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THE EVENT OF ORGANISATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DISRUPTING THE REIGNING ORDER AND CREATING NEW SPACES FOR PLAY AND INNOVATION

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Abstract
Organisational entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial event. By-products of such events may include the emergence of business organisations. In this study, I discuss the event of organisational entrepreneurship fostered by organisational creativity. An event of organisational entrepreneurship can happen in the context of social spaces for play and innovation. In these social spaces, novelty, movement, and change are outcomes of the role of organisational entrepreneurship in society. The dissertation consists of four essays.

Prior research defines organisational entrepreneurship as a relationship between the managerial order and organisational creativity. This particular relationship, rather than being a precise state, is one that problematises the tradition of studying entrepreneurship as a sub-discipline of management. Researchers tend to be drawn to studying the entrepreneurial order, but less so the play and innovation that contribute to the creativity aspect. Whilst permitting space for play and innovation have been acknowledged to be crucial, the role of play and innovation between the discourses of business opportunities and entrepreneurial becoming has not been discussed.

The literature review in this study shows that understanding the concepts of entrepreneurial actions and processes is key to explicating organisational entrepreneurship. Hence, the principal research question of this study is: how do entrepreneurial actions and processes frame the very nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship? There are four sub-questions (one for each essay) that illustrate how an entrepreneurial event is about creation of new spaces for play and innovation. The purpose of this study is to show what role playfulness and innovativeness play in organisational entrepreneurship.

I have empirically investigated how international business opportunities may be created through entrepreneurial actions in a multinational collaboration project, and found that social learning is at the heart of the process. In addition, I have examined an entrepreneurial process through the story of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian. This study shows that the entrepreneurial process emerges from the desire to become-Other. The entrepreneurial stories of this qualitative study come from two data sets (conducted in Finland and in Denmark). The research outline problematises the prior research, in which storytelling is rarely used. The dissertation concludes by suggesting that one role of playfulness and innovativeness is to create business opportunities and entrepreneurial becoming.

Keywords: organisational creativity, entrepreneurial action, entrepreneurial process
Kauppinen, Antti, Organisatorinen yrittäjyys yrittäjämäisenä tapahtumana – vallitsevan järjestyksen sekoittaminen ja uusien tilojen luominen leikille ja innovaatioille.

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Tiivistelmä


Aikaisempi tutkimus määrittelee organisatorisen yrittäjyyden johtajuuden hallinnan ja organisatorisen luovuuden väliseksi suhteeksi. Ennenkin kuin jokin tila tällä jatkumolla suhde sinänsä kyseenalaitaa tradition, joka tutkii yrittäjyyttä johtajuustutkimuksen koulukunnan. Siinä tutkimusintressi on ollut hallinta, mutta ei kovin usein leikki ja innovaatio. Vaikka leikki ja innovaatio on nähty tärkeinä asioina, siitä huolimatta niiden roolia liikenteessä liiketoinintamahdollisuuksien luomisen ja yrittäjämäiseksi tulemisen välillä ei ole vielä kovin hyvin tutkittu.

Tämän tutkimuksen kirjallisuuskatsaus osoittaa, että yrittäjämäiset toiminnot ja prosessit ovat keskeisimmät käsitteet organisatorisessa yrittäjyydessä. Tutkimuksen päätutkimuskeskymys kuuluu: kuinka yrittäjämäiset toiminnot ja prosessit rajaavat organisatorisen yrittäjyyden syvimmän luonteen yrittäjämäisenä tapahtumana? Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on näyttää, mikä rooli leikinomaisuuden ja innovatiivisuuden on organisatorisessa yrittäjyydessä silloin, kun se nähdään yrittäjämäisenä tilana.


Asiavastaisuudet: organisatorinen luovuus, yrittäjämäinen toiminta, prosessi
Affirmations from the events of becoming-lover with what you do

Apparently it’s my imagination: always thunderous, ever burning. The mind suggests a sky, the sky that reflects the possibility of fire, of the ride. The ride of lightning that fosters fire, a way directly to the meaning of the Earth. Maybe it’s a question of a beauty, fire that has its own form: But, one should ask what the affects are instead. The affects are the Earth as such: of the dancing thunder and kiss of fire, plus imagination. Apparently.

– Antek

First of all, I would like to say that this is the most important section of my doctoral dissertation. This section is dedicated to those who have contributed my life – that had a real meaning to me as an event for a period of time, more precisely, this last four years. May all of my affirmative power rain down on you guys! As mentioned in the Terry Allen (2001) book No Cash, No Fear – and also in Teresa Amabile’s inspiring work concerning creativity in work-organisations – he or she who is willing to create something new in the form of a new business, has to be in love with doing that. When doing the research on organisational entrepreneurship for this doctoral project, I found that exactly the same principles work in terms of doing research. Consequently, I would like to thank all of those beautiful people who have contributed to my life during those years. To start with, I want to express my warm thanks to Professor William B. Gartner and Professor Chris Steyaert for being reviewers of my doctoral dissertation. I am grateful for the time and effort that you could use in order to comment, evaluate, and enhance my doctoral dissertation. In addition, I want to thank Professor Gartner to be my opponent at my defense, as I have always been your fan and that is why it is so outstanding thing to me to have you as my opponent here in Oulu.

I think I found something crucial in Copenhagen on 11th November 2011. I had an appointment with my dear friend Anna in Copenhagen. We went to see a play called “The Zoo Story”. It was a play featuring two guys – an old married
man and young guy living in the same area as the old man in New York. At the end of the play, the old man killed the young guy. My interpretation is that the old man could not stand the fact that he was not a better man than the young guy. That is why he killed the young guy and later regretted it. However, the message to me was that there is no such a thing as a pure reason. In contrast, I dare to suggest that everything is based on human social constructs – the stuff that we put value on. Then, the question is with what consequences does this emerge. It seems to me that the very nature of being human is to achieve value in life. This is not news. However, I still want to affirm that this is something that I have always believed in. If you keep this in mind when reading this text, maybe my ideas will make more sense to you.

Anna, the discussions with you have opened my eyes on what life is about. Thank you for them! As I write in this dissertation later on, it seems to me that all human actions are based on interactions. It is not only about discussing this and that, but they are more based on the real life interactions, where human bodies affect each other. This makes the affirmation(s) – something that is true – possible. In that way, there is a possibility to become something that you are not. In this dissertation, I argue that this type of something is a better life. But the concept of better is difficult. So, please keep reading!

Monika, I have only one thing to say to you, I love you! That is what matters to me most. Your existence is great – oh yes, there is no pure reason (of anything). The thing that I have found with you is that there is no such a thing as love ‘out there’. In contrast, love is something that is co-created as a part of the process that is located nowhere before it starts. Now I know that you wonder where the starter is. To me, the starter was the dancing shoes that I never bought. In that sense, a space for something else through the artefact of shoes opened up what I think about love ‘out there’ at the present moment – there is no such a thing. I do not care about the shoes. To me, they are paths to the space of roses! It is the better life, my sweetheart! 😊

Vesa, I would like to say that you are the one who – like a creator of an opportunity – built up the mountain of this dissertation. I cannot thank you enough! I am sure that the reason why you are a great professor and scientific leader is that you are an outstanding creator. Thank you for supporting me all the time and giving insightful comments on my stuff whenever I needed help! Without you, I would have failed pretty badly. Daniel, thank you for making me first confused and then curious by your writing and speaking. Those things made me to do something that really deconstructed my life as a human being. The
period in Copenhagen was the best part of my life so far. Thank you for that, man! In addition, I want to thank Henrik and Pierre for making my researcher visit in the Department of Management, Politics, and Philosophy at the Copenhagen Business School possible.

Kalle, I will never forget the figures you drew with me about business opportunity creation. They made me to elaborate on the meaning of entrepreneurship (and if it is not, what it could be). That was so great. Thanks! Jukka, you are the Man of Fire. More precisely, fire – as a release of human potential – is something that always turns me on when we are working on the paper concerning the tool to make outstanding reviews of literature. I am sure that this paper is going to be successful. Saku, it is so great that you kept me grounded on the Earth. I have never been there well enough.

Anita, thank you for your invaluable support to push me out of the orbit: I am here now. I will never forget that. Please do not miss that kind of drive within you. Thank you for being a driver of my process of you-know-what that has no end! Instead, the process itself is more important, as it frames the passion inside of my body. I hope you understand how important it was to me on the way of becoming-Other – more precisely: an academic researcher with an international life and purposes that contribute to the collective (or rather organisational) creativity that fosters the possibility of fire.

Elina, thank you for kicking my ass in terms of my literature review paper. For some reason, I needed your contribution (that I call ass-kicking) then. Teea, thank you for showing what the very nature of academic teaching is, if a guy like me is involved with it. Thanks (my ass is well kicked by the way)! Keep on doing what you are, it makes the world better off.

It seems to be that the research that a man like me is doing is embedded in the very nature of my life and body. Taking this into account, here come the thanks to those who have showed something very special for me as a self-body construction in a social way (of course). Olga, thank you for your comments on my work that is at least as complex as I am. I learned crucial things (please do not ask me to detail them) about writing ideas – that are located in my mind – in a clear(er) way. I am sure that you will be a professor, one of the few professors who can dance salsa well. Lauri, it was so great to meet you and your colleagues in Berlin in May 2010. I had such a great time then. This trip was a social event of fire (you know). Heidi, I have no idea how you do it, but nobody else has never been as close to my brain (mentally – as long as this is the correct term) as you. You are always there! Nina, you have a power together with excellent ideas of the Earth. Please
actualize yourself in that way. I have found your way to influence on the Earth very great and therefore I envy you.

Perhaps everybody who knows me also knows that I see entrepreneurship as well as doing research as an emotional and personal matter on the Earth. Thus, I am willing to thank you, Hannele! Thank you for dancing with me in Oulu. You were teaching me things about life that nobody else could do. Those things are parts of my research, always and everywhere. Olli, my eternal friend (I know this sounds so ridiculous after those years and things we have gone through together), thank you for making me to think in a clever way. I hope that I could make and extend life better with you, always and everywhere. Tuomas, thank you for your understanding. Nobody, but you could do that as honesty as you have always done it. I really appreciate it!

My parents: it is so difficult to thank you in the right way, as you have been teaching me things that are very complicated while describing them in a way I really like. Anyway, I wish to thank my mother for your way to show me what love is really about. To me, business (and this dissertation too) is business, but love is an eternal power on the Earth. I am sorry that I understood this only in a step-by-step manner in my life. I think this is about social learning that I have written about in this dissertation as well. Father, thank you for the discussions of what really matters in a man’s life. I will never forget those discussions. I am sorry that you forgot those things. My brother, A-P, thank you for forcing me to get my ridiculous confusion away at the time I was down. My sister, Annukka, thank you for showing me what true happiness is. It works and makes the meaning on the Earth. My sister, Anniina, I have always been wondering why you always believe in me in the way you do. Now I understand it. Thank you! My grandmother, thank you for your care, when I was a child. It was very important to me and I learned a lot about what life is about with you.

The life of a researcher is always a full of practical and financial issues. I wish to thank the Finnish Foundation for Economic Education and Kaute Foundation for funding my doctoral project. Moreover, my work as a project researcher, coordinator, and PhD Fellow at the Oulu Business School, Finland was invaluable regarding what I do at the present moment (that is something that I love). Therefore, my special thanks go to the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration as well as Martti Ahtisaari Institute of Global Business and Economics at the Oulu Business School. I want you to know that all the tasks I was doing there were extremely important for me. You are so great, thank you!
Nicki, thank you so much for all the discussions of life and love! You have a mental/social power inside of your body, please use that. In terms of everything, you really rock, man! Michael, thank you for getting me back to the correct track of creating the future that matters to me in the summer 2011. I needed your contribution then. And yes, it is/was (as a contextually embedded phenomenon) a real contribution to me. Florian, thank you so much for discussions when you were visiting Copenhagen Business School in August 2011. I will never forget that. It was a critical timing to me. Thank you so much for hearing and discussing. I respect that a lot. For both you guys, you frame what the affirmation is – something that de-/reconstructed my whole life. Thank you!

Additionally – and as I argue above – love seems to be a crucial thing in order to hold phenomena that I am writing about. In addition, love seems to be central to doing those things well. During my stay in Copenhagen, I was really mediating on this. Therefore, special thanks go Hallur. I have found many critical things of the life of a researcher with you. Thank you! Martin, I appreciate your unselfish way to be and work with me. It is incredible actually. Nikolaj, thank you for the philosophical discussions during my research process at the Copenhagen Business School. Those discussions really matter a lot to me.

Thomas, thank you for showing me how much writing actually means to me. I did not know that before and am very happy that you could show me things that I was not aware of at all before I met you. Jesper, thank you for showing what the very nature of Danish culture – including the shot(s) of Gammel Dansk – is about. It was important to me. Katharina and Nicholas, thank you for your efforts to proofread my stuff during this doctoral project. Moreover, I want to express my warm thanks to Business English Helpline that proofread my dissertation in the end of the process.

