The Enactment of Power within Strategic Interactions:

A Saudi Arabian Case Study

Submitted by Haneen Mohammad Shoaib to the University of Exeter

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Signature: .................................................................
I dedicate this Phd thesis to my lovely parents, Dr. Mohammad Shoaib and Wedad Dahlan, along with my loving Uncle Dr. Abdullah Dahlan and the soul of my late grandfather Sadeq Dahlan.
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The Enactment of Power within Strategic Interactions: A Saudi Arabian Case Study

Abstract
This thesis contributes to the field of strategy-as-practice by developing understanding of the enacted performance of power within strategic interactions, an area that is underdeveloped. This is addressed by voicing the silences within the field of strategy-as-practice using an organisational studies lens. The study investigates the macro-influences of power, gender, body, culture, and Westernisation on micro-strategising activities and is based on an empirical cross-cultural study of a Saudi Arabian business college.

The strategy-as-practice approach faces the challenge of balancing a focus on the specified actions of individuals and remaining aware of the social influences that govern them. This study complements linguistic approaches to understanding strategy with an embodied socially enacted dramaturgical approach to strategy analysis. Dramaturgy is the theoretical and methodological framework used to focus on micro-face-to-face interactions of strategists, complemented by frame analysis which enables investigation of macro-level aspects of analysis at the meso-organisational level.

The analysis focuses on two main areas: first it explores the embodied gendered aspects of strategising, which have previously been marginalised within the field. This analysis shows how the doing and undoing of gender on a managerial level in mixed-gender strategic interactions reflects the values that govern the family context, maintaining traditional values and often constraining women from assuming active roles as participants in strategising. Second, it analyses the tensions that arise between the clash of modernity and tradition by the adoption of international/Western management
practices. These institutional influences create conflicts within strategists’ scripts when tradition encounters modernity in confronting a significant aspect of the Arab struggle. This analysis focuses on the importance of adopting a multi-level of analysis that acknowledges both structure and agency within strategising contexts. It also considers the importance of adopting a different type of ethics that is more sensitive to the particularities of caring for the ‘other’.

**Key Words:** strategy-as-practice, dramaturgy, frame analysis, Goffman, power, culture, gender, Westernisation, modernity, tradition, embodiment, silences
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