STRATEGOS

Basics of Strategy:
Theory and Practice

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine how traditional military strategy theories align with contemporary challenges in national defense by comparing the views of selected strategy theorists. The analysis will focus on how these theorists define the features of strategy, its purpose and significance, the different levels of strategy, and the influence of these theories on decision-making. It describes the evolution of strategy as a concept and theory, offering several definitions in the field of military strategy and the field of business strategy. It also analyses eight selected features of strategy that provide a theoretical framework and describe what strategy is and what constitutes a quality strategy. Furthermore, it outlines the purpose of strategy as a planning tool and the reasons for its importance. The characteristics and distinctions between the two levels of strategy in military and political terms are analysed. Since The main purpose of a strategy is to provide a clear and focused plan for accomplishing long-term goals and objectives. It serves as a roadmap that guides decision-making, resource allocation, and actions in a way that aligns with the overall vision of an organization, business, or individual. In conclusion, the need for modern strategies is identified, and the direction they should take is discussed.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

The theory of strategy encompasses various aspects of decision-making and planning, ranging from military and political plans to business operations. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles and concepts that guide strategic thinking and action across multiple areas. While business strategy has traditionally been the focus of strategic analysis, the significance of military and political strategies cannot be overlooked, as they shape the course of history and influence the outcomes of conflicts and negotiations.

In business, the theory of strategy provides a framework that allows organizations to navigate complex, competitive environments successfully and achieve sustainable success. It involves identifying long-term goals, analysing the internal and external environment, and formulating action plans to gain an advantage. By studying and applying strategic principles, companies can enhance their ability to adapt to changing market conditions, make informed decisions, and anticipate and respond to the challenges and opportunities of a dynamic market.

However, the strategy theory extends beyond the business. It has its roots in military strategy, which has been a key aspect of warfare and conflict resolution for centuries. Military strategy deals with the planning and execution of military operations, the allocation of resources, and the use of tactics and maneuvers to achieve specific objectives. It involves assessing the enemy, exploiting vulnerabilities, and applying countermeasures to ensure victory. Understanding military strategy and the lessons derived from historical conflicts can provide valuable insights into the nature of strategic decision-making and the complexities of the human and organizational dynamics involved.

Furthermore, the field of political strategy is of exceptional importance, as it involves formulating and implementing policies and managing relationships and interactions to achieve political goals. Political strategy encompasses the art of negotiation, the use of power dynamics, and the ability to influence and persuade key stakeholders. It plays a crucial role in governing nations,

resolving conflicts, and advancing national interests. By studying political strategy, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of the decision-making process in this area and the potential implications for societies as a whole.

The theory of strategy encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including business, military, and political strategies. By examining the principles and concepts that underpin strategic decision-making in these fields, we can gain valuable insights into the complexities of planning, execution, and achieving desired outcomes. Understanding the theory of strategy allows us to develop a comprehensive perspective on the dynamics of strategic thinking and action, allowing us to make informed and effective decisions.

2. Development and definitions

To gain an initial understanding of the theoretical framework of strategy, it is necessary to first describe the development of the concept of strategy, specifically what it used to mean, how it evolved, and what it represents today. This chapter also provides several different definitions of strategy from various perspectives, considering the broad meaning the term has acquired over time.

2.1. Evolution of the Concept of Strategy

The strategy concept has a long and diverse history spanning several millennia. Rooted in the military, the term "strategy" gradually expanded its scope and found application in various fields, including economics, politics, and sports. Over the centuries, its meaning has evolved and broadened to encompass a broader range of areas, influencing our understanding and application of strategy in different contexts. Today, it represents a critical element of success for organizations and individuals.

The origin of the term "strategy" can be traced back to ancient Greece (i.e. *Strategos*). With their city-states and frequent warfare, the Greeks recognised the importance of developing plans and tactics to win battles. The earliest

recorded use of the term "strategy" dates back to the time of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). The word "strategy" in more recent times came into use in discussions of military affairs in Europe during the 1770s, but it was not until the 20th century that it acquired the broad meanings that are now attributed to it and tend to be applied retrospectively to refer to past practitioners.

Sun Tzu's book *The Art of War* is one of the earliest examples of applied strategy. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the enemy, using deception, exploiting weaknesses, and meticulous planning and espionage to achieve victory. Similarly, Chanakya's works included ideas on statecraft, economics, diplomacy, and military strategy. During the Roman Empire, the concept of "strategy" spread beyond the military domain. Cicero, a Roman statesman and philosopher, used it to describe an overall plan of action that needed to be followed in political and legal matters.

Strategy has continued to evolve and find its place in various disciplines. During the Renaissance, Machiavelli (1469–1527) elaborated on the strategic principles required for political leadership, including the art of wielding and maintaining power.

Clausewitz, a Prussian general, made further contributions to the development of strategic thinking. He emphasized the central role of politics in defining military objectives and articulated the concept of the "center of gravity" as a critical factor in a nation's military success. The term *Schwerpunkt*, from which the COG concept was derived, literally means "weight (or focus) of effort." When reevaluating center of gravity as an underpinning of doctrine, it is important to observe that the original *Schwerpunkt* concept is actually closer in meaning to what the U.S. military now calls the "sector of main effort" and the "point of main attack" (defense)". (Vego, 2007)

Over time, the application of strategic thinking expanded beyond the military context and became relevant in other areas. The Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism in the 19th century paved the way for the emergence of strategic management in the business world. In the second half of the 20th century, strategy became an essential concept in business management. The Industrial Revolution and the subsequent rise of large corporations required executives to plan and organise activities to remain competitive.