Andy, thank you for the discussions of life and how it is framed, especially from the perspective of an academic man working on a doctoral project. Sari, Kati, and Jari (the order is based on the polite structure of ordering that you guys always teach), thank you for the dancing classes in Oulu. They had a revolutionary effect on my life. It seems to me that a dance is an entrepreneurial event of collective (and if I dare to say even organisational) creativity. I have seen that light now. Make, thank you for coaching during my career as an amateur boxer between 1995 and 2003. It was a great event in my life and taught me to be very humble and honest especially to myself when trying to learn something new. In terms of boxing or research, nothing happens fast. Thank you for showing this to me, man! Peter, thank you for training with me all of those years! It was a part
of the learning process for the both of us in terms of boxing. Being aware of this was definitely a thing that helped my to finalize this doctoral project as well. Thank you for the opportunity to share this event in my life with you!

Well, this piece of paper (i.e. this doctoral dissertation) was good stuff to do in the early phase of my life as an academic researcher. I really loved this as an event in my life. Sometimes I still wonder how much a human being needs to affirm before understanding what he or she is actually thinking and talking about. As a mental operation (as long as I understand right what this actually means), I think I made sense of my affirmation at some point during this project. It seems to me that love is an affirmation of the Earth. All the other kinds of events are secondary.

Oulu, April 2012

Antti Kauppinen
List of essays


II  Kauppinen A & Juho A (2011) Internationalisation of SMEs from the perspective of social learning theory. The prior version of the essay was presented and published in McGill International Entrepreneurship Conference. The conference was held in Odense, Denmark on 16th–18th September 2011.

III  Kauppinen A (2010) Visionary entrepreneurial actions: platforms for (new) businesses in the process of entrepreneurship. The prior version of the essay was accepted to European Group of Organizational Studies Conference that was held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 28th–30th June 2011, but the final paper was presented in the management research group seminar (the group leader: Professor Daniel Hjorth) in the Department of Management, Politics, and Philosophy at the Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, on 21st September 2010.

IV  Kauppinen A (2011) The process of falling in love with what you do – the entrepreneurial passion as creative becoming in the post-industrial (business) organizations. The prior version of the essay was presented and published in Critical Management Studies Conference Proceedings. The conference was held in Naples, Italy on 20th–21st July 2011.
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1 Opening

It is irrelevant to me how my wife goes about cooking my favorite goulash as long as it turns out the way I like it. (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 59)

As the citation describes above, it seems to be that the fundamental nature of entrepreneurship more like going out than staying at home. Why so? Is it not preferable to stay at home, if your wife is preparing goulash for you? In the very nature of the phenomenon, actually it is not. Namely, a wife (or a husband) is not waiting for you at home before you have met her (or him). On this ground, the quote above reflects a by-product of the social action that is called dating, and a social action like dating is not that straightforward, is it?

What has this to do with entrepreneurship? When looking behind the everyday practices of entrepreneurs, we can recognise an interesting aspect of human life – organisational creativity. Organisational creativity is an organisational potential that is needed in the post-industrial economy. Hence, entrepreneurship is not only an organisational matter – it is also a societal one (Hjorth, Jones & Gartner 2008). It can be actualised ‘all around us’ in the form of organisational creativity (Rindova, Barry & Ketchen Jr. 2009: 490).

For example, Gartner (1993) discusses the ways in which organisational emergence differs from an already existing organisation: it is similar to comparing a person looking for a new relationship (dating) to a person in a new relationship. Both phenomena – entrepreneurship and dating – are social issues. In both cases, it is important to generate trust, co-operation, and understanding (Gartner 1993). In this way, actions related to dating and entrepreneurship make a person into something Other (a non-single or entrepreneurial).

Given this meaning, entrepreneurship seems to be a bundle of actions, and not a fixed state of existence that could be explained as a bundle of personality characteristics, for instance (see Gartner 1989). As this study draws upon the view that the lifestyle of entrepreneurs reflects organisational creativity, an entrepreneur becomes like Zarathustra, Nietzsche’s (1969) fictional prophet. According to Nietzsche (1969), the great issue of being a teacher in the manner of Zarathustra is not to teach things, but actually to fail to be that type of teacher (i.e. a person who believes they know what should be learned). This leads people to think and to become what they are capable of becoming (see Colebrook 2002). This fosters novelty, movement, and change – major issues in entrepreneurship (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).
1.1 The event of organisational entrepreneurship

As mentioned above, it seems to me that the main challenge in any study of entrepreneurship is not only to describe the phenomenon, but also to discuss what is its very nature (see Hjorth 2004a). As Seymour (2006: 141) argues, one of the challenges in the field of (international) entrepreneurship is that the emphasis has been placed on “perceptions of things, but not on the things in themselves”. That is why the idea of a phenomenon does not always help us to see the critical point under question. In contrast, the perception of a phenomenon in question is the way how the phenomenologics (and therefore social constructivists as well) make sense of the unit of analysis. As social constructivism is the scientific philosophical standpoint of this study, entrepreneurship will be analysed by the way in which it is perceived, rather than through the lens of previous studies. This feeds in to Hjorth’s (2005) assertion that entrepreneurship is not only about management of a SME (small or medium-sized enterprises), but is also about the organisational phenomenon as a part of society (see also Hjorth et al. 2008).

Currently, entrepreneurship is seen as something that it is perceived as such – for example, management or ownership of small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), recognition, discovery, creation, and development processes of business opportunities, or a bundle of entrepreneurial personality traits and qualities (Gartner 1989, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Alvarez & Barney 2007). However, many simultaneous and even contradictory social processes can be found behind the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in the post-industrial economy (Webb, Tihanyi, Ireland & Sirmon 2009). This opens up a discussion of what entrepreneurship is actually about.

The economic processes of how to create value through business-based actions have been thoroughly investigated (see Ketchen, Ireland & Snow 2007). In prior research, the major question has been linked with the opportunity-seeking issues of a firm-creating individual (Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). This contributes to the discussion of how business organisations are created (Forbes 1999). It is also crucial to make sense of the precise nature of opportunities and how they relate to the actions of entrepreneurs – the phenomenon that Hjorth (2003) calls managerial entrepreneurship. The studies of managerial entrepreneurship reflect ideas from enterprise discourse (Hjorth 2003). However, the economic and/or managerial aspects of entrepreneurship are not the whole story in this post-industrial age, because almost everybody is expected to be creative or innovative in work-related
interventions today (Hjorth 2003). Due to this, an understanding of the organisational creativity that fosters organisational entrepreneurship is needed.

Some recent scholars (basically taking European-based approaches) have criticised the phenomenon of entrepreneurship as something that relates only to the economy (Hjorth et al. 2008). This is based on findings that the historical and scientific philosophical roots of management research have had a strong impact on assumptions of what constitutes entrepreneurship (Hjorth 2003). When taking a direction that has primarily been overlooked by previous scholars (entrepreneurship as an organisational and therefore ‘entrepreneurial’ phenomenon), we can in fact see that there are many by-products of entrepreneurship – for example, internationalisation of SMEs (Schweizer, Vahnle & Johanson 2010) and illegal actions that can lead to the creation of a new (business) organisation (Webb et al. 2009).

Those by-products mentioned above have been well investigated, but the actions and processes behind them (that is, the perceptions of entrepreneurship) are not that well known (see Seymour 2006). Those social actions and processes create what is needed in order to foster the creative part of human life. This is an entrepreneurial version of entrepreneurship (Hjorth 2003). From that perspective, entrepreneurial entrepreneurship as a phenomenon seems to be not a means, but rather an end of the actions and processes related to organisational entrepreneurship (compare with Sarasvathy 2001).

As Sarasvathy (2001: 250) writes, “entrepreneurs begin with three categories of ‘means’: they know who they are, what they know, and whom they know – their own traits, tastes, and abilities, the knowledge corridors they are in, and the social networks they are part of”. According to Sarasvathy (2001), some of these means can be used to create something that is not yet known or available precisely before the actions and processes linked to them begin (see also Buchanan & Vanberg 1991, Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataraman 2003).

Gartner (1989), however, writes that entrepreneurship is a role taken in order to create organisations. This reflects the fragmented nature of knowledge related to entrepreneurship. On the one hand, there is a bundle of means which entrepreneurs can combine in order to create novelty. An antecedent of this is resource-based theory (RBT) (see Penrose 1959). On the other hand, there is a specific role that entrepreneurs take up (perhaps without any resources) when creating business organisations (see Allen 2001, Baker & Nelson 2005). Thus, there is a need to understand the actions and processes that lead a person or a
group of people to become entrepreneurs and, in this way, create many different
types of value.

As Rindova et al. (2009: 478, my italics) write, the process of entrepreneurship (that is, entrepreneuring) – a different issue from the larger set of change-oriented activities due to its efforts to create many different kinds of things rather than already predefined outcomes – is a process of finding “a new idea, a new thing, a new institution, a new market, a new set of possibilities for the entrepreneuring individual or group and/or for other actors in the environment”. This is the way I address organisational entrepreneurship in this dissertation. In doing so, I see organisational entrepreneurship as a release of organisational creativity – not as a bundle of individual traits or personality qualities that the entrepreneurs draw on in order to create a new business organisation, but as the set of new possibilities that Rindova et al. (2009) describe. Therefore, entrepreneurship is not only a set of individual qualities used by an individual to foster the targets of an organisation, but is also about an organisational ability to reinforce the targets of an individual – the combination of folds from inside and outside simultaneously (see Sørensen in press). This creates novelty, movement, and change at the societal level (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).

When integrating the arguments mentioned above, a discussion is opened up regarding how certain ‘means’ (ideas of who a person is, what he or she knows, and whom he or she knows) can exist in an entrepreneur’s mind (see Sarasvathy 2001) when that person is a part of a process of entrepreneurship that is not only a set of individual means, but also involves taking up a certain role (see Gartner 1989). For a researcher of organisational entrepreneurship this is a challenge – such means are assumed to exist, but when a role is taken up it involves a certain way of acting which might contradict ideas about who somebody is and what and whom they know, because an entrepreneur should develop his or her skills and abilities in creating new (business) opportunities. On this ground, it seems that the process of entrepreneurship is an issue of life and lifestyle (as a part of society) rather than just a business-related matter, something constructed from an entrepreneur and/or business organisation per se (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

As mentioned above, when discussing organisational entrepreneurship, similarities can be found between organisational emergence and dating (Gartner 1993, Cardon, Zietsma, Saparito, Matherne & Davis 2005). In both cases, actions are taken to foster the development of something that a person has not yet become, but is on the way to becoming. In this sense, entrepreneurship is not a question of who an entrepreneur is or is not, but of what the process behind the actions entails.
More precisely, the question is: how does the creation of novelty, movement, and change (at the level of society) take place, and what type of action is needed to make this happen (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Hjorth et al. 2008)?

Prior work concerning entrepreneurial development discusses organisational creativity as elusive (Hjorth 2005, Hjorth 2007). It is a collective way to create novelty, movement, and change, as everyday practices are suggested to prepare events and social fire (Hjorth 2007). This seems to indicate that the post-industrial economy, and post-industrial organisations, do not work in line with the apparatus of production anymore. Before (in the age of industrialisation) the apparatus of production was there – ‘out there’ – and existed per se. At the level of work organisations (such as a factory), there was the visible hand of an agent of production – a managerial entrepreneur (Hjorth 2003). As such, this contradicts the idea of the ‘invisible hand’ of the market economy proposed in 1787 by Adam Smith (2003). The term ‘manager’ comes from the Latin manus, ‘hand’. In Italian the term managgiare is used, which translates as ‘training of horses’. Thus, the assumption that a higher man (a manager) controls and manages what is happening in a factory (see for example the time and motion studies proposed of Taylor in 1911) can be seen.

Philosophically, the discussion of a managerial entrepreneur as a driver of the apparatus of production (such as a factory) gives evidence for the Cartesian principle cogito ergo sum. The basic idea behind this is that cognitive reasoning (thinking) leads automatically to the existence of a human (see Hjorth 2004b). In the industrial age, this was inevitable due to the presence of an agent of production (i.e. a managerial entrepreneur) who could drive production. That tradition’s popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century seems to be due to a need to separate a human from the soil, and therefore to increase the efficiency of work. However, it seems that working and business lives no longer work in this way anymore from the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship. An agent of production is gone. In contrast, in current working life, the business environment is ambiguous or even hostile (Johannisson 2007).

