

Wim Jurg, Ed Peelen en Harry Roossien

"The Blind Men and the Elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind)
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

[They conclude that the elephant is like a wall, spear, snake, tree, fan, and rope, depending on where they touched.]

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Moral
So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel (1998) start their book *Strategy Safari – The complete guide through the wilds of strategic management* with the story of "The Blind Men and the Elephant." Its moral still fits the strategy disputes of today within

the context of both science and business: all disputants have their own perceptions, but not one sees the whole elephant. Mintzberg et al. (1998) distinguishes ten perspectives on strategy; for instance, the *Design School* thinks of strategy as a process of conception, the *Planning School* as a formal process, the *Positioning School* as an analytical process, the *Entrepreneurial School* as a visionary process, the *Cognitive School* as a mental process, the *Learning School* as an emergent process, the *Power School* as a process of negotiation, the *Cultural School* as a collective process, the *Environmental School* as a reactive process, and the *Configuration School* as a process of transformation. Each of these schools “disputes loud and long, each in their own opinion, exceeding stiff and strong; they rail on in utter ignorance, of what each other mean, and prate about a strategy not one of them has seen” (see the story on page 150).

Similar to the elephant metaphor, strategic management is an immensely complex process involving the most sophisticated and subtle human cognitive and social processes (Mintzberg et al., 1998). These processes need to draw on all schools. Strategic processes do not follow predetermined schedules, nor do they fall into preset tracks. Effective strategies inevitably exhibit many emergent qualities. Above all, strategic learning takes place in the form of “fits and starts,” principally based on serendipitous events. Recognitions of unexpected patterns play a key role in the development of effective strategies. Strategic processes require continuous insights and creativity, as well as thinking and logical reasoning. As often noted, however, it is a matter of “and” rather than “or”. A synthesis of facts and perceptions of the different members of management teams is required to develop a fitting rich picture of the strategic Elephant.

The dominant positivist logic of academics and companies can be characterized as conscious, rational, and closed (Hackley, 1999; Zaltman, 2003). However, unless the emotional, subconscious, emerging understanding of all management team members is considered, it is unlikely that an effective strategy will be found. This chapter addresses the Soft Systems Methodology and the systems constellations technique to bring the emotional, subconscious, emerging perceptions of management teams on their strategic problems to the surface. A case study of a research project at the Open University in The Netherlands illustrates the methodology and the relevance and reliability of systems constellations. Finally, a discussion on the findings and suggestions for further research closes the chapter.

10.2 *Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)*

SSM origin

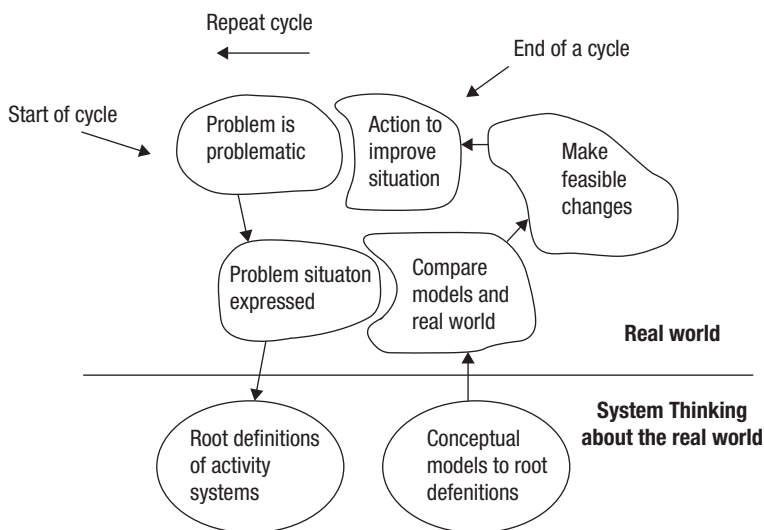
In the 1960s, possibilities were analyzed for well-developed positivist methods of systems engineering in managerial problems (Checkland & Scholes, 2005). This knowledge transfer failed, however. The SSM analysts concluded that these positivist methods might not be effective in tackling human problems. Viewing