Chandler argued that strategy developed as a response to the complexities and challenges arising from the increased volume and scope of industrial companies. (Chandler, 1962)

Academics and practitioners such as Ansoff, Porter, and Mintzberg contributed significantly to the advancement of strategic management. In the 1960s, Ansoff introduced the concept of strategic planning, emphasizing the importance of aligning a company's internal resources and capabilities with external opportunities. (Ansoff, 1988) Porter made a significant contribution to understanding strategy by emphasizing the importance of analyzing industry dynamics in order to identify sources of competitive advantage and develop effective strategies. (Porter, 1980)

Unlike Ansoff and Porter, theorist Mintzberg took a more descriptive approach to strategy, rejecting the notion of strategy as a formal, planned process. He underscored the importance of understanding how organizations develop and adapt strategies in real-world situations, introducing concepts such as "emergent strategy" and "strategy in practice" and advocating for a holistic view of strategy. (Mintzberg, 1994)

Alongside advancements in military and business strategies, the concept began to gain importance in academia. Scholars from various disciplines, such as sociology, political science, and psychology, began to investigate the concept of strategy within their respective fields, with game theory emerging as another significant domain where the term proved to be relevant. Game theory, developed in the mid-20th century by mathematicians such as Von Neumann and Morgenstern, focuses on the analysis of decision-making processes when multiple parties interact and make decisions. Schelling, a particularly influential economist and game theorist, introduced the concept of strategy to game theory. Schelling emphasized the importance of strategic thinking, decision-making, and anticipating the moves of others in order to achieve desired outcomes. Strategies play a key role in game theory because they determine optimal outcomes and helping individuals or organizations gain an advantage over competitors.

The First and Second World Wars highlighted the need for comprehensive and flexible planning in warfare. To outmanoeuvre the enemy, innovative

strategic thinking was required when using new technologies such as tanks, aircraft, and submarines. This resulted in the establishment of formal military academies, where officers received training in strategy and military operations.

In the late 20th century and early 21st century, strategy gained further prominence as the world became increasingly interconnected and globalized. With the increased complexity of organizations, it became clear that a well-defined strategy was necessary to successfully manage this new environment.

Over the centuries, the term "strategy" has evolved and broadened its meaning, now encompassing a wide range of disciplines and applications that adapt to the complexities and demands of various domains. It originated in the art of war and tactics and has since become a fundamental concept in a variety of fields, including business management, politics, sports, and even everyday decision-making. Each context brings its unique nuances and perspectives, shaping the understanding and application of strategy.

2.2. Definitions of Strategy

In theory, there are multiple definitions of strategy. Here, the definitions of prominent authors in the field of military strategy are highlighted, beginning with the classic Clausewitz. Several definitions are presented here that clearly illustrate the specifics of military strategy, as well as some differences that reflect the evolution of warfare throughout history. Furthermore, three definitions of strategy from authors in the field of business strategy are emphasized, which provide a good overview from a business perspective while also having interesting differences and, to a certain extent, even contrasting views.

Clausewitz defines strategy as the use of battles to achieve the objectives of a campaign, and, by extension, the goals of war. He emphasizes that strategy is the bridge between politics and military actions, serving as the link between a nation's political goals and the military actions required to achieve them. (Clausewitz, 1984)

Howard defines strategy as a means of achieving specific objectives in conflict or wartime. He states that strategy involves the planning and execution of military operations to attain these objectives, while taking into account the available resources and the constraints imposed by the political, economic, and social dimensions of warfare. (Howard, 1984)

Liddell Hart defines strategy as the art of distributing and applying military means to achieve political objectives. (Liddell Hart, 1991)

Rumelt defines strategy as a specific type of problem-solving procedure. He argues that a good strategy consists of three essential elements: a diagnosis of the key challenge or problem, a policy to guide the approach to that challenge, and a coherent set of actions to implement that policy. (Rumelt, 2011)

Porter offers a comprehensive definition and framework for understanding strategy. Strategy is not merely a set of goals or plans; it is a distinct and unique approach to gaining competitive advantage in a particular market or industry. (Porter, 1996)

Mintzberg defines strategy as a pattern in a series of decisions. He argues that strategy is not the result of a detailed plan or a deliberate decision-making process but rather develops over time through a series of interconnected actions and reactions within the organization. (Mintzberg, 1987)

Strategy is a pattern in a series of decisions that evolves over time as a result of actions, reactions, and adaptations. It is not a fixed plan, but rather a dynamic and evolving concept that requires continuous learning and adjustment. Understanding and analysing these patterns allows organizations to better shape and adapt their strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. (Mintzberg, 1987)

3. Features of strategy

Strategy, unlike other planning and organizational elements, has distinct characteristics that describe its nature, purpose, and development. These features can also serve as benchmarks for the quality of a strategy, helping to predict its effectiveness.

3.1. Goal-oriented

"Goal-oriented" is one of the main features of strategy that leading authors in the field have extensively discussed and researched. Strategic goals provide a clear vision and direction for an organization, directing its actions and decisions toward desired outcomes.

Porter asserts that strategy involves making choices to establish a unique and valuable position for an organization, with goals being at the heart of this decision-making process. He suggests that organizations should set clear goals to define the scope of their strategic activities and align their resources accordingly. Establishing explicit goals allows organizations to focus their efforts on achieving specific outcomes and track their progress along the way. (Porter, 1980)

Similarly, Mintzberg criticizes the traditional view of strategy as a formalized, linear process, proposing a more emergent perspective. He argues that strategies frequently result from a combination of intentions and evolving circumstances. Without clear goals, organizations risk becoming reactive and losing direction. (Mintzberg, 1994)

Drucker, another influential figure in management, emphasizes the importance of goal orientation in strategy. He argues that the main purpose of strategy is to transform an organization's potential into concrete results. Drucker suggests that organizations should have a clear understanding of what they want to achieve and establish meaningful goals that contribute to their overall mission. He emphasizes the importance of setting measurable goals that can be broken down into specific actions and responsibilities. These goals provide a sense of purpose and direction, motivating individuals and teams within the organization to collaborate on a common vision. (Drucker, 1975)