As the logics of entrepreneurship are blurry and global, we do not always even know what (if anything) to do with our lives (Mainela & Puhakka 2009). This is one of the reasons why entrepreneurialism (that is, being a person who seems to know what to do) is attractive nowadays. Entrepreneurialism requires both the “means” – as in already existing ideas of what we are, what we know, and whom we know, but also the playful parts of human life (as the basis for adopting an entrepreneurial role). This can take place in the form of the apparatus
of innovation. It seems that the apparatus of innovation is a social construct that tries to overcome the challenge of being creative and innovative. Due to this, its industrial counterpart (i.e. the apparatus of production) seems to play a different role that it did before. Namely, the post-industrial (business) organisations are pretty much based on interactions of all the types of people that create a phenomenon that I call organisational entrepreneurship in this dissertation.

As Görling and Rehn (2008) write, a venture can be created by accident. Two men rating the looks of women in a bar accidentally came up with the idea for a venture which still exists to this day – the website HotOrNot.Com, where everybody can do what the two men did in the bar and evaluate the looks of people who have downloaded a picture to the site. Görling and Rehn’s (2008) findings on accidental ventures show how industrial production and post-industrial organisational creativity/innovativeness differ from each other. In the post-industrial economy, the critical thing is to consider what types of social actions and processes lead to novelty, movement, and change – not via production and efficiency in their economic meanings only, but via the creativity and novelty that is located everywhere in society (see Rindova et al. 2009).

There is an outstanding range of work relating to business opportunities to be found: new venture creation, growth-orientated business, entrepreneurial orientation, to name just a few (see Lumpkin & Dess 1996, Forbes 1999, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Carlsson & Eliasson 2003, Davidsson 2006). However, they do not respond to the need to understand how organisational creativity can foster the process of entrepreneurship as such. There is a gap in the current entrepreneurship research in relation to gaining a better understanding of ways in which the demand for creativity and innovation in post-industrial (business) organisations can be addressed by human actions. Moreover, only a handful of studies have considered how those social actions create simultaneous human-made processes that are not about business per se, but are rather lifestyles that foster organisational entrepreneurship (see Rindova et al. 2009, Webb et al. 2009, Hjorth & Steyaert 2010).

On the grounds of the discussion above, the crucial issue is not to analyse who an entrepreneur is or how he or she differs from a non-entrepreneur. In contrast, the crucial issue is to focus on ongoing event and to explain everyday practices that lead to social movement and change – the core of organisational entrepreneurship (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Calas, Smircich & Bourne 2009, Webb et al. 2009). These things also lead to the creation of (social) value and are aspects of the phenomenon called entrepreneurship today.
This dissertation is framed around conceptual discussions of entrepreneurial actions and entrepreneurial processes. Both discussions are separated into two research problems/sub-disciplines. The first research problem/sub-discipline considers business opportunity creation and is discussed in chapter 6. It is a conceptual essay that is developed further in chapter 7, which takes an empirical view. The landmark work for these two chapters is Shane and Venkataraman (2000). The second research problem/sub-discipline approaches entrepreneurship as a contextually embedded social phenomenon, this is discussed in chapter 8, a conceptual essay that is subsequently elaborated upon as an idea of creative becoming.

The available discussion of business opportunities is outstanding and its contributions relevant (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Shane 2003, Venkataraman 1997). However, especially from the European side, scholarship on the phenomenon of entrepreneurship seems to be growing due to the need to understand entrepreneurship in relation to social actions and spatial and temporally embedded contexts (see for example the New Movements in Entrepreneurship series edited by Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyaert in 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2010). The critical difference seems to be that research on business opportunities tries to explain how a business opportunity is recognised, discovered, or created, while the scholars interested in entrepreneurial contexts and creative processes of becoming are trying to show what happens when people create novelty, movement, and change. This project attempts to combine the two strands and see the pros and cons of both. I believe this opens up a way of understanding entrepreneurship from a different angle: one that does not restrict itself to a certain approach, but shows the multiple nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship as an aspect of society.

When studying the fields of business opportunities (the first and second research problems/sub-disciplines) and contextual becoming (the third and fourth research problems/sub-disciplines), it becomes evident that entrepreneurs themselves, as individual persons, are not the core interest. The main point is to make sense of the actions and processes that those beings are parts of. Due to this, the subject (that is, an entrepreneur) is not a unit of analysis of this study, the unit of analysis is in fact the underlying driver that leads a subject to become that subject. More precisely, the unit of analysis of this study is entrepreneurial action that fosters the processes of entrepreneurship. This kind of entrepreneurial process can be a process of business opportunity recognition, discovery, development, or creation, for instance.
When discussing business opportunities (the first and second research problems/sub-disciplines) and contextual becoming (the third and fourth research problems/sub-disciplines), the creative and playful nature of entrepreneurship becomes crucial. As Rindova et al. (2009: 490) write, entrepreneurial efforts are located “all around us”. Therefore, in accordance with the prior work, the very nature of entrepreneurship has as its basis social actions that consist of serious issues (for example business opportunities as means–ends frameworks), as well as the playful aspects of human life that are a processual issue of becoming in a specific context. Due to this, the purpose of this study is to show the roles that playfulness and innovation play in organisational entrepreneurship, because that area has not been the subject of any great amount of study.

It seems to me that there has never been any clear conceptual understanding of what entrepreneurship is or of how it should be understood or approached (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000). In this study, the crucial issue is to consider entrepreneurial actions and processes in terms of the way they occur in entrepreneurs’ lives. Due to this, it is of interest to understand how those actions and processes create novelty, movement, and change. As by-products of these kinds of actions and processes, business opportunities, internationalisation of SMEs, entrepreneurial contexts, and passion can take place. In later parts of this dissertation, I will describe those by-products in more detail. However, the current literature already acknowledges that entrepreneurial actions and processes do not always lead to the same economic ends. In contrast, there are many different kinds of outcomes and by-products fostered by entrepreneurial actions and processes as part of society (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Rindova et al. 2009, Webb et al. 2009). Even research aimed at studying economic ends (business opportunities) recognises that entrepreneurial actions and processes are not always based on rationality in its economic sense per se.

As an example, the cost of an entrepreneurial opportunity does not often fall below the eventual profit made (Shane & Venkataraman 2000). From the rational or economic perspective (of making money, for instance), this seems pointless, because the entrepreneurial opportunity means profit $X$ is lost by an entrepreneur when making decision $Y$. In other words, often an entrepreneur makes a decision that leads to a lower profit level than he or she could have achieved by making the best possible decision. However, this type of irrationality happens and it is pretty much what organisational entrepreneurship is about nowadays – doing things for their own sake, even though the profit generated is less (in terms of money) than could have been achieved. Due to this, entrepreneurial actions should be framed
conceptually around passion, affects (feelings and emotions), and the drive to do something relevant in life instead of being part of the ready-made apparatus of production (for example working in a factory). Conceptually (and in part methodologically), the question is how to approach that type of phenomenon, which is completely irrational by its very nature.

Previous work (see for example Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 217) has responded to this by trying to create a unique conceptual framework that “sheds light on unexplained phenomena and enhances the quality of research”. However, it seems to me that even though that type of conceptual framework would work as a basis of future studies, it could frame away the very nature of organisational entrepreneurship – as a complex, emotional, irrational and unclear process of social actions and processes that might emerge in the form of new spaces for play and innovation. For instance, Hjorth et al. (2008) call for a multiplicity of entrepreneurship writing which highlights that entrepreneurship is not only an economic issue, but also a societal phenomenon. Moreover, Hjorth (2004b), Steyaert (2004), and Gartner (2010) call for future scholars to analyse entrepreneurship via entrepreneurial stories. This is what I have sought to do in this project.

I have discussed entrepreneurship with many of my students. Some of them seem to be interested in entrepreneurship due to the freedom that the life as a self-employed person can offer. This seems to be in line with the view proposed by Rindova et al. (2009), in which they discuss entrepreneurship as emancipation (i.e. both about ‘breaking free’ and ‘breaking up’). More precisely, it seems that entrepreneurship is seen as something that people who are clever enough could enjoy as a result of their recognition or discovery of business opportunities, therefore meaning they can avoid the constraints of working life, such as restricted office hours and so on (Kirzner 1997, Alvarez & Barney 2007, Rindova et al. 2009). The (entrepreneurial) stories of my students reflect the same problematisation mentioned above: namely, ideas about entrepreneurship are still largely based on the resource-based view (RBV) and ideas of industrial production, even though post-industrialism can be seen everywhere – especially in Western countries – when we talk about the creation of novelty, movement, and change. This study seeks to offer a solution to the problem of how to become innovative and creative in the contexts that require such qualities as social phenomena. It seems to me that this is a matter of interest for Western business schools.
My observation of students’ stories of entrepreneurship reflects that what they register as entrepreneurship (as an industrial issue) differs from the image that it could have. This is particularly important in the post-industrial economy, because there is no agent of production who can say what it is relevant to recognize (like the machinery in a factory) anymore. Instead, work-related interventions should be created socially – like a person who is trying to build a new relationship (Gartner 1993). That is one of the most important differences between industrial and post-industrial business organisations. This is not to say the industrial version of entrepreneurship is dead, but rather that the post-industrial age opens up new issues to talk about. For instance, business opportunity creation (as an action taken by a person interested in creating a new business, for instance) is an outstanding topic for understanding business/work-related interventions nowadays – not as a phenomenon that could overcome everything related to the issues of entrepreneurship, but as a way to understand how entrepreneurship has emerged as a part of that kind of a society.

Through the discussion above, organisational entrepreneurship emerges as something that cannot be easily classified as A or B. In contrast, it seems that entrepreneurship could be A and B (and also something more). Such and-thinking allows us to see the number of simultaneous human-made processes that take place. In a study of organisational entrepreneurship, this makes it possible to discuss a social energy – as an elusive event of fire – that is manifest as many different types of actions in a society (Hjorth 2004a, Rindova et al. 2009, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Webb et al. 2009). Some of those actions (but not all of them) will finally be actualised as new firms, businesses, international business affairs, and more general economic processes. In other words, the purpose of studies that consider organisational entrepreneurship research is to make sense of entrepreneurial events. It can be seen as a form of social fires, for instance, that “need to be studied via those everyday practices that prepare for them” (Hjorth 2007: 714). They also drive novelty, movement, and change as parts of societies (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).

To sum up this section, the heterogeneous (and simultaneous) entrepreneurial actions and processes mentioned above are critical in the post-industrial era because of its high demand for creativity and innovation. From the perspective of academic research, the processual philosophy of becoming (see Deleuze & Guattari 1984, Colebrook 2002) shows its value here. The process of entrepreneurship as a means–ends framework (that is, a business opportunity) has been well investigated. However, the processual parts of such processes (such as
what types of entrepreneurial action and processes of organisational entrepreneurship foster novelty, movement, and change as parts of society) have been inadequately studied so far. In accordance with previous work, the space for play and innovation is a crucial issue that should be studied carefully.

1.2 Prior research and conceptual framing of the study

This dissertation is a compilation of four essays that consider the event of organisational entrepreneurship. In this chapter, I briefly outline the relevant literature contributing to the emerging discourse of organisational entrepreneurship. More detailed descriptions of that work can be found in chapter 2. The standpoint of this study is that the subject (an entrepreneur) or the outcome of that subject’s actions (a firm) is not the most interesting issue (compare with Gartner 1989). In contrast, the issue of interest is gaining an understanding of the entrepreneurial actions and processes that lead to the creation of spaces for play and innovation in the post-industrial age.

In short, the creation of spaces for play and innovation – that is, the crossroads of research problems/sub-disciplines of business opportunities and contextually embedded creative becoming (see previous chapter) – consists of the following ideas:

1. The creation of business-related novelty is linked with business opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman 2000). The ‘business opportunity’ is a co-created human-made construct (Sarasvathy et al. 2003). The creation of such a business opportunity relates to entrepreneurial actions around the process of social learning (Alvarez & Barney 2007).

2. Business opportunities are composed of social/daily actions (Hohenthal, Johanson & Johanson 2003). Those actions emerge from the iterative process of social learning (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, 2009). The by-products of such a process (such as internationalisation) reflect the fact that the critical events require the potential of organisational entrepreneurship behind to be released (Steyaert & Katz 2004, Schweizer et al. 2010).

3. Entrepreneurial events in the process of social learning are human-made efforts (Rindova et al. 2009). Those efforts are based on visions of creating a context for novelty, movement, and change – that is, entrepreneuring (Steyaert 2007a).
4. The process of actualising the shared vision of becoming Other is eventual, but is not linear in its nature (Hjorth 2005). In terms of organisational entrepreneurship, there is a desire to create a better life via creative becoming (Sørensen in press). Such a desire can be one of the outcomes of a space for play and innovation (Beyes & Steyaert 2011).

Let me elaborate the list of things above. Firstly, as Shane and Venkataraman (2000: 220) state in their landmark paper, “to have entrepreneurship, you must first have entrepreneurial opportunities”. I agree that entrepreneurship is closely linked with business opportunities, but the very nature of those profit-seeking opportunities should be elaborated in a more detailed way – as an imaginative and co-created action rather than as a means–ends framework only (compare with Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003, Alvarez & Barney 2007). For example, Alvarez and Barney (2007) discuss two complementary views of approaching business opportunities: the discovery and creation theories.