managers as conscious, rational objects with clear, one-dimensional objectives did not work; managers are emotional subjects with multiple subconscious goals. The SSM analysts began to address the principles of action research and tried to assist managers in developing both as-is-models and can-be-models of business situations perceived as problematic. The *systems* construct stopped referring to literal objects in the real world but became employed as a *metaphor*: a particular way of organizing management's thoughts about a perceived problematic situation. The SSM analysts focused on finding and understanding potential positive and negative *feedback loops*: loops in which the output of a system is monitored and employed to correct the input.

SSM procedure

SSM has been described in various ways throughout its existence (Checkland & Scholes, 2005). The 7-stage model is an early presentation that remains the most common for explaining the methodology. Figure 10.1 presents a pictorial overview of these seven stages based on Presley, Sarkis, and Liles (2000).

Figuur 10.1 7-Stage SSM model



(Presley et al., 2000)

Applying SSM to the strategy process means that, in SSM *stage 1*, some management team members perceive their current strategy as problematic: they perceive mismatch between this strategy and the changing circumstances and try to convince other team members that a strategic dialogue is necessary. In *stage 2*, the management team expresses the perceived strategic problem in terms of changing circumstances and potential strategic interventions. In *stage 3*, the management team identifies approximately seven root definitions concerning internal

and external activity systems that play key roles in these changes. In *stage 4*, the management team expresses thoughts on these root definitions and the positive and negative feedback loops between the root definitions, usually by employing cognitive mapping.¹ In *stage 5*, the management team generates insights into the effects of the possible interventions by comparing their understanding from stage 4 to the “real world.” In *stage 6*, the management team has a dialogue on the intuitive feasibility of the alternatives, and, in *stage 7*, they act to improve the perceived problem situation, repeat the cycle, or thoroughly research a specific issue. SSM was thought to have undervalued the role of emotions and to have serious drawbacks because of the limited awareness of the processes involved (Wang & Ahmed, 2003). Hence, a recent innovation within SSM is to employ systems constellations in stage 4, rather than cognitive mapping, to bring to the surface the emotional, subconscious, emerging perceptions of the management team on the strategic problem.

10.3 SYSTEMS CONSTELLATIONS

Systems constellations origin

Systems constellations developed from roleplaying (Buer, 2003). *Roleplaying* originates from Jacob L. Moreno in the 1920s as a form of group therapy in which clients transfer perceived problems involving movement and action onto a real stage. The other group members are carefully instructed by the facilitator how to behave during the roleplaying. Unlike roleplaying, systems constellations facilitators do not instruct the group members regarding their role (Gminder, 2006). The innovative assumption of systems constellations is that *stand-ins*, people who know neither the client nor their problem and are chosen by a client to represent an element in the physical set-up of this problem, are capable of bringing the subconscious relationships between these elements to the surface. This phenomenon is called *representative perception*. The emotions these stand-ins perceive are presumed to reflect the element in the problem they represent. One explanation of this

1 The dividing line between the “real world” (stages 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7) and the “systems world” (stages 3 and 4) was criticized as indicating a false dualism (Checkland, 2000; Tsouvalis & Checkland, 1996). Furthermore, the seven stage model was regarded as having a mechanistic flavor and giving the false idea of SSM as a prescriptive process to be followed systematically. Despite these critical notes, this model is still most often found in academic literature. Recently, a more iconic model of SSM that subsumes a cultural stream of analysis in the activities is often used. The four activities are (1) finding a problem situation, including culturally and politically; (2) formulating some relevant purposeful activity models; (3) debating the situation, using the models, seeking from that debate both (a) changes that would improve the situation and are regarded as both desirable and (culturally) feasible and (b) the accommodations between conflicting interests that will enable action to improve to be taken; and (4) taking action in the situation to bring about improvement.

