge in the sense that it is that is governed by rules of enunciation, rules which give form and materiality to "objects" (organization, the environment, for example) and subject positions (who speaks to whom? in what manner?).

Adopting a Foucaldian perspective leads us to question the power of strategic discourse(s), in other words, its performative dimension. Foucaldian research (while not numerous) seeks to problematize the way we look at the objects and subjects constructed by strategic discourse. In what way does discourse construct "strategic" problems, solutions and the subject-strategist himself (Knights & Morgan, 1991)? How do the conveyed rationalities justify certain strategic movements or management control methods (Ezzamel, Willmott & Worthington, 2008)? In other words, how are these discourses related to specific organizational techniques and practices (Rose & Miller, 1992)? Through this questioning, the Foucaldian perspective of strategic discourse appears "complimentary" to the rational and interpretative concepts of strategy.

Sillince and Simpson are less interested in strategic discourse as a body of knowledge and more interested in how, through rhetoric, strategy and organizational identity mutually transform and evolve over time. The authors observe that research on these two notions was developed autonomously and led to two theoretical problems: contradictory conceptions of the stability/instability of organizational identity and

its role (facilitator vs. inhibitor) in strategic change, and correlatively, the different visions of an actor's capability to consciously modify this identity.

For the authors, escaping these contradictions implies that strategy and organizational identity are viewed as "significant" social practices taking place in conversations among actors. With the rhetorical processes that these conversations activate, the actors are able to reconstruct and reformulate the sense they give to past actions and to imagine new paths; in other words, it activates, in the present, both identity work (linked to the past) and strategic work (linked to the future). Rhetorical processes integrate past and future in that it enables anticipated results to be compared to obtained results, processes that lead us to review the sense given to the past and to envision new actions. Emotions (notably fear) play an essential role in that they bring to the forefront both the past and the future. It is thus through their interactions that the members of the organization work ceaselessly on identity and strategy, integrating that which theory has too often reified and separated.

The third part of the work titled "Perspectives: symbolic resources" considers the capacity of organizations to construct/re-construct the sense of their actions as a source of competitive advantage. Suddaby, Foster and Trank, in a perspective close to that adopted by Sillince and Simpson, argue in favor of a rhetorical concept of history as a source of competitive advantage. While work in strategic management more often sees history as a entrenchment of real facts that constrain or limit the possibilities of action in the organization, historians distinguish these facts that can never be fully captured (i.e., the past) from history itself, as they define history as a temporary consensual interpretation, that is always reconstructed in light of the present.

In this perspective, history can be seen as a highly malleable resource that organizational actors use to generate new interpretations, motivate action and create change. This rhetorical concept of history finds numerous parallels in work on storytelling, memory, forgetting and even organizational identity. However, the authors regret that these contributions have basically neglected the voluntary intervention of organizations in these constructions. The use of historians, the creation of a museum commemorating the enterprise, the development of industrial tourism, all pay witness to what history represents for organizations. By conferring identity and legitimacy to the organization, history constitutes a key strategic resource that the authors invite us to study in more detail.

Dalpiaz, Rindova and Ravasi ask for further study of symbolic and cultural dimensions. For these authors, research on strategic management masks the question of the transformation of an enterprise's resources and capabilities into value for the costumers and the role of perceptions and meanings that clients associate with a product or service. The organization, with its cultural capital, on the one hand, and its symbolic capital, on the other, is likely to influence these meanings as well as its capacity to "realize" value. Cultural capital and symbolic capital are defined and distinguished from more common notions of intellectual, social and reputational capital. Cultural capital includes an ensemble of

cultural resources (knowledge of artistic movements and sociocultural tendencies, in particular) as well as the capacity to exploit them which allows the enterprise to develop original products endowed with new meanings ("fun" products from the furniture manufacturer Alessi, for instance). Symbolic capital is defined as the association of valued sociocultural meanings (status or identity-enhancing) to the product by external stakeholders (Harley-Davidson, as an example). The relationships among the different forms of capital are then described. Relying essentially on examples of European firms within creative industries, the authors point out that strategy develops within a specific sociocultural context to which the enterprise actively contributes through the products or services it offers.