What is important and interesting to study in terms of business opportunities is that a business opportunity is not only an objective artefact in the market (demand–supply fit, for example). The idea of a business opportunity as an objective artefact is one of the basic premises of discovery theory. However, a business opportunity can also be seen as a subjective construction that is created in human action. The idea of a business opportunity as a subjective co-creation is one of the basic premises of creation theory discussed by Alvarez and Barney (2007). The ontological discussion of business opportunities is outstanding – not as an attempt to define whether a business opportunity is objective or subjective, but from the perspective of the discourse itself (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003, Alvarez & Barney 2007, Companys & McMullen 2007, Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). It seems that discussion of the discovery and creation perspectives actually creates the way in which the nature of entrepreneurship is seen nowadays (compare with Hjorth 2003). There are different views or schools of thought that have tried to define what a business opportunity is and is not (see Companys & McMullen 2007). However, those attempts have focused on explaining the nature of business opportunities, thick descriptions of them have remained in the background.

An assumption of the individual–opportunity nexus (as a business opportunity) has constructed the teleological approach to what is seen as being about entrepreneurship (see Alvarez & Barney 2007). In this sense, it has been
assumed that entrepreneurship could be explained in a linear way – as a way from A to B. In some cases, this is definitely true. If a person has a clear idea in his or her mind of what he or she is willing to do, then the nexus between individual and opportunity does exist and will work. For instance, if there is a need to find a cure for cancer (as, of course, there is), an entrepreneur with the talents required to build up cancer-removal machinery can directly seek that business opportunity. However, stories of entrepreneurship are not usually like that. They are more like stories of the lifestyles and passionate emotions felt by people working on something that they feel matters (see Allen 2001). And that is actually what is happening at the practical level when a person is engaged in entrepreneurial actions.

From that perspective, there is not a great deal of literature showing how a business opportunity could frame outcomes or by-products of organisational entrepreneurship at the societal level (Hjorth et al. 2008). More precisely, the question is how a business opportunity is actualised as a social construct within the everyday practices of a creative and playful human. On this ground, there is room to discuss the concept of the business opportunity as a socially created co-creation or construct, rather than as an objective artefact which is ‘out there’. As discussed above, sometimes a business opportunity is ‘out there’ – like an opportunity to invent a cure for cancer – but that is not always the case. Post-industrial (business) organisations seem to be social constructs or co-creations, with no precise instructions on what to do at the beginning of the process. Instead of being marked by someone having a precise picture of what to do in his or her mind, post-industrial entrepreneurship is marked by a desire to become something that a person or group is not. Hence, we need understanding of the creative processes of entrepreneurship. Methodologically, that can be studied via the use of real-life stories (Hjorth 2004b).

In addition, it seems that quite often, entrepreneurship actually happens as part of human life. Therefore, assuming that human life is an appropriate assumption of where the entrepreneurial actions and processes manifest themselves could open up a new perspective on what the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is about – as an action that is framed around the concept of everydayness (Hjorth, Johannisson & Steyaert 2003, Steyaert & Katz 2004). Prior work has replied to this by discussing the logics of effectuation, for example (Sarasvathy 1997). However, there is still an assumption of the ‘means’ (who you are, what you know, and whom you know) (see Sarasvathy 2001).
On this ground, the ontological basis of the logic of effectuation remains the same as it is in studies of business opportunity recognition and discovery: something is ‘out there’ (the means of an acting entrepreneur or business opportunities, for example), but this does not elaborate how – or, particularly, from where –organisational entrepreneurship comes to be. If this could be better understood, work-related interventions and everyday practices could be changed to be more in line with the post-industrial need for creativity and innovation. Sarasvathy (1997) discusses how firms come to be, but what is needed is not an understanding of ‘becoming’ in its social and organisational senses, rather, there needs to be discussion of how a firm (as a business construct) is constructed, but far less of the social emergence of the human life that entrepreneurs are parts of. Furthermore, the contextual nature of entrepreneurship is neglected (Hjorth et al. 2008).

In the first essay of this dissertation, I elaborate on the creative view of business opportunities. The essay gives evidence for the argument that the nature of entrepreneurship is more about something which is done than something that simply exists (compare with Sarasvathy 2001, Sarasvathy & Dew 2005). It is about creating something that has never previously existed (Baker & Nelson 2005). Thus, the critical issue is to learn from the cultural–historical context of the environment in question (the market, for example). In terms of organisational entrepreneurship, this type of learning is a process. It consists of social actions that allow the participants in that process to learn about the critical elements of business environments and contexts in social interaction, and then to co-create and construct a business opportunity.

In the field of entrepreneurship, issues of learning have been discussed, but that approach to studies has usually been framed around an acting entrepreneur (that is, a person who creates businesses, firms, new markets, and so on). It seems to me that the actor in the process is not more interesting than the process itself, because the actors (the entrepreneurs) change over time in the post-industrial age. People change their jobs far more often than was once the case, therefore it is not that easy to say who an (organisational) entrepreneur actually is (compare with Gartner 1989). It is more interesting, then, to try to understand how entrepreneurial actions work. This also opens up a discussion on how to teach entrepreneurship and what types of action could lead to greater success in terms of businesses.

My second essay suggests that the interactions between acting subjects (entrepreneurs) become crucial when there is an intention to internalise business
affairs. This shows that an acting subject is important, but in order to understand the very nature of the process of creating and developing a business opportunity, the crucial point is to focus on the process of creation (compare with Gartner 1989). Particularly in this post-industrial age, people move quickly between positions. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that an extensive understanding of individual subjects (entrepreneurs) is a sufficient reply to the need to be creative and innovative in the long run. In contrast, I propose that social learning and organisational becomings could show how social affairs relating to the creation and development of business opportunities take place.

In seeking to understand social learning, rather than a set of individual qualities that may or may not lead to the creation and/or development of new business opportunities, I believe that the core interest of the research should be located in entrepreneurial actions and processes. In doing so, we could gain a better understanding of the ways in which such social affairs take place. The second essay of this dissertation suggests that social learning has the power to create novelty, movement, and change both inside and outside existing business organisations (see Hjorth et al. 2003). The second essay is framed around the issue of SMEs’ internationalisation. There are many by-products of social activities related to entrepreneurship. One is the internationalisation of SMEs. This aids the understanding that entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon (more precisely: a cyclical process of expansive learning) by its very nature.

But what does it mean to investigate social learning from the perspective of entrepreneurial actions? As Engeström (2001: 137) writes, from an activity theoretical perspective of social learning, “people and organisations are all the time learning something that is not stable”. Therefore, it seems that a system of activities together co-create the process, and the result is not clear. In contrast, it is based on life and its events. This is also the same in terms of entrepreneurship (see Rindova et al. 2009, Webb et al. 2009). Entrepreneurship is about human actions at the societal level, roles taken in order to actualise entrepreneurial actions through human agency.

The third essay discusses the roles taken in certain entrepreneurial contexts. I use criminal characters in the essay in order to show that the contexts of entrepreneurship are located almost everywhere. The crucial thing is to update the visions (of what a better life might mean) on the way to becoming something other than what you are right now. In the third essay, this is illustrated by analysing the movie From Dusk Till Dawn, in which two criminals (Seth and Richie Gecko) commit a robbery and then try to escape to Mexico to enjoy their
ill-gotten gains. This highlights that organisational entrepreneurship can be located everywhere, and entrepreneurial potential is present in everybody – not only those with a certain set of personality traits or qualities.

Some studies have suggested looking behind the scenes and elaborating on what the passions relating to entrepreneurship are, how they work, and for what reason they occur (Cardon, Wincent, Singh & Drnovsek 2009). In doing so, it is important to investigate creativity, context, and the social processes of everyday human practices (Hjorth et al. 2008, Schweizer et al. 2010). That is why the entrepreneurial actions and processes in life are located at the centre of this study. My third essay suggests a crisis in the literature of entrepreneurship. More precisely, there is a turn from opportunity-based writings (the first and second essays) to processuality (the third and fourth essays) in seeking to make sense of entrepreneurship and its nature.

The meaning of the creative view of business opportunities is relevant (see Alvarez & Barney 2007). The assumption is that both the means and ends of the entrepreneurial process can be created on the way towards a (new) business opportunity (Sarasvathy 2001, Sarasvathy et al. 2003). This is in line with the idea of co-created learning (see Holt 2008, Jones & Holt 2008). Learning has been seen as an important issue in entrepreneurship, especially when seeking to create new things without any (or only with a small amount of) money (Allen 2001, Sarasvathy 2001). However, there is still an assumption about the existing “means” that describe what an entrepreneur (or an entrepreneurial person) is about. It seems to me that a better option is to elaborate what the entrepreneurial persons are doing and how the actions of them reflect the very nature of the processes regarding to organisational entrepreneurship.

In his book No Cash, No Fear (2001), Terry Allen discusses ways to create businesses without financial backing. His stories are interesting insights into what entrepreneurship actually is, or what it could be (compare with the logic of effectuation proposed by Sarasvathy 2001). Those stories have inspired some scholars to create narrative-based understandings of entrepreneurship (see especially the special issue of Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing published in 2007). The basic principles of Allen’s (2001) approach also emphasise the meaning of learning, he suggests people should follow the things they find relevant. Moreover, he writes about his personal career. He emphasises that there must be love behind entrepreneurial actions, that homework on the meaning of ‘the rules of thumb’ (ways of acting entrepreneurially) must be undertaken, and that it is important to ‘ride with the tide’ (go with the flow) (Allen 2001).
issues can also be seen in the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship, based on the entrepreneurial passion to actualise desires.

Allen’s (2001) discussion and my empirical analysis in this project (the second and fourth essays, the chapters 7 and 9) show that there is a need to see entrepreneurship as a learning process (see also Alvarez & Barney 2007). That iterative process of social learning leads entrepreneurs to focus on the things that matter to them. In this way, entrepreneurship seems to be not only about the creation, management, and government of SMEs, the most important issues are everyday actions (and life as such). They seem to foster the process of entrepreneurship (see Steyaert & Katz 2004, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). Therefore, there seems to be a dichotomy between managerial ideas of entrepreneurship (based on control and order in a firm) and creative/entrepreneurial potential in terms of the same issue. The prior work defines organisational entrepreneurship as the

relation between an established order and creativity within such order – on the order of a strategized place (appropriated by management knowledge) and the creation for play and/or innovation (heterotopia) within the apparatus of such an order (Hjorth 2005: 387).

This project is framed conceptually around that definition. The most important concepts of this study are illustrated in Figure 1.
As Figure 1 illustrates, the dichotomy between order (entrepreneurship studied as a sub-discipline of management – that is, enterprising discourse) and play/innovation (studied in the name of entrepreneurial entrepreneurship) is a discussion of how organisational entrepreneurship emerges as a part of society. In that sense, the event of organisational entrepreneurship is an outcome fostered by organisational creativity. However, organisational entrepreneurship is not the only outcome of organisational creativity. It fosters many other kinds of outcomes, such as art, theatre plays, and literature, to mention only a few (see Figure 1). As described above, when considering social spaces for play and innovation, novelty, movement, and change are post-industrial by-products that can be actualised as a new firm, a business, or internationalisation of SMEs, for instance. An industrial counterpart to these kinds of by-products could be a factory, which an agent of production (that is, a managerial entrepreneur) drives and controls, whereas a post-industrial entrepreneur is creating a new space and spacing within it.

Hjorth (2005) elaborates on space and spacing: it is about “the differentiation of other spaces – the spacing that creates heterotopias” (Hjorth (2005: 394). In that sense, the pre-described (managerial) places can be used for rest, silence, and pleasure, but what happens in them is about the creation of new spaces for play and innovation. More precisely, they are spaces in which the everyday practices
of creative men and women are transferred into entrepreneurial actions that might lead to entrepreneurial processes which make novelty, movement, and change. In this study, the creation of novelty, movement, and change are studied via business opportunities and contextual becoming, as the discussion above outlines.

When investigating organisational entrepreneurship in this way, it appears that the process of entrepreneurship is eventual, but not linear in nature (see Hjorth 2005, Steyaert 2007b). This means that it is not enough to investigate the things that follow on from each other, we must also study the organisational creativity that fosters organisational entrepreneurship (see Figure 1). The prior work has pretty much ignored this (Hjorth et al. 2008). That is why the essays within this project cover two elements: the first (essays 1 and 2) highlight a crisis in the literature of business opportunities and the second (essays 3 and 4) show the location and meaning of studying organisational entrepreneurship from the perspective of contexts and creative/processual becoming as parts of societies – not simply as a part of economies (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

As Steyaert (2007a) argues, the use of a ‘processual becoming’ approach helps an entrepreneurship researcher to see the imaginative potential of social affairs as a conceptual attractor. For example, Steyaert (2007a) and Rindova et al. (2009) call upon researchers to approach the process of entrepreneurship – entrepreneuring – as a standpoint that takes the processual nature of the phenomenon into account. This means that creative social events are actually those that create what happens in entrepreneurial actions, and therefore in socially constructed and co-created processes of entrepreneurship (see also Hjorth 2004a). What happens at the practical level is that entrepreneurs are learning all the time (see Hohenthal et al. 2003). This process involves not only market-based learning, but also social learning regarding how their lives are engaged with the process of entrepreneurship and how this is the basis of the value that they are creating. It can be about novelty, movement, and change, for instance (see Figure 1).