phenomenon is found in the works of Merleau-Ponty (1997) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999), who argue that people think in embodied metaphors. Since these stand-ins feel the same human way as clients, it might be “just” a matter of back-translation of subconscious emotions put into the constellations by the client’s choice of the personalities of the stand-ins and their positions and directions toward each other (Madelung, 2004). Other authors refer to field theory (Sheldrake & Beaumont, 2001), mirror neurons (Ruppert & Altman, 2006), and quantum theory (Laszlo, 2004) to explain this representative perception phenomenon.

Systems constellations studies

Within SSM, new techniques should demonstrate their relevance on real-life problems (Gummesson, 2000). Similarly, several explorative PhD studies (Gminder, 2006; Lehmann, 2006; Wilhelmer, 2007) show that systems constellations have a high relevance in identifying effective strategic interventions. Further, one positivist PhD experiment (Schlötter, 2005) was conducted. This experiment contained three configurations, with statues, within which 132 respondents were positioned at different positions and their perceptions were compared. It reports high *reliability*, signifying the perceptions reported by these stand-ins are significantly correlated with their positions in the configurations. All studies report systems constellations are only at the beginning of a methodological discussion, as every facilitator has his or her own way of conducting these constellations, usually with very little rigorous description or evaluation.²

Jurg (2010) conducted a PhD study on the usefulness perceived by branders and marketing experts of systems constellations in identifying branding problems. For this study, branding constellation workshops were organized in which seven branders conducted systems constellations to identify their branding problems in the presence of 81 marketing experts functioning as possible stand-ins. These marketing experts knew nothing about the branding problems identified before the constellations took place. Jurg (2010) argues that systems constellations differ from other problem identification techniques by their combination of a holistic perspective and an emotional approach. A *holistic perspective* focuses on the elements and relationships emerging from the whole, rather than deconstructing problems into core elements. An *emotional approach* includes bodily sensations, feelings, and intentions, as well as spontaneous verbal “outbursts” based on these emotions, rather than logically grounded arguments. Additionally, Jurg (2010) claims that a study on perceived usefulness should take four dimensions into account: relevance, validity, reliability, and precision. Jurg (2010) concludes that branders are very positive about the relevance of systems constellations and moderately positive about its other dimensions. Branders perceive these constel-

2 The texts on SSM and systems constellations are shortened and improved versions of Jurg et al., 2008, p. 239-244.

lations as more useful than marketing experts, with the exception that both groups perceive these constellations as ambiguous³. Branders are very positive about the opportunities to test their insights empirically, whereas marketing experts are ambivalent. Marketing experts who are employed by branders as stand-ins are more positive about the usefulness of systems constellations than marketing experts who do not have a stand-in experience.

10.4 CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Next to his PhD study, Wim Jurg guided twenty-three studies to identify strategic problems employing systems constellations as part of Master studies at the Open University in The Netherlands since 2002: Van Geel (2004), Siezen (2004), Gomersbach (2004), Matthijsen (2005), Davidse (2005), Van Zwienen (2005), De Velde Harsenhorst (2006), De Heij (2006), Van Mechelen (2008), Holwerda (2006), Simons (2006), Stroo (2006), Harrewijn (2006), Schuurman (2006), Bloonens (2006), Ten Have-Smit (2007), Vertregt (2007), Meijer (2008), Halters (2008), Karel (2009), Jongsma (2011), Meines (2011), and Roossien (2012). The project's methodology was based on Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2003). Within the methodological framework of this research, findings were ordered to enhance the theoretical and practical knowledge on the usefulness of SSM employing systems constellations. All systems constellations were videoed and transcribed. This next section presents the latest case study company and a description of the 7 SSM stages, including the relevance of the systems constellations for the management team of this company and the reliability findings regarding eleven of these systems constellations studies: Van Geel (2004) on the Dutch Army Museum, De Velde Harsenhorst (2006) on the EODD, De Heij (2006) on the SKBA, Schuurman (2006) on Alex, Bloonens (2006) on Hooghoudt, Ten Have-Smit (2007) on Lipton, Halters (2008) on IDS Scheer, Karel (2009) on Van de Klok, Jongsma (2011) on TNO, Meines (2011) on DUO and VDP, and Roossien (2012) on tonalite.