Furthermore, Rumelt argues that a good strategy is inherently goal-oriented. He emphasizes that setting clear and compelling goals is among the key components of an effective strategy. Rumelt suggests that goals must be specific, challenging, and focused on identifying and leveraging key sources of advantage. He emphasizes the importance of aligning goals with the

organization's internal capabilities and external environment, which allows for strategic coherence and long-term success. (Rumelt, 2011)

In conclusion, the concept of goal orientation is a critical feature of strategy. Establishing clear goals provides an organization with a sense of direction, guiding its actions and decisions toward the desired outcomes. Goal orientation allows organizations to effectively allocate resources, motivate their members, and adapt to changing circumstances, ultimately resulting in better implementation and long-term success.

3.2. Proactive Approach

A proactive approach is a prominent feature of strategy that has been analysed by leading authors across various fields, including business strategy, military strategy, and organizational theory. This concept entails developing effective plans and actions by anticipating future scenarios, challenges, and opportunities that exist beyond the current state of affairs. Organizations and military leaders can gain an advantage, overcome obstacles, and achieve desired results by anticipating what lies ahead.

Porter argues that a successful strategy in the business world involves predicting industry trends, technological advancements, and competitive activities before they emerge. In this way, companies can position themselves favorably in the market by staying ahead of the competition and adapting to changes in a proactive manner. According to Porter, companies must not only analyze their current market position but also foresee future industry trends in order to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Likewise, truly effective strategy considers both the present and the future, allowing companies to shape their competitive environment proactively rather than reactively. This forward-looking mindset allows organizations to make informed decisions and efficiently allocate resources, leading to a sustainable competitive edge. (Porter, 1980)

Rumelt emphasizes the need for proactive thinking in developing effective strategies and asserts that strategy should involve identifying and capitalizing on critical opportunities in the future environment. With a

deep understanding of the external environment, potential disruptions, and emerging opportunities, leaders can steer their organizations toward success. Rumelt highlights the role of fundamental strategies that are simple, clear, and provide a comprehensive view of the organization's goals and actions for the future. (Rumelt, 2011)

The importance of a proactive approach extends beyond the business realm. Military strategists have long recognised the significance of anticipating future scenarios and planning accordingly. Clausewitz emphasized the need to account for the dynamic nature of warfare. He argued that military strategy must be based on a deep understanding of the geopolitical environment, considering not only current circumstances but also future possibilities. Commanders must be able to anticipate the moves of their adversaries and plan accordingly to gain an advantage in battle. The essence lies in the fact that war is an area of uncertainty, as three-quarters of the factors upon which actions in war are based are shrouded in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty. (Clausewitz, 1984)

Another influential military strategist, Gray, stressed the need for a proactive approach in military planning, stating that strategists must anticipate and consider the future security environment, technological advancements, and geopolitical trends. By visualising future conflict scenarios, military strategists can generate a range of options, avoiding a reactive or shortsighted approach. Gray emphasized the importance of strategic foresight, explicitly linking it to the concept of a forward-looking perspective. (Gray, 1999)

Scholars in organizational theory also highlight the proactive approach and its importance in effective management and leadership of organizations. Hersey and Blanchard discussed the concept of visionary leadership, arguing that leaders should possess a future-oriented perspective to inspire and motivate their subordinates. Leaders can align and energise their teams around a common goal by expressing a compelling vision of the future, guiding them confidently through uncertainties and achieving higher levels of performance. (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988)

Hamel also argued that strategic plans should prioritize advancement rather than merely protecting existing positions. He developed the concept of

strategic intent, which emphasizes setting ambitious goals and visualising the organization's future position. Hamel highlighted the need for organizations to anticipate and capitalise on future trends, investments, and technologies to create revolutionary strategies that can disrupt industries and transform business practices. (Hamel, 1996)

Various studies and articles further affirm the importance of a proactive approach in strategy. According to Ancona and Bresman, successful strategies require the ability to anticipate and adapt to changing market conditions. Their research suggests that organizations with proactive strategies are more likely to succeed in volatile and uncertain environments. (Ancona & Bresman, 2007)

As a final point, the characteristic of a proactive approach is a fundamental feature of strategy across various fields, including business, military, and organizational theory. Organizations can gain a competitive advantage by adopting a forward-looking perspective, while military strategists can respond proactively to conflict dynamics as they evolve. Leaders across all areas can leverage the insights provided by these influential authors to adopt a future-oriented perspective and navigate the complex challenges of strategy successfully.

3.3. Comprehensiveness

A comprehensive or holistic strategy is widely regarded as one of the main features of successful strategic planning and implementation. This approach considers all relevant factors and possible scenarios to develop a multi-layered, all-encompassing strategy that maximizes the chances of achieving long-term goals. Comprehensive strategy is frequently associated with political and military contexts, where its application is critical to achieving desired outcomes in complex and dynamic environments.