The fourth part of this work called "Application" regroups two empirical studies. The first contribution explores tactics of strategic discourse consumption by managers in three large enterprises. Using de Certeau as inspiration, Suominen and Mantere envision strategy as a body of knowledge consisting of different registers that managers reproduce and use (consume), adapting them to their interests. Through individual interviews, observation and documentary studies, the authors identified five registers or macro-discourses describing strategy and strategic work for managers. These different registers were all present in the three organizations studied, leading the authors to consider that, through their discourse, managers reproduce conceptions and metaphors that are in effect in society.

A deeper analysis of discourse by which managers recount their experiences and practices bring to light three usage tactics of these registers: an "instrumental" tactic in which the manager uses strategic discourse to defend his unit or even mobilize his team; a "playful" tactic in which they mock the discourse and actions taken by management and they seek to create a margin of liberty; an "intimate" tactic where managers use strategic discourse to question and give sense to their existence. For the authors, this study showed that the mechanisms of subjection and equally, subversion are at work in strategic discourses in organizations.

In the following article, Munir, Ansair and Cregg build a critical evaluation of strategies destined for the poorest countries and used by certain multinationals. These so-called "Bottom of the Pyramid" strategies (BoP) are often presented as a means to generate profit and eradicate poverty; however the possibility of simultaneously achieving both has yet to be shown, as is the problem in Corporate Social Responsibility and social entrepreneurship activities. The authors return to the different versions of BoP strategies, exposing successes and failures. In the first versions these strategies rely on the size of the market that is represented by populations whose revenues are less than $2 a day and propose low-cost products or services. This first version is the object of numerous critiques that say it proposes superfluous products and it overestimates the size of the potential market. From that, a second version proposes not to deliver products or services to consumers but to turn them into producers. In spite of this change of perspective, the second version is confronted with other difficulties as it assumes a level of mutual trust

that, in practice, is difficult to attain between multinationals and third world populations. Close examination of the successes and failures of the "BoP" strategies underline the difficulty in identifying their social benefits. The authors suggest placing these strategies in a context of a global value chain. Envisioning their potential benefits by considering the group of actors intervening from conception to distribution of the product or service would possibly allow the identification of the power relationships between the multinationals and the consumer/producers of these poor countries and would underline the role that the state plays in the regulation of this relationship. The potential social benefits of these strategies could be distinguished in function of the type and degree of firms, state and population involvement.

The fifth part of the work, "Genealogies", regroups three historical perspectives in the field of strategy. Djelic and Durand propose a contextual and genealogical analysis of the mechanisms of selection. Harkening back to Weber, they emphasize that other forms of selection can be identified along with a Darwinian version: strategic selection that is essentially defined by the power that certain actors have (large national groups, specifically) to influence the selection mechanism themselves (government policy, for example) and institutional selection, where insertion in a socio-economic network and the ability of actions to conform to the cultural and social norms in place, constitute the key criteria. One or the other of these mechanisms will predominate at a given time or place in function of the underlying cultural frameworks installed (which the authors call the "embedded rationalities"), predominance giving way to specific competitive configurations and performance levels. The authors illustrate this by comparing the "rationalities" in place in the United States and in France. This analysis calls for a contextual and historical reading of the value of the resources that the enterprise possesses, the success and failures of different entrepreneurial forms, the mechanisms at work in the ecology of populations and the process by which "embedded rationalities" are transformed.