Case study

The case study presented here concerns a Netherlands company that specializes in Research and Development (R&D) of Bluetooth platforms and products, as well as other wireless technologies. It produces extremely small, wearable Bluetooth headsets that enable hands-free, wireless control, speaking via a mobile phone (voice), and listening to music (stereo).

The company started under the name Nira with the import of radio components in Maassluis in 1947. Nine years later it moved to Emmen. In 1982, the company

3 Degree to which the statements of the stand-ins provides unambiguous information in the perception of the respondents: statements that do not permit or invite alternative interpretations.

was acquired by Ericsson, a multinational telephone company mainly operating in the business market. In 2001, Ericsson formed a joint venture with Sony, the multinational electronics company with roots in music and design, mainly operating in the consumer market. The SonyEricsson joint venture ended its joint activities in 2010. The company continued as a management buyout with 27 employees covering electronics, software, mechanics, PCB design, audio, antenna, industrialisation, and quality/reliability. The core management team consisted of CEO, CTO, and systems designer. The extended team also included a systems architect, a systems analyst, and a project manager. The management team chose the name *tonalite* and the strapline⁴ “wireless wearables” for their new company. Figure 10.2 presents the name logo.

Figuur 10.2 The tonalite logo



Description of the tonalite 7 SSM stages

- *Stage 1 Problem is problematic*

The six members of the management team had an internal dialogue on November 18, 2011 in which they shared that their current strategy was problematic. They decided to follow the suggestion of their reliability systems designer and quality officer to employ SSM, although a bit sceptical about the emotional approach of the systems constellations.

- *Stage 2 Problem situation expressed*

The dialogue on the strategic problem continued on January 12, 2012, with four team members (i.e., CEO, systems designer, systems analyst, and project manager) and a systems constellations facilitator. The dialogue converged on core competencies that might contribute to success for the most relevant customers in the Business-to-Business (BtB) market and consumer groups in the Business-to-Consumer (BtC) market.⁵

⁴ UK term; the US term is “tagline”.

⁵ *Core competencies* were initially defined following Prahalad & Hamel (1990, p. 4) as “the company’s collective knowledge about how to coordinate diverse production skills and technologies” and later more extensively as “difficult to imitate and unique combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes, through collective learning, and communicated across the organization to deliver sustainable competitive advantage by adding perceived customer benefits in a variety of markets” (Roossien, 2012, p. iii), based on Manikutty (2010).

- *Stage 3 Root definitions of activity systems*

On January 14, 2012, the four team members and the facilitator agreed on the core competencies of the internal relevant activity systems: tonalite name, strapline wireless wearables, audio, headsets, miniaturisation, robustness, Emmen, low power, and confirmed strategic partner. The external elements emerging from the dialogue on the BtB market included, for instance, customer Plantronics with its current and optional contact persons and interfaces.

- *Stage 4 Conceptual models to root definitions*

On January 19, 2012, the four team members gathered at the Marketing Village in Leusden. This location was selected to dissociate the stand-ins from the organization. The team divided into two subteams of two members to test the reliability of the systems constellations findings. The first subteam consisted of the CEO and systems analyst, and the second subteam included the systems designer and the project manager. Both subteams conducted two systems constellations: the core competencies for the company's business customers in a BtB constellation and the core competencies for the consumer groups in a BtC constellation. The CEO and systems designer, separately, had the lead in the BtB constellations, whereas the systems analyst and the project manager, respectively, lead in the BtC constellations.