As Engeström (2001) argues, social learning relates to the structures of human activity. There is an object of actions that is a shared object – a moving target. The same is the case in entrepreneuring, which is created by human actions and imagination, not as a linear process from A to B. The reason for the non-linear nature of such a process is that the human is an irrational animal. In contrast, the process of entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneuring) consists of co-creative, spatial, and creative ways to make sense of the world (compare with Weick 1979). On this ground, there is no self, but the desires behind entrepreneuring make a human passionate rather than an economic calculator (i.e.
economic man proposed by Marshall 1920). This reflects a space for play and innovation – doing things on their own sake – like an artist creating a masterpiece (see Dew 2009).

Sometimes such spaces can be interpreted as crazy, rebellious, or even bad (see Smith & Anderson 2004, Hjorth 2005, Görling & Rehn 2008). In this study, I found evidence for Rehn and Taalas’ (2004: 149) argument that there is “a bias towards ‘nice entrepreneurs’” meaning here that actually the creation of a space for play can come about through all types of human processes, not only the economic or “nice” ones (see Webb et al. 2009). Moreover, Hill and Levenhagen (1995) write how the entrepreneurs make decisions of the things they do not know that well, and thus operate on the edge they do not know. It seems that entrepreneurial actions are based on the desire to become something other than what a person is right now (see Gartner 1993). The outcomes of this process are those usually recognized as entrepreneurship (the efforts of internationalisation in SMEs, personality qualities of an acting entrepreneur, creation of new ventures, and so on). In the second essay, I illustrate that these outcomes are actually by-products of entrepreneurial action.

The discussion above suggests that Görling and Rehn’s (2008) approach to ventures created by accidents seems to describe the nature of entrepreneurship. Perhaps these types of action could show what the mainstream literature is not able to (the interactive and processual elements of entrepreneurship). This type of work is not about predicting how the means–ends frameworks (that is, business opportunities) are created in a risky business environment (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003, see also Knight 1921), but about illustrating what is actually happening and in which types of contexts. Similarly, Allen’s (2001) book of entrepreneurial stories problematises the core of the studies seeking to rationally analyse entrepreneurship (compare with the logic of causation proposed by Sarasvathy (2001) and Sarasvathy & Dew (2005)). Thus, entrepreneurship can be seen as a bundle of creative social actions that are closer to the nature of dating (as a bundle of social effort to become Other) than to life in a relationship (Gartner 1993).

The discussion above implies entrepreneurs act and think “as if”, in the sense of creating plausible explanations of the equivocal events that they express as non-equivocal interpretations (see Gartner, Bird & Starr 1992, Steyaert 2007b). In a similar vein, the nature of effectuation is based on the assumption that entrepreneurs are used to working closely with social networks that they are familiar with rather than doing a wide range of market research etcetera in order
to investigate the market in depth (Sarasvathy 2001). This issue is explicating in more detail in my third essay (see also Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Rindova et al. 2009, Webb et al. 2009). The third essay is linked with the contexts of entrepreneurship and how they are shaped by entrepreneurial actions. It suggests that the networks that (organisational) entrepreneurs are involved (or already familiar) with are the basis of the contexts (compare with Sarasvathy 2001).

Conceptually, entrepreneurial contexts (in which people work closely with their social networks) seem to be platforms for many types of things – not only business-based intentions. This is elaborated in the third essay. However, it seems that the business-related contexts are pretty much the same as all the other types of social contexts that framed around close social relationships and networks. When investigating entrepreneurial actions and processes in this way, firms, internationalisation, personality traits and so on can be seen as by-products of organisational entrepreneurship via social spaces for play and innovation, as illustrated in Figure 1 (compare with Hjorth 2005, Steyaert 2007a). As discussed above, they are not the subject matter per se, but they are the side effects of creating a space for novelty, movement, and change. The third essay opens up this discussion from the perspective of the entrepreneurial contexts required for social platforms – some of which can also be used to create new business.

What this means in practice is that as long as we can see entrepreneurship more as a kind of organisational (and social) creativity rather than a bundle of more or less static personality skills, traits, or ways to create new ventures, we could use that entrepreneurial and innovative potential in a broader sense. Study of prior entrepreneurship research indicates to me that entrepreneurship is seen as almost mythical (like Utopia, open to chosen persons only – see Ogbor 2000), but not as an everyday practice accessible to almost everybody (compare with Hjorth et al. 2003). I see this as problematic. I am sure that if a greater amount of organisational creativity could be used, there would be potential to be not only more creative, but also more productive in its basic meaning (that is, homo oeconomicus).

From the perspective of the research outline, the discussion above means that research actions should focus on everyday actions and processes from the organisational perspective. In doing so, the focus of the firms and/or acting entrepreneurs will shift (Hjorth 2004a, Steyaert & Katz 2004, Steyaert 2007a). Alternatively, the research could focus is social constructive in its nature (see Berger & Luckmann 1966). In that way, the processual nature of human life becomes crucial. I discuss the processual philosophy of becoming in the final
chapter (the fourth essay), which is based on empirical fieldwork that I conducted in Finland. I followed a person seeking to become a stand-up comedian. This shows that the nature of organisational entrepreneurship is about creating space for play and innovation and that it is unnecessary to analyse what a person or firm is about \textit{per se}.

The positive effect of using processual philosophy in entrepreneurship research is that if researchers can better highlight the nature of entrepreneurship as a creation of space for novelty, movement, and change, surely the number of new firms would grow. The processual philosophy is needed in order to elaborate what the process actually is, and how it is actualised. When people are creating spaces for play and innovation, the products of that processual action can be many types of things: literature, art, music, dance, or new firms (see Guillet de Monthoux 2010). All those things are human-made artefacts. Without an understanding of the true nature of the process, the focus of an entrepreneurship study can easily shift to businesses and business opportunities. The problem here is a lack of consideration of the entire entrepreneurship process. In contrast, the complete understanding of such a process is a larger issue – it involves the study of the life of person becoming entrepreneurial.

As Allen (2001: xiii) writes, “Having your own business is an accelerated learning experience. And what you learn most about is yourself.” Thus, I consider that entrepreneurs’ actions are about learning, as part of the process of becoming. For example, Sørensen (in press) writes about the subjectification of the post-industrial man (that is, an entrepreneurial manager) who takes on the nature of their actions in everyday (work-related) practices. This suggests that a human is always a part of the process of becoming. This creates a location for the processual perspective (of becoming) in entrepreneur studies, as foldings are discussed there (see Deleuze 1999). This is also a field that the upcoming book \textit{Organisational Entrepreneurship} is trying to build on (Hjorth 2012 forthcoming).

1.3 Research scope and gap

This study aims to integrate the research problems/sub-disciplines of business opportunity creation/development and contextual/creative becoming (see Figure 2). Current research on entrepreneurial processes is mainly focused on the recognition, discovery, and creation of business opportunities. Entrepreneurs’ imagination and social everyday actions and practices are not particularly well investigated in that discourse (see Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010, compare with
Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). In the post-industrial age, almost everybody is asked to be creative and innovative. Hence, the apparatus of production (for example, a factory) no longer works in the way it used to. Rather, the focus has moved to a kind of apparatus of innovation – a social power that produces novelty, movement, and change as part of human life – as a way to actualise entrepreneurs’ visionary life around business opportunities. This is the debate the European School of Entrepreneurship is willing to open up by suggesting that the empirical methods of narrativity and genealogic storytelling could contribute.

As Figure 2 illustrates, the research problem/sub-discipline of entrepreneurship in relation to business opportunities (the creation of business opportunities), as well as contextuality and creative becoming, are linked in this study via the concept of the event of organisational entrepreneurship. Prior work has defined organisational entrepreneurship as the “relation between an established order and creativity within such order – on the order of a strategized place (appropriated by management knowledge) and the creation for play and/or innovation (heterotopia) within the apparatus of such an order” (Hjorth 2005: 387). It seems that there is always a question of order/rationality (management, for example) and disorder/irrationality (entrepreneurship, for example) for studies of organisational entrepreneurship to consider. Such an order/rationality is seen in this project as the creation/development of business opportunities (see the first and second essays, chapters 6 and 7). Moreover, such a disorder/irrationality is linked with
contextuality and creative becoming in the second part of this dissertation (the third and fourth essays, chapters 8 and 9).

In this study, the research problem/sub-discipline of business opportunity creation is discussed in the first essay (chapter 6), business opportunity development – in the context of internationalisation of SMEs – in the second essay (chapter 7), contextuality in the third essay (chapter 8), and creative becoming in the fourth essay (chapter 9). The research scope illustrated in Figure 2 invites the possibility of seeing the current research problems/sub-disciplines of organisational entrepreneurship research in a novel light. More precisely, the event of organisational entrepreneurship becomes a phenomenon that links together the current research problems/sub-disciplines of entrepreneurship research. In this, organisation theory is a conceptual way to better understand how entrepreneurship takes place in the post-industrial (business) organisations.

On the grounds of the discussion above, we can see that the entrepreneurial process is located not only ‘in’, but also ‘between’ (that is, the space for play/innovation called heterotopia) entrepreneurial actions. Those actions are conducted by entrepreneurs, for example (see Hjorth 2004a, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Steyaert 2007a). In practice, this means that we have to analyse two simultaneous processes – an established order and creativity – within the apparatus of order, in which a human is involved. Hence, we are not only analysing the economic or managerial processes (the opportunity-based issues), but also the creative parts of human life (the contextually-embedded becoming). Such an analysis helps us to understand the event of organisational entrepreneurship, and is also important when trying to comprehend what happens in the early phase of SMEs (new venture creation) – in other words, managerial entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2003). SMEs are not the only form of organisational entrepreneurship, but reflect it as a form of business opportunity creation.

To offer a concrete example: the creation of new ventures is a by-product of organisational entrepreneurship (compare with Schweizer et al. 2010). However, analysing such by-products (firms and their internationalisation, etc.) alone does not present images that help to see the constructive forces behind the phenomenon that people refer to as entrepreneurship. Rather, entrepreneurial actions should be studied in the name of organisational entrepreneurship. The event of organisational entrepreneurship opens up a novel way to understand how things actually happen when people are acting entrepreneurially, and then create a business opportunity that can be actualised as a new firm, a new business, the internationalisation of a firm, etc. As Hjorth (2005: 387, my italics) writes, “you
arrive at the conclusion that opportunities are rather created in an ensemble of time in an already arranged order – in a place often prepared for something else”. In that sense, organisational entrepreneurship – such as that discussed in Hjorth (2005) and Hjorth (2012) – is a tactical art of creating a space for play and innovation, especially in the post-industrial age.

What comes to the tactical art of creating a space for play and innovation, contextual, creative, and social issues should be investigated in order to reply to the need for creation and innovation in the post-industrial era (see Hjorth et al. 2008). In an academic work, this also raises the question of publishing. The US-based publications seem to have as their main interest issues such as the recognition, discovery, creation, and development of business opportunities (see for example Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003, Baker & Nelson 2005, Baron & Ensley 2006, Alvarez & Barney 2007, Companys & McMullen 2007, Wood & McKinley 2010). Similarly, European scholars publish more in the European-based forums and journals (see Hjorth 2005; Fletcher 2006, Steyaert 2007a Sørensen 2010). Thus, it seems that the discourses have been polarised academically.

Based on my argument of the polarisation of entrepreneurship discourses, I want to approach entrepreneurship at the crossroads of these two discourses (see Figure 2). On this ground, entrepreneurship is not only seen as management and/or the creation of SMEs (order/managerial entrepreneurship). Rather, it is about creation of space for play and innovation (disorder/entrepreneurial entrepreneurship). At the practical level this type of research might foster by-products such as new business organisations (SMEs, for example), but it is not the necessary condition. The necessary condition of this type of phenomenon is organisational creativity, which drives people to create new ideas, things, institutions, markets, and possibilities (just to mention a few), whether individually or together with a group of other actors in a certain entrepreneurial context (see Rindova et al. 2009). More precisely, these kinds of actions in certain entrepreneurial contexts frame what organisational entrepreneurship is all about.