Clausewitz emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive strategy in warfare. According to him, strategy is the coherent direction of military activities to achieve national political objectives. He argues that a successful strategy requires a deep understanding of the complex interplay between political,

military, and social factors. This understanding is essential for developing a comprehensive approach that encompasses all aspects of conflict. His ideas emphasize the importance of considering not only military but also political, social, and economic factors when developing a strategy. (Clausewitz, 1984)

In the political domain, a comprehensive strategy is equally important. Neustadt and May argue that comprehensive strategic planning is crucial in political decision-making. They recommend that decision-makers adopt a broad perspective that considers context, past experiences, and the potential consequences of their actions. Political decision-makers can develop strategies that anticipate challenges and adapt as needed by taking into account a variety of factors and scenarios. This approach promotes effective decision-making and increases the likelihood of success in complex political environments. (Neustadt & May, 1988)

A comprehensive strategy involves addressing long-term goals while simultaneously addressing immediate challenges. Heuser discusses the value of balancing immediate concerns with long-term objectives. A comprehensive strategy requires an understanding of the broader context and the potential implications of actions. It involves making decisions and adjustments that align with long-term goals, even if they do not provide immediate benefits. A comprehensive strategy enables decision-makers to navigate complex situations and achieve sustainable results by integrating short-term and long-term considerations. (Heuser, 2010)

Brzezinski, a political strategist, emphasized the importance of comprehensiveness in the development of effective national strategies. He argues that a comprehensive strategy must take into account multiple dimensions, such as geography, culture, history, and demographics. He highlights the need to consider regional dynamics, alliances, and potential threats when developing a coherent and integrated geopolitical strategy. (Brzezinski, 2016)

A comprehensive strategy is an essential aspect of successful strategic planning and implementation in both political and military settings. It involves considering all relevant factors and potential scenarios to develop a multi-layered, all-encompassing strategy that increases the likelihood of

achieving long-term goals. It requires a deep understanding of the complex interdependence of political, military, and social factors, as well as the integration and coordination of various elements to achieve a common objective. A comprehensive strategy combines both proactive and reactive measures, striking a balance between immediate concerns and long-term goals. Decision-makers can navigate complex environments, anticipate challenges, and increase their chances of success by taking a comprehensive approach and taking into account a wide range of variables. In today's rapidly changing world, a comprehensive strategy is crucial for achieving desired results and ensuring sustainability in the face of uncertainty.

3.4. Resource allocation

Resource allocation is one of the key factors shaping strategy and determining an organization's success or failure. It is the process of distributing resources such as time, money, personnel, and equipment to achieve the overall goals of the organization. This allocation of resources is a critical decision-making process that requires careful analysis and consideration.

Porter emphasizes the importance of resource allocation, arguing that strategy is fundamentally about making choices, with resource allocation serving as the ultimate expression of those choices. He believes that the ability to prioritise and allocate resources in a way that creates a sustainable competitive advantage is critical to a successful strategy. Porter's resource-based approach to strategy highlights the importance of aligning resources with the organization's unique capabilities in order to differentiate itself from competitors and achieve outstanding results. (Porter, 1980)

Mintzberg challenges the traditional view of strategy as a deliberate, hierarchical process and proposes a new perspective. He claims that strategy is a complex, non-hierarchical, iterative process that requires continuous resource allocation. He suggests that resource allocation is a dynamic and ongoing activity driven by the internal and external realities of the organization, as well as the actions of competitors. His perspective underscores the value of flexibility and adaptability in resource allocation, allowing organizations to respond to changing circumstances and capitalize on emerging opportunities. (Mintzberg, 1994)

Moving on to military strategy, Clausewitz offers valuable insights into the role of resource allocation in warfare. He emphasizes the significance of proper resource allocation in achieving victory in military campaigns. He argues that the allocation of resources, including troops, supplies, and intelligence, must be aligned with military objectives and the overall strategic plan. Clausewitz highlights the interconnection between resource allocation and risk assessment, stressing the need to balance potential gains with the costs and risks involved. His work underscores the criticality of resource allocation in military strategy, where the stakes are often high and the consequences of misallocation can be disastrous. (Clausewitz, 1984)

Within the discipline of political strategy, resource allocation is of utmost importance. Bueno de Mesquita and Smith provide insights into the political strategy of resource distribution. They argue that political leaders – whether dictators or democratically elected officials – prioritize allocating resources to maintain and consolidate their power. According to them, political leaders distribute resources to their key supporters and allies, ensuring their loyalty and support. Thus, resource allocation becomes a strategic tool for political leaders to sustain their power and influence. (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2012)

Machiavelli's work provides valuable insights into the role of resource allocation in political strategy, as well as an exploration of the strategies used by successful political leaders to acquire and maintain power. He argues that resource allocation, particularly in the form of patronage, is a critical tool for political leaders securing the loyalty and support of their allies and subjects. Machiavelli emphasizes the importance of political leaders carefully managing the distribution of resources, balancing the interests of various stakeholders while maintaining a perception of fairness and justice. His work illustrates the strategic implications of resource allocation in politics, where the distribution of resources can shape power dynamics and state stability. (Machiavelli, 1998)

To sum up, resource allocation is a central feature of strategy, and the perspectives of leading authors on military and political strategy provide valuable insights into the significance of this concept. The aforementioned

authors explore the role of resource allocation in the context of strategy, highlighting the need for strategic alignment of resources, flexibility in distribution, and careful resource management in achieving competitive advantage, military victory, and political power. Understanding and effectively applying resource allocation strategies can help organizations and individuals enhance their ability to achieve their goals and succeed in their respective fields.

3.5. Action-oriented

An action-oriented approach is a key feature of strategy, emphasizing the importance of taking decisive and proactive steps to achieve desired results. This approach emphasizes the importance of effectively implementing and executing strategic plans, ensuring that actions are in line with overall strategic objectives.