The following chapter goes back to the origins of the notion of competitive advantage and, more broadly, to the affiliations and foundations of the modern versions embodied by Penrose, Schumpeter and Porter. Powell, Rahman and Starbuck point out that the notion of competitive advantage is owed to certain economists who opposed the mathematical models that were wide-spread in the 19th century. The English economist Hobson introduced this notion in 1904, emphasizing that entrepreneurs seek to preserve an advantage because the earnings from competitive advantage exceed those that may be achieved by instituting change. By their behaviors, entrepreneurs can reduce competition so that the markets only rarely resemble the pure and perfect competitive situations or the monopolies that economists study. Hobson, who saw in competitive advantage a source of social inequality, will eventually fall into oblivion, but his hypotheses are largely shared within the field of strategic management. The authors then researched the major influences on Penrose, Schumpeter and Porter through their thesis directors (and, in turn, their thesis directors) and the authors cited in their work. This investigation principally showed the stamp of

the Austrian school on our three “pillars”. Carl Menger, founder of this school, directed Wieser, who would be the future director of Hayek and Böhm-Bawerck, who was the director of Schumpeter and Mises. This latter connects Penrose and Porter in that Mises will direct the doctoral work of their directors. The authors also point out that in spite of the influence of German historians on certain American researchers from Harvard, as well as, the contributions of Chicago and Cambridge in the study of monopolistic competition, it is the Austrian roots in strategic management that should be retained.

In the following chapter, Ortmann and Seidl highlight the specifics of German research in strategic management. Unlike North American research, German research principally targets the relationship of the organization with its environment. To do this, they take inspiration from the works of Habermas, Luhman, the Austrian School and to a lesser degree, Giddens and Derrida. Beyond this diversity of inspirations, the research conducted in Germany sees strategic management as an organizing/organized process, a conception that both relies on, and develops, a vision of society. The thinking is anchored in a few general principals, from which the modalities of functioning and propositions for action are deduced and that, for the most part, uncover paradoxes. Linked to a university system that values essentially theoretical and general knowledge in management, Ortmann and Seidl regret that that these particularities are apt to dissolve as German universities adopt the evaluation criteria used by large international organisms.

The final part of this work regroups two methodological contributions. Understanding the accreditation agencies and public policy requirements for research impact, Antonacopoulou and Balogun placed this issue in the “rigor/relevance” research debate. They call for engaged (Van de Ven, 2007) or relational (Bartunek, 2007) research, however the incidences and potential contributions of collaborative research has not been fully explored. The impact of collaborative research should not be uniquely seen in terms of its results; the learning that occurs for the practitioners and researchers must also be taken into account. Collaborative research is a process of coproduction that assumes not only the establishment of mutual trust but also a questioning of the research practices themselves. This transformation calls for a modification of recruitment policies, training, remuneration of researchers and, ultimately, their identity.

In the last chapter, Samra-Fredericks brings to light a different form of reflection. Beginning with a quote from Evans-Pritchard where it is said that what one takes from a field of research depends on what is put into it, the author suggests that we think about the incidences of “I” on the process and results of research. She views the “I” on two levels. First of all, the “I” is a member of an epistemic and theoretical community, which by adopting or differentiating oneself from the norms of its community (post-positivist paradigm in strategic management research) participates, or not, in field reproduction. While the constructivist perspective leads us to question the current concepts and classifications that affect our way of reading reality, they remain silent about this “I” whose choices reflect its belonging to a particular social

and epistemic community. Following Johnson and Duberley (2003), Samra-Fredericks thus steers us to exert epistemic reflexivity in order to contextualize our choices and the results obtained. Secondly, the "I" and its view of the world are also formed by personal history. Through four biographical extracts, the author illustrates how certain elements of one's history can shape choices and references in terms of research. She thus calls for this double reflexivity in order to reveal the hand of the researcher in his productions, uncovering both the fragility of obtained results and the responsibility of the researcher in their production.

THE POWER OF A "EUROPEAN" STRATEGIC DISCOURSE

Baum and Lampel principally accentuate the diversity of perspectives proposed by the contributions assembled here, leaving us to think that European opposition to the North American school of thought expresses a form of anomie. In counterpoint to this perspective, we wish to present here what, in our opinion, appears to link these works.