Both subteams conducted their systems constellations in a separate conference room with a facilitator and 14 stand-ins. The rooms were very similar. The facilitators were also similar: both were fifty years of age or older, combined a PhD-degree with systems constellations training, and had about 7 years of systems constellations facilitation experience. The stand-ins knew neither the management team members, nor their company, nor their strategic problem. They were alphabetically divided into two groups of 7 stand-ins, based on surname. Both groups consisted of 4 stand-ins with systems constellations experience and 3 stand-ins without. These stand-ins changed rooms after the BtB constellation to allow the subteams to start with fresh stand-ins in the BtC constellations. The subteams and the facilitators did not change rooms. Thus, the conditions for a quasi-experiment (Zikmund, 2003) on the reliability of systems constellations were optimally fulfilled (Table 10.1).

Tabel 10.1 Quasi experiment design

CEO and systems analyst	Systems designer and project manager
Room A	Room B
Facilitator A	Facilitator B
Stand-ins group A: 1 st BtB systems constellation	Stand-ins group B: 2 nd BtB systems constellation
Stand-ins group B: 2 nd BtC systems constellation	Stand-ins group A: 1 st BtC systems constellation

The leading subteam members, intuitively and independently, chose stand-ins to represent the key elements (activity systems) regarding their core competencies. Next, they positioned these stand-ins, also independently, where they felt intuitively right to these subteam members. Figures 10.3 and 10.4 focus on the role of customer Plantronics in the BtB market. They show the positioning of the stand-ins when customer Plantronics appeared on the stage in the two parallel BtB constellations, termed *projection constellations*.

Figuur 10.3 1st BtB projection constellation

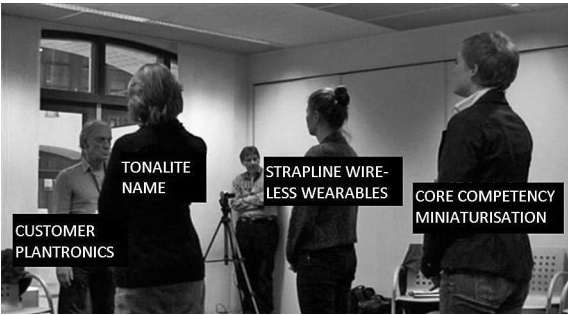


Figuur 10.4 2nd BtB projection constellation



The facilitators, independently, asked the stand-ins to verbalize the emotions experienced to bring the subconscious perceptions of the management team members to the surface. The facilitators' focus was on the positive and negative *feedback loops*: the degree in which the emotions expressed modified the emotions perceived by the other stand-ins in a positive or negative way, respectively (Königswieser & Hillebrand, 2005). The facilitators repositioned stand-ins or initiated the verbalisation of emotions unexpressed by stand-ins to optimize these feedback loops. The first BtB constellation resulted in a specific *vision constellation* after repositioning the core competency miniaturisation, showing a solution direction: a configuration with optimal positive feedback loops between the stand-ins (Figure 10.5).

Figuur 10.5 1st BtB vision constellation



For the second BtB systems constellation, the facilitator did not search for a specific solution direction regarding customer Plantronics, as she was the most positive customer toward the tonalite name. Therefore, the facilitator in the second BtB constellation decided to optimize the feedback loops with the other customers and no specific new vision constellation regarding customer Plantronics was created.

- *Stage 5 Compare models and real-world*
- In stage 4, the four team members verbalized their insights regarding the core competencies that were important for customer Plantronics using notes during the constellations, directly after the constellations on camera, and in e-mail questionnaires afterwards (Table 10.2).