On the grounds of the discussion above, the crossroads of four separate research problems/sub-disciplines of entrepreneurship leads me to decide against conducting a systematic literature review, as the purpose of such a review is “evaluating and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question, topic area, or phenomenon of interest” (Kitchenham 2007: vi). While this is important, creating a new understanding of a phenomenon in that way will mean that the research gap will be like a brick in a broken wall. Even though
there could be a hole in the wall of business opportunity-based literature (more precisely, the research gap, in terms of its traditional definition), there is an option of seeing the wall differently. A systematic literature review does not help here, because while the basic assumption is that there is a wall, what if there is a need to break it down? If this is the case, a researcher should follow the same path that Hjorth (2005: 387) took in his study and “critically question the certain aspects (primarily the governmental rationality) of conventional managerialism and managerial entrepreneurship”.

When trying to break down the wall of entrepreneurship literature (that is, to see it in a novel light), awareness of the crossroads of research problems/sub-disciplines of business opportunity creation/development (in the first and second essay) and contextual becoming (in the third and fourth essays) is obviously needed. The polarisation of those discourses (between the US and Europe) appears to have created a tension in the group of entrepreneurship scholars. For example, some European-based journals (such as *Organisation and Organisation Studies*) have started to publish on issues of entrepreneurship in a different way from the US-based journals (such as *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*). For that reason, I feel it is relevant to attempt to contribute to both the US and European forums, rather than focusing on only one specific type of discussion and risk reinforcing the polarisation.

As Rindova et al. (2009) write, as an action, entrepreneurship is all around us. Therefore, there should be an argumentation that feeds both discourses and that could help them support each other. This is not to say that the concept of business opportunity could cover all matters related to contextual becoming, or vice versa. Rather, I suggest that by reaching an understanding of each others’ work, the scholars interested in business opportunities (as means–ends frameworks) could find new inspiration from those who write about contextual becoming, and vice versa. From the perspective of business opportunities, contextual becoming could open up a discussion of what the process of entrepreneurship actually is, and where, how, and why it happens. From the angle of the group interested in issues of becoming, etc., there is a potential to better understand businesses through reaching a better understanding of the approaches typical to studies of business opportunities.

That is why this dissertation consists of two distinct conceptual parts. The first part (essays 1 and 2) discusses the nature of business opportunities from the perspective of entrepreneurial actions. The second part (essays 3 and 4) is an argument for dealing better with processual approaches when making sense of
what entrepreneurial processes (as processual phenomena) truly are. These two parts are framed around the concept of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, as this allows us to follow both paths to discuss the nature of space for play and innovation – a critical element of the post-industrial economy.

1.4 The research questions

The discussion above does not imply that I wish to deconstruct prior research. On the contrary, I wish to highlight that this position at the crossroads of two different approaches (business opportunity-based discourses and contextual becoming) could allow for collaboration rather than competition. To date, it seems that at least two (ontologically) different approaches (see Figure 2) have been polarised as scientific research problems/sub-disciplines of organisational entrepreneurship. With this in mind, I state the following primary research question:

_RQ: How do entrepreneurial actions and processes frame the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship?_

In order to reply to the primary question, I state four sub-questions that are used as separate research questions to be addressed in my essays (chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9):

1. _What is the nature of the business opportunity creation process, assuming it to be linked with entrepreneurial actions? (chapter 6)_

2. _How do entrepreneurial actions open up the possibility for SMEs to internationalise their actions related to international opportunities? (chapter 7)_

3. _What types of entrepreneurial actions are needed when creating a context for the process of entrepreneurship – entrepreneuring – through a shared vision? (chapter 8)_

4. _Why does entrepreneurial passion, as a vision related to a better life, foster the context-related process of entrepreneurship? (chapter 9)_

The research questions mentioned above seek to reply to the problematisation of the work related to business-based individuals (entrepreneurs) and the creation of new business organisations (SMEs, for example). My argument is framed around entrepreneurial actions and processes. Even though the essays included here are separate articles, they frame the primary question in such a way that...
organisational entrepreneurship is linked with the space between an established order and creativity (the space for play and innovation) (see Hjorth 2004b, 2005). It is assumed that entrepreneurship is not just a single (social) event in the life of entrepreneurs, for instance. To the contrary, it is a larger process of social learning and becoming that consists of many separate (social) events and efforts.

1.5 Methodological choices

As the discussion above reflects, there is a need to view the phenomenon of entrepreneurship from two separate angles. There is a need to analyse business opportunities, and in particular to consider the discourses that consider business opportunities from the subjective/qualitative perspectives of social learning (see Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). There is also a need to consider studies that approach the event of organisational entrepreneurship. This is a contextually embedded phenomenon – entrepreneurial becoming (see Hjorth 2004b). There is an assumption behind the business opportunity-based literature that a conceptual framework of some sort could offer “a systematic body of information about entrepreneurship” (Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 224). As long as entrepreneurship is all around us as a contextually embedded phenomenon, this seems to be complicated (see Rindova et al. 2009). Methodologically, this raises the question of how then to study such a phenomenon.

This study suggests that organisational entrepreneurship is a context-related phenomenon, and therefore should be investigated using methods that support that belief. In terms of the methodological choices for a study, contextually this offers the potential to overcome the difficulty mentioned above by offering a better understanding of the complex issue of entrepreneurship. Mainela and Puhakka (2009: 131) write that future scholars could “look for entrepreneurial phenomena outside the most common small/independent business context”. In terms of this study, I think it was methodologically better to create an approach that could help the future scholars to open up new ways to see a phenomenon rather than trying to reproduce again the same information as the prior scholars have already done. In this study, genealogical storytelling is used as a method to approach the empirical reality in which the event of organisational entrepreneurship takes place.

There is always a question of how any methodological tool or framework can reflect what is actually happening in the field, as entrepreneurship is a practical and applied phenomenon. This has not been neglected so far. For instance, Shane
and Venkataraman (2000) mention that data about entrepreneurship comes from many different types of sources. Therefore, it seems that even though methodological pluralism is a solution to understanding a complex phenomenon, it also builds the polarisation mentioned above. This raises the chicken–egg problem: when trying to make better sense of what organisational entrepreneurship actually is, there is a tendency to break previous framework(s) that do not fit with the methodological choices in question.

The demand for multiplicity in terms of research methods is the reason why contextuality is the methodological starting point of this study. While contextuality does not solve the problem of multiplicity per se, it helps the researcher to consider empirical happenings in a certain spatial-temporal space. Moreover, that spatial-temporal space is important in terms of the nature of organisational entrepreneurship (Hjorth 2005). That is why entrepreneurial actions always happen in a certain way in a particular time and space. If you consider entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley, for example, it can be interpreted that a certain environment (that is, context) is an important feature of the actions that take place around San Francisco, but not somewhere else. This gives evidence for the usage of ethnography in this study (see Geertz 1973, 1988) and shows the value of genealogical storytelling as a method to understand what is happening on the field (see Hjorth 2004b, Steyaert 2004, Hjorth 2009).

Of course there are many other approaches to entrepreneurship, such as the structural hole theory (Burt 1992), entrepreneurial orientation (Lumpkin & Dess 1996, Wiklund & Shepherd 2003, Covin, Green & Slevin 2006), corporate entrepreneurship (Burgelman 1983) and intrapreneurship (Pinchot 1985). Those discussions are also important from the perspective of this study, especially in terms of business opportunities. However, by carrying out a literature review of them, there is a tendency to avoid multiple methods. In contrast, publishing (the basis of research) supports a researcher in following methods that have been well applied to date. That is why contextuality opens up the novel perspective of seeing what is actually happening when the event of organisational entrepreneurship takes place (see Figure 2).

In this study I worked with narrative interviews, which were carried out in an open-ended manner. In this way, I went through the critical business-related actions that two opportunity-creative entrepreneurs were performing in their business. According to Söderberg (2006: 413), conducting narrative interviews “opens a window to the diverse worlds that key actors in an organisation construct, and often act upon as if they were real”. This expresses the nature of
social interaction, as the definition of interaction is a kind of action that occurs as two or more objects that have an effect upon one another. Therefore, there is no truth in the objective sense. As Czarniawska (1997a) suggests, ‘science’ is actually much more closer to ‘narrative’ than one could imagine. For example, “there is an abundance of stories and metaphors in scientific texts, while folk tales and fiction build on facts and sometimes even play with formal logic” (Czarniawska 1997a: 7). The critical thing in a narrative study is to interpret a story and provide a thick description of it, as then that type of data “registers and explores how bodies’ capacities to act increases and decreases” (Hjorth 2009: x).

Czarniawska’s (1997b) ideas of storytelling describe pretty well that the world itself is actually to some degree produced in a narrative way. There are a number of different social constructs that reflect what is regarded as ‘truth’ (Berger & Luckmann 1966). This idea comes back to the previously mentioned egg–chicken problem, the pluralism in terms of methodology not only produces complexity with regard to the meaning of what entrepreneurship is about, but also creates a better fit between the empirical world – context, where the event of organisational entrepreneurship takes place – and the existing understanding of it (which is not that contextual as yet). As Hjorth et al. (2008) suggest, entrepreneurship is an issue of society, not only part of the economy. That is why entrepreneurial efforts are located “all around us” (Rindova et al. 2009: 490).

In order to make sense of the nature of organisational entrepreneurship as part of a society (rather than only an economic issue), this study uses genealogical storytelling. According to Hjorth (2004b), genealogical storytelling helps a researcher to make sense of entrepreneurial events and processuality when studying entrepreneurship. Moreover, the second part of this empirical study was framed ethnographically. I conducted an interview with an up-and-coming stand-up comedian. Stand-up comedians are always entrepreneurs in the context of the Finnish stand-up comedy business, so in that sense the process of becoming entrepreneurial was obvious. The ethnographical part of this empirical study shows how beliefs, expressive symbols, and values reflect the entrepreneurial contextuality – the context being the society. More precisely, it shows how social interactions mediate the reality that we interpret to be ‘true’ (Berger & Luckmann 1966).

These contextually embedded ‘truths’ can change between one social space and another, because the signs and signals that we perceive are different in different contexts. Interpretations of social interactions vary, and this variation is the basis of the (socially shared) ‘truth’. For example, Berger and Luckmann
(1966: 43) write: “I may think that the other is smiling while in fact he is smirking”. That means that the same physical movement creates two different interpretations, at least. However, from the perspective of this study, the context itself – that is, society – remains.

In fact, the abovementioned variation between interpretation of signs is the basis of human interactions. The way in which those different symptoms or signs are interpreted is the way in which entrepreneurship takes place – how one interprets people and their actions around one, and how one is interpreted by others. For example, Webb et al. (2009) write about entrepreneurial efforts that might be misinterpreted with regard to their business meaning, even though they have a social basis in business-related contexts (e.g. informal and renegade economies). Thus, entrepreneurship is about change in the sense of what people interpret to be business-related issues (see Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

In Gartner’s (1989: 64) words, an “entrepreneur is not a fixed state of existence, rather entrepreneurship is a role that individuals undertake to create organisations”. This offers evidence for the argument that organisations can be created through organisational entrepreneurship as a movement that is fostered by a decision to adopt entrepreneurship. In other words, they are about actions. The ethnographical approach supports my ambition to investigate social actions in the real-life contexts in which they take place (Johnstone 2007). In other words, the critical issue is to make sense of what the different types of signs (such as beliefs, expressive symbols, and values) mean in a certain context and create a thick description of that (Geertz 1973). Storytelling is a way to do that – for instance, by analysing stories that already exist in the field, reporting empirical findings in the form of stories, or conceptualising organisational life as stories and offering organisation theory as a tool to read that (Czarniawska-Joerges 1995, Czarniawska 1997b).

Furthermore, there is a need to express the thick descriptions of stories in a narrative study. In other words, a study could better articulate the meaning of a story as a part of the larger picture of the study’s aim (Hjorth 2009). That is why the story of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian was framed ethnographically. More precisely, the interview that concerned the up-and-coming stand-up comedian was interpreted as a part of the Finnish stand-up comedy business. The data relating to this field of business was gathered as ethnographical fieldwork in a firm that creates stand-up comedy clubs. The stand-up comedian was also part of their business, in this way, the two data sources support each other and provide
an opportunity to create a thick description of the person seeking to become a stand-up comedian (that is, an entrepreneur).

As part of the study’s ethnographical fieldwork, I followed the role taken by the up-and-coming stand-up comedian (that of a fledgling entrepreneur). From the ethnographical perspective, his beliefs, expressive symbols, and values reflected how the role of becoming a stand-up comedian came to be. The most critical thing was the passion underlying the actions of the comedian. Deleuze’s (1999) interpretation of Foucault (becoming) opened up a way to articulate this. Becoming, as compared with being, reflects the process supported by undertaking a role of entrepreneurship. In that sense, entrepreneurship is about movement, not about staying in the same, fixed position over time (compare with Sarasvathy 2001). An ethnographer should understand the meaning of actions related to this type of movement in a certain context, in order to offer a thick description (Geertz 1973).