Boyd, a renowned military strategist, introduced the concept of the OODA loop, which stands for Observation, Orientation, Decision, and Action. Boyd emphasizes the importance of swift and decisive action, arguing that the ability to quickly process and respond to changing circumstances is critical to gaining a competitive advantage. He believed that the ability to outmaneuver opponents and disrupt their decision-making processes through rapid and unpredictable actions is key to achieving victory. Boyd's OODA loop framework has since gained widespread adoption and application, not only in military strategy but also in a variety of other fields such as business and sports. (Boyd, 2018)

Liddell Hart, a military historian and theorist, emphasized the importance of assuming an indirect approach and exploiting the vulnerabilities of the opponent. He argued that the most effective strategy avoids direct, forceful confrontation and instead seeks to achieve objectives through indirect and innovative means. Instead of engaging in frontal conflicts, he believed that the key to success was to surprise and outmanoeuvre the opponent. His emphasis on the indirect approach and the importance of manoeuvring is consistent with the nature of an action-oriented strategy, as it promotes the idea of taking decisive measures to gain an advantage. (Liddell Hart, 1991)

Luttwak, a prominent political scientist and strategist, has made significant contributions to the understanding of strategy in both military and political contexts. He emphasizes the importance of an action-oriented strategy and the need to exploit opportunities and vulnerabilities to achieve desired outcomes. He argues that strategy should focus on achieving decisive and swift results rather than getting entangled in prolonged conflicts. Luttwak advocates the use of surprise, deception, and unconventional tactics to disrupt the opponent's plans and gain a strategic advantage. His approach aligns with the action-oriented nature of strategy, as it underscores the need for proactive and decisive actions to achieve success. (Luttwak, 2002)

Finally, the concept of being action-oriented is a key element of an effective strategy. Boyd, Liddell Hart, and Luttwak highlight the importance of taking decisive and proactive measures to achieve desired outcomes. Whether it is Boyd's OODA loop, Liddell Hart's indirect approach, or Luttwak's focus on exploiting opportunities, these strategists emphasize the need of responding rapidly to changing circumstances, outmanoeuvring opponents, and gaining an advantage. Action-oriented strategy is not only applicable in military contexts, but also in a variety of other fields. By effectively implementing and executing strategic plans, organizations can ensure that their actions are in line with their overall goals and objectives, thereby increasing their chances of success.

3.6. Alignment with the External Environment

Alignment with the external environment is a crucial aspect of strategy. It involves understanding and adapting to external factors that can influence the success or failure of an organization. This alignment ensures that the strategy is responsive to the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the external environment. Many leading authors on strategy have highlighted the importance of this aspect in their works.

Although Clausewitz does not specifically discuss alignment with the external environment, his principles of war and the importance of understanding the opponent's strategy can be closely related to the concept of external alignment. Clausewitz emphasizes the need for a military strategist to have a

comprehensive understanding of the external environment, terrain, political climate, and enemy motivations. Aligning military strategy with the external environment increases the chances of success on the battlefield significantly. (Clausewitz, 1984)

Politics – another important field – also emphasizes alignment with the external environment. Boin discusses the importance of a political leader's strategy in relation to the external environment. He argues that the success of a political strategy is directly linked to aligning the leader's goals and actions with the external environment. By understanding needs, aspirations, the political landscape, stakeholders, opposition, and public opinion, political leaders can develop strategies that are both responsive and effective. (Boin, 2001)

Within the domain of business strategy, authors such as Sull, Homkes, and Sull have highlighted the importance of aligning strategy with the external environment. They claim that the failure of many strategies can be attributed to a lack of alignment with the external environment. They suggest that organizations must continuously monitor and analyse external factors that can impact their operations, such as market trends, customer preferences, technological advancements, and regulatory changes. By aligning strategy with the external environment, organizations can make informed decisions, anticipate changes, and adapt quickly, thereby increasing their chances of success. (Sull et al., 2015)

Rumelt also emphasizes that a good strategy is not merely a set of lofty goals and aspirations but a coherent and realistic plan that addresses the challenges and opportunities offered by the external environment. He suggests that strategy should be based on a deep understanding of the industry, competition, customers, and broader social and economic trends. By aligning strategy with the external environment, organizations can create competitive advantages and increase the likelihood of achieving their objectives. (Rumelt, 2011)

In summary, aligning with the external environment is a fundamental element of strategy across military, political, and business domains. By thoroughly understanding, assessing, and adapting to external factors, organizations can craft strategies that are not only responsive but also effective and successful.

Prominent authors have underscored the significance of this approach, offering valuable insights and guidance for both practitioners and researchers in the field of strategy.

3.7. Flexibility and Adaptability

In the field of strategy, flexibility and adaptability are widely recognised as key elements of success. They enable individuals and organizations to navigate complex and constantly changing environments, allowing them to seize opportunities and overcome challenges.

Renowned management experts, Mintzberg and Waters emphasize the importance of flexibility in strategy, arguing that organizations must embrace a combination of deliberate and emergent strategies. Deliberate strategies are pre-planned, whereas emergent strategies are adaptive and respond to unexpected circumstances. They suggest that a flexible strategy, which blends both deliberate and emergent approaches, allows organizations to adapt and respond more effectively to changes in their external environment. (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985)

Ansoff and McDonnell highlight the significance of flexibility in strategy implementation. They emphasize the importance of an organization's ability to adapt and revise its strategies in response to new information and changing circumstances. They propose a flexible strategy implementation process that allows for adaptability and the integration of new insights. Flexibility allows organizations to align their strategies with their stakeholders' shifting needs and preferences, enhancing their competitive advantage and long-term success. (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1984)

Liddell Hart, a British military strategist, emphasizes the importance of adaptability in military strategy, claiming that the ability to adjust to changing battlefield conditions is critical to victory. He argues that rigid adherence to pre-determined plans can lead to failure, as the enemy will exploit any predictability. Instead, he advocates for flexible strategies that allow for adaptation in response to enemy actions, thereby creating opportunities for surprise and outmanoeuvring. (Liddell Hart, 1991)

Gray also emphasizes the importance of adaptability in military strategy. He asserts that the ability to quickly adjust to changing circumstances is crucial for military success. Gray highlights the need for military organizations to develop flexible strategies that enable them to exploit their opponents' weaknesses, maintain the initiative, and achieve their objectives. (Gray, 2004)