Tabel 10.2 Expressed core BtB-insights of the four team members regarding Plantronics

CEO and systems analyst (1 st BtB constellation)	Systems designer and project manager (2 nd BtB constellation)
Plantronics is a potential key customer that wants to do business	Plantronics is the potential key customer that wants to do business
Miniaturisation is generally an important core competency	Miniaturisation is generally an important core competency
Plantronics dislikes tonalite’s internal strategic discussion	Plantronics dislikes tonalite’s internal strategic discussion
Miniaturisation should be communicated toward Plantronics as a core competency only initially	No specific core competency needs communicated toward Plantronics
Miniaturisation, tonalite name, and strapline “wireless wearables” do not resonate well	Miniaturisation, tonalite name, and strapline “wireless wearables” do not resonate well
Plantronics does not resonate well with tonalite’s own brand identity (its name and strapline “wireless wearables”)	Tonalite name does not welcome Plantronics warmly
Plantronics does not resonate well with other customers	Plantronics only resonates well with customer N.

The differences in insights verbalized between the four management team members were very small, and, in the management team dialogues on the core competencies, no differences due to the different parallel systems constellations came forward.

- *Stage 6 Make feasible changes*

The four management team members and the facilitator met again on January 14, 2012, at the tonalite office. The management team agreed that the first team meeting after the systems constellations workshop should focus on the (communication and development of the) core competencies “miniaturisation” and “headsets,” based on the first BtB and the second BtC systems constellation, respectively. However, it was clear that every customer in the BtB market needed specific attention and a continuous dialogue was needed within the management team. The systems analyst was appointed to have a leading role in protecting this BtB interchange, and the project manager was given the lead in the BtC exchange of “facts and hunches.”

- *Stage 7 Action to improve situation*

The consultancy firm MoveYourMarket (MYM) was briefed on April 4, 2012 on how to challenge the BtC market. The MYM consultants agreed on the BtC market opportunities but advised to meet this challenge with care, as it might require high investments in strategy and sales empowerment, investments that tonalite could hardly afford. When customer Plantronics offered tonalite to become part of it, the management team considered accepting the offer a wise strategic decision to be able to focus on their core competencies “miniaturisation” and “headsets.” Thus, tonalite merged as a creative design department into Plantronics on October 1, 2012.

To conclude the description of the 7 SSM stages and their relevance, the management team obtained many insights during the seven stages. The most impressive insight, however, was that they needed each other’s emotional, subconscious, emerging understanding regarding their customers to get a rich picture of their company’s core competencies. Another major understanding was that the insights from the two parallel systems constellations were astonishingly similar. This next section focuses on one specific reliability measurement within the Open University research project.

Reliability of systems constellations

The Open University research project distinguishes five reliability measurements, rated on an ordinal bipolar five point scale from -2 to +2 based on Jurg (2010). This chapter focuses on the *bilateral relationship test-retest reliability*, which denotes the average correlations of the relationships between the same two elements in two different systems constellations on the same strategic problem. The compari-

son was based on a standardized excel file developed by Van Reij (2010) and employed the statements of the stand-ins in the transcriptions of these constellations. Table 10.3 presents an overview of the bilateral relationship test-retest reliability findings within the research project, including the findings of this case study.

Tabel 10.3 Overview of bilateral relationship test-retest reliability findings (scale -2; +2)

Case	Team member	Facilitator	Stand-ins	Time	Room	Number of same elements	Average score
TNO	Different	Same	Same	Different	Same	2	+2.0
Hooghoudt	Same	Same	Different	Different	Same	4	+1.9
VDP 1-3	Different	Same	Same	Different	Same	3	+1.7
DUO 1-2	Different	Same	Same	Different	Same	5	+1.7
tonalite BtC	Different	Different	Different	Same	Similar	7	+1.6
EODD	Different	Different	Different	Different	Similar	9	+1.6
Van de Klok	Different	Different	Different	Same	Different	9	+1.6
Alex	Different	Same	Different	Different	Different	5	+1.6
Lipton	Different	Same	Same	Different	Same	8	+1.6
tonalite BtB	Different	Different	Different	Same	Similar	7	+1.3
VDP 1-2	Different	Same	Same	Different	Same	3	+1.3
VDP 2-3	Different	Same	Same	Different	Same	3	+1.3
IDS Scheer	Different	Different	Different	Same	Similar	9	+1.2
Army museum	Same	Same	Same	Different	Same	3	+1.2
<i>Mean</i>						5.5	+1.5

The bilateral relationship test-retest reliability of all systems constellations is very high (+1.5), as in the tonalite case study, indicating that the relationships between the same two elements in two different systems constellations are generally very similar. The influence of possible third variables, such as team member, facilitator, stand-ins, time (parallel or successively), and room, seems limited.