Tsoukas and Chia (2002) have discussed organisational becoming in the context of organisations. They write that organisational change is an ongoing process of “reviewing of actors’ webs of beliefs and habits of action as a result of new experiences obtained through interactions” (Tsoukas & Chia 2002: 570). The basic idea behind this is that an organised change is a directed movement towards a certain end (Tsoukas & Chia 2002). In this study, I followed this idea without assuming that a certain end should always be present. To the contrary, and as previously noted, entrepreneurship can be an accident, for instance (Görling & Rehn 2008). Thus, Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) concept of organising does not completely fit into this study. Instead of applying their idea completely, I used the idea of becoming provided by Tsoukas and Chia (2002). It is about folding, meaning that there are always both internal and external folds that cover what becoming Other is.

Deleuze’s (1999) idea of becoming also works with ethnography. Geertz (1973) writes that one task for an ethnographer is to make sense of signs in a certain context, where social interactions take place. In that sense, organisational becoming is similar. Tsoukas and Chia (2002) give an example of a copy machine that breaks down when treated in a certain way. The same is true of human interaction (in this study, entrepreneurial actions). Specific types of signs and actions take on different meanings depending on the context. For example, Geertz (1973) writes of the cockfight, a painful competition in which men compete with regard to their level of masculinity. In the context of universities in the 21st century, the cockfight is meaningless (because of attempts to diminish the
perception of differences between masculinity and femininity), but in the context in which such a cockfight does take place as an expression of masculinity, it reflects the most masculine person in the group. Due to the importance of contextuality, an ethnographer must understand where and for what reason something happens in the context in question. For this reason, my interview with the stand-up comedian was framed ethnographically.

In order to make sense of signs and actions in a certain context, I found it crucial to conduct this study by using the method of genealogical storytelling. The interviews concerning a collaboration project of two firms producing software together and the interview with the stand-up comedian indicate the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship. It is about opportunity-seeking actions and contextual becomings in the process of entrepreneurship. The interviews with the stand-up comedian opened up a way to retrospectively discuss his feelings about beliefs, expressive symbols, and values (compare with Geertz 1973). This is crucial, because the process of becoming is extremely important from the perspective of intensive feelings of transformation – how a person folds internally and externally (see Deleuze 1999). ‘Internal folding’ relates to a person’s fit with ongoing occurrences/organisation, ‘external folding’ to how the external environment fits with that person (Sørensen, in press). The same is true of the first empirical part of this study: the collaboration project between a Finnish and Danish firm producing software together is based on their desires to become better persons.

This information was gathered through the stories that the two entrepreneurs and the stand-up comedian told about the processes in which they are involved. The ethnographical fieldwork concerning the comedian was carried out because I wanted to better understand the context in which he was operating. This is a crucial aspect of the study of entrepreneurial events (Steyaert & Katz 2004). In that sense, organisational entrepreneurship is a contextually embedded phenomenon and therefore almost everybody can be an organisational entrepreneur. The critical thing is the process of striving for a better future and life. In entrepreneurship research, this type of data can be gathered via empirical storytelling (Hjorth 2009, Gartner 2010).

In that sense, the narrative type of open interview replies to the need to see the different perspectives from which the actors see their relation to others. This is how they ‘become’ over time (compare with Deleuze 1999). Relation to other actors is important in this study due to its discussion of organisational entrepreneurship as a social issue. Moreover, the separate contexts are important
social platforms of the creation of spaces for play and innovation. According to Söderberg (2006: 399), “the narrator thus prioritizes and orders the events and places them in a particular context in order to suggest connections between the events and provide causal explanations”. Hence, genealogical storytelling shows its value as a dialogic relationship with the world (Czarniawska 1997a, Czarniawska 1997b). This is similar to Deleuze’s (1999) description of folding as both an internal and an external relationship with the world. In accordance with Söderberg (2006), narrative interviews have the following features:

1. A narrative has a chronological dimension, a narrator chooses what he or she is willing to talk about and in which order. That is why the order in which things are mentioned matters, as well as what is said. In this way, narratives (that is, what a narrator says) can be interpreted as an appreciation of things.

2. A narrative is retrospective interpretation, a narrator relates what has happened before. It is a personal interpretation of the issue of interest in a certain context (see Geertz 1988).

3. The selected events and actors are integrated into a given plot structure. Usually the stories are produced in a metaphorical sense. That is why certain events and actors emerge as parts of the story. Accordingly, the events and actors belong to the meaning as parts of the plot of that story. In this way, the story is socially produced. The narrator is simply the person who relates it in his or her own words.

4. Narrating is a part of identity construction. The identity of a narrator is not only a fixed state of existence, but it is also constructed in the way a person is telling a story. In a Deleuzian (1999) sense, telling a story is about folding and unfolding in the process of becoming Other.

5. A narrative is co-authored by the narrator’s audience. As mentioned above, the role of narrator is not a fixed and/or isolated state of existence. In contrast, a narrator is folding in terms of his or her audience that interprets what the story is about. Thus, the assumptions made by the narrator with regard to the researcher will affect what they speak about, and in which way.

As the list above illustrates, the meaning of the narrative/storytelling type of interviews is to make sense of the narrator’s (interviewee’s) position and relation to his or her environment. Due to that, contextualised signs – more precisely, the ways in which actions or signs are interpreted in a certain context – become crucial. According to Söderberg (2006), an interviewer (researcher) is also an audience that affects the narrator’s (interviewee’s) way of telling their story. As
part of the ethnographical approach, the interviews in this study (the story of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian and stories of the collaborative project between the Finnish and Danish firms) give evidence for Czarniawska’s (1997a: 7) argument that “everyday knowledge is circulated in stories”. It seems that narrative interviews are useful in showing how a narrator’s interaction with other actors and objects takes place. As a result, genealogical storytelling and ethnographical fieldwork prove a good match (see Czarniawska 2008).

The first data set in this study shows that the separate stories (i.e. the stories of how the collaborative project around software for hospitals) build up the same perception as was the case with the narrative open interviews that are part of the second dataset – an ethnographical fieldwork – contextualisation. However, they are different stories. In the first data set, two entrepreneurs discuss how their software collaboration came into being. The interviews focused on the entrepreneurs’ views of their business and their relation to it. In the case of the interview carried out as part of the ethnographical fieldwork, however, the target was primarily to make sense of how a person becomes Other alongside other people. Both empirical data sets highlight the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship – the creation of spaces for play and innovation. It is a matter of movement. In the case of the software firms, the space for play and innovation made it possible to create a collaborative project from which they could make money. In the case of the up-and-coming stand-up comedian, the context of stand-up comedy, and the social efforts involved in becoming other, are themselves the context.

As the discussion above suggests, the first part of this empirical study is based on narrative open interviews without an ethnographical context. However, methodologically the first part (the interviews regarding to the collaborative software project) follows the principles of genealogical storytelling, because the processual nature of entrepreneurial events can be seen in that way. The second part of the empirical study is based on ethnographical fieldwork as the context of a narrative interview with a stand-up comedian. That interview is analysed as empirical material in my fourth essay. The ethnographical aspect offers the context for the comedian’s interview. Without context, interviews would make little sense, as a concept or sign is always based on the cultural–historical context in which it takes place.

To summarise the methodological discussion above: the first empirical data set is based on four narrative interviews regarding the collaboration project of two international firms, one Finnish and one Danish (see Søderberg 2006). The second
empirical dataset is an ethnographically framed narrative interview with an up-and-coming stand-up comedian. In addition, the comedian was shadowed in online discussions later on, and field notes were used during my ethnographical fieldwork in a company attempting to promote the comedian’s career (see Czarniawska 2008). In that way, it was possible to study how the phenomenon of becoming Other took place in a certain context – in the Finnish stand-up comedy arena. Both data sets suggest the same idea of contextuality. In the case of the first data set, the context is the whole world, as internationalisation was a default assumption of those firms and their efforts to create a project around international software. In the case of the second data set, the context is the Finnish stand-up comedy field. I will describe the datasets in the next section.

1.6 Empirical material and research outline

The empirical data used in this study comes from two separate sources. The first empirical part was conducted as an interview study of a collaborative project between two firms. I used this method because there is a need to understand social learning in the research area of business opportunities (see Johanson & Vahlne 1977, Alvarez & Barney 2007, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). I contacted the CEO of the firm X (a firm that is working on online software solutions in Helsinki, Finland) in order to make sense of how business-related activities are carried out in the context of the Finnish information technology sector. This company appears to spend an outstanding amount of effort on social learning – for example, its creation of software in conjunction with a Danish partner, requires social learning for them to comprehend what the other party is doing, and how it is doing it. At a practical level, they rarely meet. In that sense, the process of social learning happens online, with their software produced using open-source technology.

Generally, the information technology sector is an example of the separation of a person and a product. This is understandable, because the product (that is, the software) is a completely different issue from the life of its developer – nobody is engaged with software in the way that a stand-up comedian can be engaged with a stand-up comedy firm (see the description of the second data set below). Both firms are mediators of the desire to have a better life. However, what is completely different in the case of the first firm is that the product they are producing and developing is not about an aspect of life – it is a piece of technology that makes somebody other than the entrepreneur’s life better. In the
case of the stand-up comedy firm, the desire basically makes the life of an entrepreneur better.

The company the firm X is a Finnish firm that produces many types of software products. One of their most important products is software, which is used by hospitals worldwide when treating patients with brain stroke. It is innovative because the doctors are able to document details of patients’ treatment online, which had not been possible before the creation of that software. From the perspective of academic research, the creation and development of that software can be interpreted as being based on social events (i.e. the result is an application of the social learning theory), activity that I elaborate upon theoretically in this research. I conducted two ‘storytelling’-type interviews at the firm X in Oulu, Finland in autumn 2009 and winter 2010. After that I conducted two similar interviews with their partner (the firm Y) in Copenhagen, Denmark in autumn 2010, in an open-ended manner. All interviews were framed around the software mentioned above. In that sense, the first empirical dataset was about following an object, as suggested by Czarniawska (2008). The object (that is, the software product that the companies worked on together) was a kind of shared object, in the sense of social learning theory. As social learning theory is derived from actor–network theory (ANT), the idea of following an object, as suggested by Czarniawska (2008), opened up a way to understand how the software was built up and developed. In addition, application of the social learning theory (more precisely, the expansive cycle of learning actions) formed the conceptual framework for the second essay in this dissertation.

The collaboration project between the firm X and the firm Y is an illustration of social learning. The project seems to be an object shared between the two firms, similar to the shared vision of the entrepreneurs behind the stand-up comedy firm mentioned below. However, what separates them is the fact that the collaboration project between the firm X and the firm Y is not a reflection of the lives of the entrepreneurs per se. In contrast, it is a reflection of an attempt to improve the lives of other people (patients and researchers). The entrepreneurs of the firm X and the firm Y are not users of their own product in the way that the entrepreneurs and the up-and-coming stand-up comedian from the stand-up comedy firm are. The purpose of the software that they have created is to help doctors with their treatment and investigation of brain stroke.

The second dataset consists of an open interview, framed in an ethnographical manner, in Oulu. I conducted participatory observation at a stand-up comedy firm for ten months. The firm offers a good description of the entrepreneurial context
in the area of Finnish stand-up comedy. From the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship, the actions of the entrepreneurs behind the firm Ookko Nää Nauranu (‘have you laughed’ in northern Finnish slang) show that two social processes (an established order and creativity) are constant and simultaneous drivers in the two founders’ self-actualisation as entrepreneurs.

The abovementioned discussion of the stand-up comedy firm indicates that both persons are always parts of social processes that are not stable. When analysing this further, it can be seen that social processes like these are flux by their very nature and suggest becoming. In practice, the stand-up comedy firm just arose out of the interactions of two guys who played with the idea that maybe they might start a firm, which could support their mutual desire to develop stand-up comedy culture in Finland. In the interviews, the two entrepreneurs consistently highlighted that their work is not about seeking to maximise profits. Rather, they want to do something that is fun and enjoyable. Moreover, they want this fun and enjoyable work to also foster the stand-up comedy business in Finland. This highlights the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship – doing something for its own sake (see Hjorth 2005).

The founders do not necessarily have any special personal qualities that distinguish them from other people. Rather, it is the process of becoming an entrepreneur that differentiates them. Therefore, the critical thing for my study was to see how the process of becoming takes place in the specific context (the stand-up comedy field in Finland) in which they are embedded – and they are pretty much embedded, because they are the firm itself. This finding problematises the nature of the current entrepreneurship literature based on the idea of the managerial hero – a human body as the host of certain personality qualities that make an entrepreneur different from a non-entrepreneur – behind the SME (see Ogbor 2000).