What strikes us immediately is the insistence of the different contributors on the centrality of strategic discourse and its performative dimension. Whether it is seen as a body of knowledge or "savoir" (Hatchuel et al.; Vaara; Suominen & Mantere; Ezzamel & Willmott), a narrative on what will be or has been the organization (Vaara; Suddaby et al.), or the set of rhetorical processes at work during conversations and interactions among the members of the organization (Samra-Fredericks; Sillince & Simpson), strategic discourse has power effects: it shapes our way of reading reality, a reading that is reproduced and legitimized when put into use; it defines "subject positions", attributing differentiated rights to speaking subjects and, from that, social identities (Ezzamel & Willmott; Vaara). As the vehicle for sociocultural meanings which may bring value to the client (Dalpiaz et al.), as an expression of organizational identity, continuity, and coherence in action (Suddaby et al.), strategic discourse can be the source of competitive advantage.

This performative dimension of strategic discourse is not limited to enterprises but also affects the academic world itself. It is the power of discourse that Powell et al. reveal when they highlight the fact that we owe strategic management's key concepts and hypotheses to several heterodox economists of the 19th century (Europeans moreover) and it is in some way this power of concept and classification that Samra-Fredericks warns against when she calls for epistemic reflexivity.

Although a number of the contributions share a vision of strategic discourse as a mechanism of reproduction and even subjection, some underline the fact that this power does not take away all possibility of discourse transformation or even innovation: that it is the result of simple subversion when managers divert the organization's current strategic discourse to serve their own interests; a reconstruction of the past (Suddaby et al.) and/or the future through conversations that activate rhetorical work (Sillince & Simpson); or even the innovations

that concepts and knowledge generate (Hatchel et al.).

It is Foucault's sense of the power of discourse that is in question here: a "productive" power that forms, deforms and transforms. Certainly all contributors are not renouncing the idea of a subject's intentionality. Powell et al. and Suominen and Mantere emphasize the plasticity of strategic discourse, a discourse that directors and managers work on, or use, in function of their objectives or interests. It is important, however, to separate the multiple and varied manifestations of these discourses from the rules of enunciation that are without a doubt more stable and more restricted than the manifestations which obey them (Foucault, 1991). If certain works (see Vaara) emphasize the possibility for the actors to resist or go against strategic discourses coming from management, Ezzamel and Willmott remind us, that according to Foucault, these particular capacities are limited because discourse hides its rules of formation and so appears "rational" and because it is often linked to daily, insignificant notions and practices. It is perhaps for that reason that Hatchuel et al. have chosen the discourse of design and engineering rather than that of strategy to imagine other ways of conceiving the strategic process.

If strategic discourse possesses productive power, it is because it is anchored in material techniques and methods – those that Foucault (1991) calls the group of "extra-discursive" conditions. A number of the contributions gathered for this work bring to light the importance of performativity of discourse, the relationships among strategic discourse and management techniques and the organization's methods for productive activities. Strategic discourse is sometimes seen as one of the conditions for the implementations of techniques or forms of organization. Ezzamel and Willmott highlight how strategic discourse can simultaneously justify the resizing of an enterprise's activities and the implementation of new methods of management control. In parallel , Hatchuel et al. show how new concepts are apt to challenge the company's knowledge base and may, in consequence, initiate new methods of cooperation both within and outside of the organization. Finally at the societal level, Djelic and Durand stress the pervasiveness of embedded rationalities (or the episteme of a society) in longevity of specific competitive configurations.

Symmetrically, these management techniques and organizational methods in some way embody the principles and rules of discourse enunciation and with that, provide solidity and stability. Ortmann and Seidl, Antonocopoulou and Balogun point out here the impact of recruitment methods, training and promotion on developed theories and knowledge, in other words, on academic discourse itself.

It is the relationships (consonant, dissonant) between the methods and techniques (in particular what they value, encourage and enable us to "see") and the discourses that allow one among them to acquire the status of "knowledge". In this perspective, Munir et al. note that the social benefits of BoP strategies will only happen when the latter are understood within the framework of the power relationships among actors in the Global Value Chains (multinational corporations, third world developing nations, NGO, government).