The authors Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky emphasize the role of adaptation in political strategy. They argue that political leaders must possess the ability to adapt their strategies to the evolving demands of their constituents. The significance of distinguishing between technical problems, which can be resolved with known solutions, and adaptive challenges, which require innovative and flexible strategies, is highlighted. Political leaders who embrace adaptability can more effectively address complex and dynamic issues in the political arena. (Heifetz et al., 2009)

Sartori, an Italian political scientist, explores the concept of adaptation in the context of political parties. He argues that political parties must continuously adapt their strategies to the changing political landscape to remain relevant and competitive. Sartori stresses the need for parties to be flexible and responsive to social changes, as failure to do so can lead to their decline or even extinction. The significance of strategic adaptation in maintaining the vitality and effectiveness of political parties is emphasized. (Sartori, 1975)

Finally, flexibility and adaptability are fundamental features of strategy, applicable across various domains, including management, military, and politics. The insights of the mentioned authors in these areas underscore the importance of embracing flexibility and adaptation. By adopting these approaches, individuals, organizations, and states can navigate complex and uncertain environments, seize opportunities, and effectively handle challenges, ultimately achieving long-term success and competitive advantages.

3.8. Implementation and Execution

Implementation and execution are key components of any strategy that determine whether a plan succeeds or fails. The ability to effectively translate strategic ideas into action sets successful organizations and military campaigns apart from their competitors. Several authors have investigated the importance of implementation and execution in strategy, providing useful insights into this critical aspect of strategic management.

According to Rumelt, execution is the most important aspect of strategy, and even the best strategic plans will fail if not executed properly. He emphasizes that strategy without effective implementation is merely a wish, and that execution is the bridge between strategy and results. Rumelt provides several examples from the business world to illustrate the impact of execution on strategic success, highlighting the key roles of leadership, discipline, and the ability to adapt and learn from feedback. (Rumelt, 2011)

Similarly, in a military context, Boyd, an influential military strategist, underscores the importance of execution. Boyd argues that executing the strategy is paramount in warfare, as the ability to adapt, innovate, and outmanoeuvre the enemy is often a decisive factor in victory. His concept of the OODA loop (observe, orient, decide, and act) emphasizes the need for swift and effective decision-making and implementation to gain an advantage on the battlefield. Boyd's work highlights the critical role of execution in the military, where the ability to translate strategy into action can determine the outcome of a campaign. (Boyd, 2018)

In the political arena, the execution of strategy is equally important, as political leaders must navigate complex environments and effectively implement their policies to achieve desired results. Bueno de Mesquita and Smith argue that political leaders must possess the ability to effectively execute their strategies to maintain power and advance their interests. They explore how leaders use a combination of rewards and punishments to secure their positions and maintain support, emphasizing the role of execution in political strategy. (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2012)

Furthermore, strategy implementation and execution extend beyond the

business, military, and political domains. Bossidy and Charan explore the importance of execution in a variety of organizational environments. They argue that execution is crucial for transforming strategy into tangible results. They emphasize the need for clear accountability, effective communication, and disciplined execution to achieve strategic goals. Their work provides valuable insights into the practical aspects of execution, offering a roadmap for organizations to successfully implement and execute their strategies. (Bossidy & Charan, 2013)

Overall, the implementation and execution of strategy are fundamental to the success of any plan, whether in business, military, or political domains. The authors mentioned have explored the significance of execution in their fields. Their works highlight the crucial role of execution in strategy, emphasizing the need for effective leadership, adaptability, and the ability to translate strategic ideas into action. By studying and applying the insights provided by these authors, organizations and leaders can enhance their execution capabilities and increase their chances of strategic success.

4. Purpose and importance of strategy

To fully understand strategy and how it emerges, it is essential to study its purpose and the uses for which it is employed. Gray's writings provide clear and precise insights into the purpose of strategy and the objectives it serves. This chapter also briefly describes the importance of strategy that arises from the ideas presented in this and the previous chapters.

4.1. Purpose

According to Gray, the purpose of strategy is to provide a framework for decision-making and action to achieve desired outcomes in a competitive environment. Gray explores this concept and offers insights into the nature of strategy and its relevance in modern warfare and complex environments.

Gray argues that the purpose of strategy is to bridge the gap between policy and the means to achieve it. He emphasizes the importance of aligning

desired political objectives with available resources and capabilities. By formulating a strategy, decision-makers can ensure that the limited resources at their disposal are directed toward achieving desired outcomes, whether in the context of warfare, business, or any other competitive environment. (Gray, 1999)

Gray further highlights the significance of strategy in dealing with uncertainty and complexity. He asserts that strategy serves as a tool for navigating the "fog and friction" of the operational environment, where outcomes are unpredictable and the terrain is constantly changing. According to Gray, strategy is the process by which the political and military leaders of a state or coalition attempt to create conditions that allow the state or coalition to achieve the goals that political leaders believe the state or coalition should accomplish while also protecting it from threats that political and military leaders believe the state or coalition faces. (Gray, 1999)

Gray examines the purpose of strategy in the context of the modern security landscape, characterised by increasing interconnectedness and complexity of global systems. He argues that strategy is crucial in addressing the chaos and unpredictability of this environment. According to Gray, strategy is the art of imposing order on chaos, a tool that enables the strategist to create order within the chaos of the operational environment. (Gray, 2004) He also emphasizes the need for strategic thinking and adaptability in uncertain conditions. He argues that strategy should not be understood as a rigid plan but as a flexible framework that allows for adjustments and improvisation in response to changing circumstances. Gray emphasizes that strategy is not a fixed plan but a continuous process of adaptation and adjustment. (Gray, 1999) Therefore, the purpose of strategy is not to provide a detailed trajectory but to offer guidance that enables decision-makers to make informed choices and effectively respond to unforeseen challenges. (Gray, 1999)

Moreover, he contends that strategy is essential in mitigating the potential negative impacts of decisions and enhancing the prospects for success. He believes that strategy is a means of managing uncertainty, reducing the risks of unintended consequences, and improving the chances of achieving the desired objective. By considering potential risks and adverse outcomes,

strategists can make informed choices and develop contingency plans to mitigate the negative impacts of their actions. (Gray, 2004)

In conclusion, in his books "Modern Strategy" and "Strategy for Chaos," Gray argues that the purpose of strategy is to provide a framework for guiding decisions and actions to achieve desired outcomes in a competitive and uncertain environment. He emphasizes the importance of aligning desired political goals with available resources and the need for strategic thinking and adaptability to navigate chaos and a complex operational environment. His analysis highlights the significance of strategy as a tool for managing uncertainty, reducing risk, and facilitating the achievement of desired goals.