10.5 DISCUSSION

Similar to the previous studies within the research project, the tonalite management team is very positive about the relevance of systems constellations. Finding the core competencies of the “reborn” company and employing objective measurement methods was an attempt at trying to see the whole elephant from one perspective. Taking into account each other’s emotional, subconscious, emerging inputs, as well as the analytical information in an interactive approach, allowed

the tonalite management team to obtain a much richer picture of their core competencies and strategic choices.

The high scores on the bilateral relationship test-retest reliability indicate that the relationships between the same two elements are very similar in different systems constellations. These high scores on bilateral reliability align with the other reliability measurements within the research project based on the transcriptions of the statements of the stand-ins. The high scores also match the fact that the four management team members almost completely agreed on the core insights from the parallel systems constellations. Thus, the stand-in marketing experts' perceptions in Jurg (2010) appear in line with the reality that systems constellations are reliable. The doubts of the observing marketing experts are due to the fact that a person needs to have been involved in systems constellations to fully understand them as one; as people who have never moved into water cannot really understand swimming (Roevens, 2008).

The frequently reported "lack of repeatability" criticism on SSM and its deficiency of rigor (Eden & Huxham, 1996) does not seem to be valid here. This is remarkable, since a literal, intuitive comparison of Figures 10.4 and 10.5 shows that the distances and directions of the stand-ins toward each other are clearly different. Similarly, Schuurman (2006) concluded that the intensity (very or moderate) and direction (positive, neutral/ambivalent, or negative) of the relationships with other stand-ins does not correlate with their distances and/or angles. It seems, however, that the opportunities of systems constellations to test strategic interventions are reliable, despite the different distances and directions of the stand-ins in different constellations on the same strategic problem.

A key benefit of the SSM process involving systems constellations is that the management teams perceived a converging understanding. This benefit fits the notion of Markóczy (2001) that strategy making is first and foremost a consensus process. Management teams are under constant pressure to respond strategically to a great variety of demographic, economic, social, technological, ecological, and political changes to remain profitably viable and/or morally and ethically attractive to an ever widening spectrum of stakeholders. However, every team member has his or her own perceptions, dependent on his or her role and perspective on strategy. Strategy making is a process of collective sense making, a collective search for collective meaning (Weick, 1995), and systems constellations seem to facilitate this process.

A focus of the future systems constellations research project could be on the systematic comparison of the effects of the facilitator interventions, based on the videoed and transcribed systems constellations. For instance, in the first BtB constellation, the facilitator intervened in such a way that a vision constellation was reached that optimized the positive feedback loop between the stand-ins representing tonalite name, strapline "wireless wearables," core competency miniaturisation, and customer Plantronics. Looking at Figure 10.5, it seems that tonalite name in the second BtB projection constellation did not have an open attitude

toward customer Plantronics, as the crossed arm posture of tonalite name stand-in indicates a *closed attitude* (Pease & Pease, 2004). Remarkably, the facilitator's decision in the second BtB constellation not to intervene here did not influence the insights generated by the subteam members. However, future research is clearly needed regarding the intervention decisions made by the facilitator. To conclude, given the enormous changes in circumstances affecting strategic management and all the different perspectives on strategy, it is worthwhile for science and business to explore the usefulness of SSM involving systems constellations to develop a fitting rich picture of possible strategic interventions. Strategic management remains an immensely complex process involving the most sophisticated, subtle, and subconscious human cognitive and social processes, to embrace the Elephant.

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