Through the importance accorded to discourse on the one hand, and their relationships to the material dimensions of organized life on the other, it appears to us that the contributions assembled here lead us to perceive strategic management as a particular form of governmentality: a specific arrangement between a body of knowledge and the organized/organizing techniques and methods that embody, nourish, reinforce, legitimize and contest this knowledge; an arrangement that, by its complexity and uncertain character, distances us from the sovereign conception of strategy that is the base of the field's orthodoxy.

Research conducted in strategic management, even when inspired by interpretivism, tends to reduce the explanation of the strategic process or actions to an intentionality of the actor who would always be capable of manipulating or bending the rules towards his own ends (Allard-Poesi, 2010). Conceiving strategic management as a "complex arrangement" pushes us to consider the hand of the subject-strategist as "formed", to a great degree, by this arrangement and the knowledge that characterizes it, a hand whose influence on words and things is an effect of the words and things themselves (for an idea close to this, see Ezzamel & Willmott).

If the various perspectives presented here differ from North American orthodoxy, it is because not only do these perspectives reject the post-positivist ambitions and hypotheses (Baum & Lampel), but also prefer constructivist hypotheses. Certainly, Ezzamel and Willmott point out, constructivism takes many forms, from simple interpretativism to what they call "strong constructivism" in which the subject himself, his identity and intentions are seen as historically constituted by the body of knowledge that the subject adheres to[2] (see Rose, 1999). However, these constructivisms recognize all socio-historical inscriptions and the uncertain character of strategic management discourse and practices, as well as of the knowledge that we are capable of elaborating on strategy. This recognition calls for the practitioner and researcher himself to have a certain humility vis-à-vis their possible impact on the world.

The different dimensions brought to light through this analysis show, in our opinion, if not the existence of "counter-norms" at least attractors. It is relatively easy to reveal certain lacks in this and we can suggest certain avenues for further research that appear fruitful to pursue.

A number of researchers today recognize in strategic management the status of knowledge, or a body of knowledge, as these discourses share a certain number of rules of enunciation. The archaeology of knowledge, in other words, the uncovering of these rules, remains to be done. The works of Knights and Morgan (1991; 1995), Lilley (2001), Huault and Perret (2009) are precious help towards the achievement of this goal.

While the material dimensions of strategic practices (the role of diagnosis models and tools, meeting organization, for example) have become the objects of growing interest for management researchers (in particular those inscribed in the strategy-as-practice approach, see Jarzabkowski & Kaplan), research seeking to identify these aspects

2. We note here that the constructivism evoked by Ezzamel and Willmott is clearly different from the French version in which social construction of reality results, in the final picture, from the objectives and intentions of the actors (be they practitioners or researchers, see Girod-Séville & Perret, 2007).

and their articulation with strategic discourse remains few – and above all, by researchers in information systems and management control. What is the relationship between discourse and methods of control and information at work both within, and outside of, the organization? To what extent do these methods, that allow us to see the activities of the organization and its environment, affect the perception brought to bear on these activities and, in return, the strategic discourses themselves?

In a similar vein, strategic discourse is fed by other discourse and knowledge (for military, see Knights & Morgan, 1991; accounting, see Hoskin, Macve & Stone, 2006; managerial, see Rose, 1999; economics, see Hatchuel et al., sociological, etc.). What are the incidences of these different types of "knowledge" on the field and on its transformation? To what extent is strategic knowledge affecting other management knowledge?

These questions call upon the field of strategic management to open up to, and be fed by, other management knowledge (in human resources, information systems, finance, management control). As a hallmark of European heterodoxy, we must recognize the care that the contributors to this work have taken to anchor their comprehension of strategic management in larger knowledge bases (philosophy and sociology, in particular), which has permitted them some distance with their object. References to work being done in sister disciplines are still rare[3], and for a field of research supposedly considered "transversal", this is all the more regrettable.

The call for greater transversality will not, without a doubt, greatly facilitate an Atlantic crossing but, instead, may reinforce this "European identity" that we have chosen to sketch out here.

3. The contributions of Dalpiaz et al. (references in marketing), Ezzamel and Willmott (references in management control) are the exception.

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