4.2. Importance

Strategy is a key aspect of any organization or individual's decision-making process, as it provides a plan for achieving desired goals and objectives. It plays a key role in directing actions and ensuring that resources are efficiently deployed to achieve the greatest possible results.

First and foremost, a strategy helps provide clarity and direction. It enables individuals or organizations to define their goals and purposes and to identify the best approach to achieve them. By having a clear strategy, decision makers can prioritise their actions and focus their efforts on activities that are in line with their overall vision. This helps avoid wasting time, effort and resources on activities that may not contribute to the desired results.

In addition, strategy is essential for the effective deployment of resources. Organizations and individuals often have limited resources, be it financial, human or time. The strategy helps determine the most effective and efficient use of these resources by identifying the areas with the highest return on investment potential. It enables decision makers to make informed decisions about where to allocate resources, ensuring they are used in a way that maximises their impact.

Furthermore, strategy enables organizations and individuals to adapt to a dynamic and changing environment. In today's fast-paced and competitive world, it is important to be flexible and respond quickly to changing

circumstances. A well-defined strategy helps identify potential risks and opportunities and provides a framework for managing and exploiting them. It enables decision makers to anticipate and respond to changes in the world, market, industry or personal circumstances, ensuring they stay one step ahead and competitive.

The strategy also promotes alignment and coordination. In an organizational context, strategy provides a common understanding and direction to all members, ensuring that everyone is working towards the same goals. It promotes unity and coordination, enabling individuals to collaborate and pool their efforts and resources to achieve common success. Strategy also helps align the interests and actions of different departments or members within the organization, ensuring that everyone is moving in the same direction and working towards a common vision.

The result of the aforementioned is that the strategy facilitates decision-making. In the absence of a clear strategy, decision makers can be overwhelmed by numerous possibilities and options. A well-defined strategy provides a framework for decision-making, guiding individuals or organizations to make choices that are consistent with their overall goals. It helps prioritise decisions and ensure they are consistent and aligned with the broader strategy. This not only saves time and effort, but also reduces the risk of making rash or ill-informed decisions.

Ultimately, the strategy serves as a tool for evaluation and monitoring. By setting clear goals and objectives, the strategy provides a basis for measuring and evaluating performance. It helps decision makers assess whether they are on track towards their desired results and identify areas where adjustments or improvements are needed. The strategy also enables the establishment of performance measures and reference points, enabling progress to be monitored and controlled. This ensures accountability and enables decision makers to make informed decisions based on reliable and accurate information.

Finaly, strategy is extremely important both for the organization and for the individual in making decisions. It provides clarity and direction, facilitates efficient deployment of resources, enables adaptation to a changing environment, promotes alignment and coordination, facilitates decision-

making, and serves as a tool for evaluation and control. By incorporating strategy into their decision-making processes, individuals and organizations can increase the chances of achieving their goals and purposes and significantly increase their overall success.

5. Levels of strategy

In the military and military-political fields, the term strategy sometimes can have a slightly different, more traditional meaning. Namely, in order to distinguish between certain levels and the scope of planning within the framework of national security and, ultimately, participation in conflicts, two levels can be distinguished. Grand strategy and military strategy (in a narrower sense) are two related concepts that play a key role in the military and political decision-making process. Although both terms involve planning and decision-making, they differ in scope, level of analysis, and time frame.

Grand strategy, as defined by Liddell Hart, refers to "coordinating and directing all the resources of a nation or group of nations towards achieving the political goals of the state". In other words, grand strategy encompasses a comprehensive long-term plan that guides a nation or group of nations toward achieving their political goals. It involves the integration of military, economic, diplomatic and other resources and aims to align a nation's actions with its political goals. (Liddell Hart, 1991) Historian and political scientist Earle, a historian and political scientist, contends that grand strategy extends beyond the military realm, encompassing "the totality of national assets and resources, and their application to the achievement of the political goal of the state." (Earle, 1943)

On the other hand, as defined by the military strategist and philosopher Clausewitz, strategy refers to the use of battles or plans for a series of battles to achieve the goal of war. The strategy, therefore, focuses on the military dimension, the conduct of campaigns and the use of forces to achieve military and operational objectives. (Clausewitz, 1984) Liddell Hart develops the concept further, stating that strategy involves the art of allocating and deploying military means to achieve policy goals. (Liddell Hart, 1991)

The key difference between grand strategy and military strategy lies in their scope and level of analysis. Grand strategy takes a broader, more comprehensive view, taking into account political, economic and diplomatic factors (all national instruments of power, including military), while military strategy focuses on the use of military instrument of power.

In addition, a grand strategy operates over a longer period, often lasting decades, as opposed to a strategy focusing on short- and medium-term military operations and campaigns. Grand strategy considers the changing international environment, long-term threats, and the nation's core interests, while strategy focuses on achieving specific military objectives within a specific time frame.

Ultimately, grand strategy and strategy are two separate but related concepts that guide military and political decision-making. Grand strategy involves coordinating and directing all resources toward the nation's political goals, while strategy focuses on the use of forces and plans to achieve military and operational goals. The main differences can be found in their scope, level of analysis and time frame, with grand strategy taking a broader, longer-term view, while strategy focuses on the military dimension and a shorter time frame.

6. Influence on decision making

Decision-making is a key aspect of strategy formulation and implementation. The choices made by individuals and organizations have a profound impact on the effectiveness and success of strategies. The decision-making process shapes the course of action, the allocation of resources and the general direction of the strategy.

In the context of political strategy, Fukuyama's works provide valuable insights into the decision-making process and its implications for strategy. Fukuyama explores the challenges of decision-making in the political arena. He claims that successful governance requires the development and implementation of institutional strategies that are aligned with the specific needs and context of society. He emphasizes that the effectiveness of political strategy is strongly

influenced by the ability of political leaders and the institutions in which they operate to make decisions. It emphasizes the importance of decision-making in the formulation and implementation of political strategies, since the choices made by political leaders shape the direction of policies, the allocation of resources and the achievement of social goals. It emphasizes the need for decision-makers to have the necessary knowledge, expertise and ability to navigate in a complex and dynamic political environment. (Fukuyama, 2014)

Turning to military strategy, Gray delves into the details of decision-making in a military context and its impact on strategy. Gray argues that military strategy is fundamentally a product of decision making. It emphasizes the key role of decision makers in assessing the political, military and operational environment, analysing available options and finally making choices that shape the direction of military action. Gray emphasizes the importance of decision making in military strategy as it involves allocating scarce resources, assessing risks, and determining desired outcomes. He argues that the effectiveness of military strategy is ultimately determined by the quality of decisions made by military leaders. (Gray, 2016)

According to Rumelt, many so-called strategies are nothing more than wishful thinking and daydreaming, lacking in depth and analysis. He argues that strategy is more than just a plan; it is an overall approach that aligns an organization's actions, resources, and decisions toward achieving its goals. It suggests that effective strategies should be based on a clear understanding of the situation, identification of key challenges and development of coherent and executable plans. Rumelt's work highlights the importance of a systematic and analytical approach to making strategic decisions, avoiding the pitfalls of vague and unrealistic strategies. (Rumelt, 2011)

Furthermore, Dufourcq notes that there is a misconception that every decision is the result of strategy, but he believes that this is not often the case. Neither can every situation that is decided upon be foreseen by the strategy, nor should the strategy be so rigid that different decisions cannot be made. On the contrary, he claims that such decisions change the strategic environment and thus create the need to restart the strategic cycle in order to evaluate the current strategy and confirm or change it. It also points to the seriousness

of the problem of strategy implementation, that is, it calls into question the survival of that strategy by passing through the organization's hierarchy. (Dufourcq, 2017)

Decision making plays a crucial role in shaping strategy within organizations. The ability to make effective decisions can profoundly impact the success or failure of a strategy. By considering various factors such as the organization's goals, resources, external environment and potential risks, decision-makers can develop a strategy that is aligned with the organization's goals and can adapt to changing circumstances. However, decision-making is an ongoing process that necessitates constant evaluation, adaptation, and learning. Organisations that prioritise and invest in strong decision-making capabilities are more likely to develop and implement effective long-term growth strategies.

7. Conclusion

In any management, strategy denotes the highest level of goals, planning and action of an organization. Although the purpose of strategy was initially closer to today's term tactics (because a decisive battle may have had a strategic impact), today's strategy denotes the highest level of goals, planning, and action of an organization. Because of its unique position at the top of the planning and implementation hierarchy, it is used in a variety of fields, including military and warfare, politics, and business. Even today, its purpose remains the same as it was centuries ago; its features have not changed much, and the problems in strategic processes remain similar. However, the methodology for strategy development is still developing, reflecting the need for greater flexibility and faster decision-making. Modern strategies must anticipate a wide range of possible scenarios, including unpredictable ones, in order to be effective, given that due to globalisation and technology, in today's warfare and politics, the speed of decision and the speed of implementation are often just as important as their quality. Furthermore, due to the constant growth and networking of organizations, as well as the increased complexity and need for continuous decision-making, organizations find it difficult to ensure full implementation. Therefore, in addition to modern strategies, plans to ensure implementation become increasingly important.

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Temelji strategije: teorija i praksa

Sažetak

Cilj je ovoga rada ispitati kako se tradicionalne teorije vojne strategije usklađuju sa suvremenim izazovima u nacionalnoj obrani usporedbom stavova odabranih teoretičara strategije. Analiza će se usredotočiti na to kako teoretičari definiraju značajke strategije, njezinu svrhu i važnost, različite razine strategije te utjecaj njihovih teorija na donošenje odluka. U radu se opisuje razvoj strategije kao koncepta i teorije, nudeći nekoliko definicija u području vojne strategije i poslovne strategije. Također, analizira se osam odabranih značajki strategije koje pružaju teorijski okvir i opisuje se što strategija jest i što čini kvalitetnu strategiju. Nadalje, razmatra se svrha strategije kao alata za planiranje i razlozi njezine važnosti. Analizirane su karakteristike i razlike između dviju razina strategije u vojnim i političkim terminima. Glavna je svrha strategije pružiti jasan i fokusiran plan za postizanje dugoročnih ciljeva i zadataka. Ona služi kao putokaz koji usmjerava donošenje odluka, raspodjelu resursa i djelovanje na način koji je usklađen s ukupnom vizijom organizacije, poslovanja ili pojedinca. Zaključno, identificiraju se potrebe za modernim strategijama i raspravlja se o smjeru u kojem bi se trebale razvijati.

Ključne riječi

strategija, strateško odlučivanje, teorija strategije, značajke strategije, razvoj strategije