The firm organises stand-up comedy clubs, and, at the time of writing, had been active for five years now. The firm is a market leader in this business area in Finland, it is the country’s first Finnish stand-up comedy organiser and producer. This illustrates Rindova et al.’s (2009) description of the creation of new ideas, things, institutions, markets, and possibilities as the process of entrepreneuring. As the firm was based on collaboration between two friends (two people in the process of becoming entrepreneurs), it seems that there was (and still is) a creative space for play and innovation allowing them to pursue their ideas (compare with Hjorth 2004a, Steyaert & Katz 2004, Hjorth 2007).
Ookko Nää Nauranu’s organisation of stand-up comedy clubs makes it a relevant example of entrepreneurial actions, as those actions (as well as the work undertaken by the two emerging entrepreneurs) are full of human-made interactions. Moreover, the iterative learning practices seemed to drive the process of entrepreneurship (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). This is relevant to the targets of this project, because my approach reflects the actions and processes that drive a person or a group of persons to create and act on opportunities in their everyday actions and work-related social practices (see Hjorth et al. 2003). I found clear evidence for that argument during the fieldwork: the entrepreneurs repeated many times that business should be based on the basics (more precisely, they discussed going “back to the basics”). The fieldwork consisted of narrative interviews, participatory observation, and Google chats during a ten-month period in 2009–2010.

During the fieldwork, I followed a person who had a desire to become a stand-up comedian. It is possible to interpret that the entrepreneurs’ firm was founded on the same basis – the aim of becoming something other than that which a person is right now. This indicates that Gartner (1993) was right to suggest that entrepreneurship shares similarities with dating (that is, it is necessary to generate trust, co-operation, and understanding). The up-and-coming stand-up comedian needed to do the same in order to become a stand-up comedian who could contribute to the clubs run by Ookko Nää Nauranu. The first part of the empirical material is based on open-ended interviews that I conducted with the comedian. The firm/stand-up comedy business around that type of becoming is regarded as providing the context for an examination of how to become over time. This idea is developed in my fourth essay (chapter 9).

The idea of founding a stand-up comedy club was initially a social construct (an idea shared by two persons). The actualisation of that idea occurred within a certain context (the field of the Finnish stand-up comedy business) that was about becoming Other – moving from non-entrepreneur to entrepreneur. Similarly, the stand-up comedian’s vision was to become a funnyman and make money from that. This finding problematises the literature of entrepreneurial processes, which assumes that a business opportunity is always behind entrepreneurial actions (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000). There was no business opportunity behind the process of becoming Other. The crucial thing was the entrepreneurial context (the stand-up comedy firm as a part of the Finnish stand-up comedy market) and the actualisation of desires regarding that. The firm is a by-product of that action.
It became quite clear early in the fieldwork that both the stand-up comedy firm and, especially, the person trying to become a stand-up comedian offered strong illustrations of the ongoing process of becoming. However, I did not find many specific phases of the creation from the perspective of business opportunities in the lives of the entrepreneurs and up-and-coming stand-up comedian at Ookko Nää Nauranu. There was no business opportunity in the sense of business opportunity creation/development – they just created it with minimal resources to hand at the beginning. In contrast, they were living their lives that they ran through the mediator of business (i.e. a firm). However, there is a large amount of literature suggesting that the iterative steps of learning from the market are crucial when fostering novelty, movement, and change (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, Alvarez & Barney 2007, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). That is why the first empirical data set contributes well to the targets of this project, even though its focus is narrower, being framed around the business opportunity of the software produced collaboratively by the two firms.

In terms of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial activities (as the iterative steps of learning) play crucial roles, because they refer to more tangible acts that occur when people work together in an organisation. In the case of Ookko Nää Nauranu, those acts precisely matched the acts of their lives per se, but not the business opportunity creation or development. On these grounds, their lives reflect what the firm and their product (a stand-up comedy club) are all about. Hence, it was necessary to elaborate on how the business could be separated from the lives of the acting entrepreneurs. This is not to say that the lives (and lifestyles) of the acting entrepreneurs could not be interesting and important, but was dictated by the two-fold scope of this dissertation (see Figure 2). In this way, it was necessary to go through the development process of business opportunities as well.

In this sense, the driving forces in the entrepreneurs’ lives are different for Ookko Nää Nauranu than for the firm X/the firm Y. The collaboration project between the firm X and the firm Y shows how people learn from each other when creating and developing a business opportunity. It is a shared object (see Engeström 2001, for method see Czarniawska 2008). The entrepreneurial actions around that kind of social learning leads SME internationalisation to happen through firms. Thus, the meaning of entrepreneurial actions is not internationalisation per se. Instead, internationalisation is a by-product of those entrepreneurial actions (compare with Schweizer et al. 2010). In order to better
understand this, it is crucial to place entrepreneurial actions at the centre of the study.

The first data set is based on the four open narrative interviews mentioned above. This method was chosen because of its ability to capture genuine feelings and emotions. In terms of this study, it meant that the role of the interviewer was to follow the discussion in a way that contributed to the target of the study (Söderberg 2006): to find information about the iterative phases of social learning that take place when the entrepreneurs are creating and developing software to be used by hospitals all over the world—an international business opportunity. This made it possible to see that the nature of business opportunity creation and development differs from that examined in prior research that focused on the personality traits and qualities of entrepreneurs.

Owing to the theoretical framework being the theory of social learning (more precisely, the cycle of expansive learning), there is a need to identify and explain the entrepreneurial actions that deconstruct the nature of the process of entrepreneurship in the end. The collaboration project between the firm X and the firm Y explicates this well, as the project was built in steps. However, these were not the general steps to creating a business identified in prior research. In contrast, their business opportunity came from the fact that the entrepreneurs wanted to do something relevant in their lives— to contribute to and improve the lives of other people. In this way, they could feel that they have become better people and indirectly contributed to saving the lives of others, as the software makes it easier and more efficient to better understand what the brain stroke is about—the end-user being doctors treating and investigating brain stroke.

With this in mind, the event of organisational entrepreneurship seems empirically to be an intersection of business opportunity-based research and contextual becoming (see Figure 1). An understanding of both sides can help us to understand what is happening when the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship occurs. In fact, the actualisation of both parts (i.e. the creation/development of a business opportunity from the opportunity-based side, and contextual/creative becoming from the other) are fairly typical for human beings separately. As a result, the simultaneous processes of the established order (i.e. a business opportunity) and creativity (i.e. the contextual becoming) are the most important points when discussing organisational entrepreneurship. This notion is at the heart of the study’s contribution. That is why the two separate empirical datasets support each other in order to meet both the empirical and theoretical targets of this study.
1.7 Ontological and epistemological standing points

The ontological basis of this study is social constructivism. As discussed above, the crossroads between the discourses of business opportunities and contextual becoming starts from the idea of entrepreneurial actions. Those actions relate to the everyday lives of the people creating social spaces for play and innovation (the entrepreneurs). Investigating everyday life is also a target of social constructivism. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966: 33), social constructivism is a way to understand “a reality that forms the subject matter of the empirical science of sociology, that is, the world of everyday life”. This makes it clear that the nature of a subject itself (for example, an entrepreneur) is not the main point of study: the crucial issue is to investigate how the subject is becoming such a subject, and how social constructs (such as knowledge) are created in the processes of everyday lives. According to Gergen (2001), social constructivism assumes that the co-creation of a social construct takes place in a certain context. This was also assumed for the purposes of this project.

Social constructivism is also a way to approach epistemology – a discussion of what knowledge is about and how it can be reached (Berger & Luckmann 1966, Gergen 2001). For the purposes of this study, this is linked with the idea of social learning (more precisely, how knowledge regarding business opportunities is created socially). The prior work on entrepreneurship suggests that entrepreneurial processes are about iterative learning actions (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). However, the nature of those learning actions has not been the subject of much study so far (see Seymour 2006). Therefore, taking social constructivism as the ontological standing point of this study replies to the need to see what is actually happening when people create spaces for play and innovation through the processes of social learning (see Wood & McKinley 2010).

Along similar lines, Foucault (1978) and Berger and Luckmann (1966) write that human life is based on history and cannot be analysed outside of the context in which it takes place (see also Foucault 1975). As an example, Gergen (2001) calls for scholars to use social constructivism as a scientific philosophical approach to the study of how human activities are situated in certain contexts and how they function within them. He writes that socially constructed ‘knowledge’ is not objective in its nature, but rather is created through knowledge claims (Gergen 2001). In that way, methodological narrative and storytelling show their value. Additionally, Gergen (2001: 28) writes that “regardless of ‘the data”
accounts of human development cannot escape the demands of ‘proper storytelling’”. This is also called for by current research into organisational entrepreneurship, such as the statement by Hjorth et al. (2008) that entrepreneurship takes place in a certain context, and a better understanding of such contexts could lead to greater comprehension of how the construct of entrepreneurship per se can be seen.

The discussion above is not so much a question of who an entrepreneur is or how business opportunities are created. Rather, the principal question relates to seeing “all claims to knowledge as embedded within particular communities of meaning making” (Gergen 2001: 125). In that sense, the whole idea of socially constructed knowledge – including the production of scientific knowledge regarding organisational entrepreneurship – is produced through social processes. Therefore, the question relates to what we register under the name of entrepreneurship (see Gartner 1989, Gartner 2010). Methodologically, this can happen through stories (see Hjorth 2004b). This kind of research opens up the question of what entrepreneurship is and how knowledge related to it is produced.

It is difficult to pin down the precise nature of organisational entrepreneurship. For example, Rindova et al. (2009) write that entrepreneurship is all around us, Dew (2009) suggests that unintentional discoveries are important in terms of entrepreneurship, and Görling and Rehn (2008) argue that an entrepreneurial outcome (such as a venture) can be created in an accidental way – to mention just a few viewpoints. Taking these ideas into consideration leads to a problem: almost everything could be categorized as entrepreneurship. This means that discovery of the precise nature of entrepreneurship becomes more complex. This is the point at which we see the potential of social constructivism. It is a way to investigate the everyday lives and actions that conceptually and empirically reveal the important points of what is meaningful when discussing the spaces for play and innovation. Those social spaces are located behind the process of entrepreneurship (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).

In this study, the first two essays (chapters 6 and 7) consider entrepreneurship from the perspective of actions of social learning. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), the reality of everyday life is always shared with others. In terms of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, this means that a created space for play and innovation is not an invention or innovation until it is socially regarded as such. A similar idea is used in social learning theory. For instance, Engeström’s (2001) application of social learning theory (that is, the structure of human activity used in the first essay and the cycle of expansive learning used in
the second essay) is about understanding the socially constructed objects that actors in (subjects of) an activity share when acting through the collective, artefact-mediated, and object-orientated activity system (compare with Holt 2008).

Blackler (1995), Engeström (2001), and Engeström (2004) write that learning is a social issue. For example, Engeström’s (2004) analysis of baseball shows that many systems of human activity work simultaneously and therefore create social constructions. As Engeström (2000b) notes, that is why activity theory offers the potential to analyse and redesign the current work. In this study, I used Engeström’s (2001) application of social learning theory in order to understand entrepreneurial actions. Engeström’s (2001) version of social learning is similar to the event of organisational entrepreneurship because both cases assume a shared object (for methodology see Czarniawska 2008). Entrepreneurship does not occur in a vacuum, and therefore contextually embedded investigation is needed (Sørensen in press). This also relates to social constructivism. As Gergen (2001: 38) notes, citing Vygotsky, Bartlett, Mead, and what he describes as “a host of other significant psychological figures”, it is the “culture, not biology, that shapes human life and the human mind, that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretative system”. In that sense, Engeström’s (2001) ideas of social learning contribute to the research on organisational entrepreneurship, as the idea of learning underpinning the very nature of entrepreneurship as learning has already been accepted (see Johansson & Vahlne 1977, Hohenthal et al. 2003, Alvarez & Barney 2007, Johanson & Vahlne 2009).

Engeström (2001) writes about three types of learning: Learning I, Learning II, and Learning III. Learning I is about learning “conditioning, acquisition of the responses deemed correct in the given context” (Engeström 2001: 138). Learning II is about deep-seated rules and patterns of behaviour that are linked with that context – such as learning what it means to be a student in the classroom. The object of this type of learning action is not what the teacher wishes to teach, but is more about learning how to please a teacher and how to manage in the social context of learning. Learning III is about problematising the sense and meaning of the context itself. In this way, it is possible to construct a wider, alternative, context. The event of organisational entrepreneurship is similar – problematising the social context that already exists and constructing a new, alternative, context, a new business opportunity, for example. Novelty, movement, and change can be created in that way. This is the standpoint of my first two essays in this dissertation (chapters 6 and 7).
Conceptually, social learning is the basis of business opportunity creation, in the sense of challenges to learning. Engeström (2001: 139) writes, in relation to the learning challenges that he encountered in the course of his research: “there was no readily available model that would fix the problems, no wise teacher had the correct answer”. Similarly, Alvarez and Barney (2007: 11–12) suggest that “entrepreneurs creating opportunities might engage in an iterative learning process that ultimately could lead to the formation of an opportunity”. Later, they add that “in creation theory, entrepreneurs do not search – for there are no mountains to find – they act, and observe how consumers and markets respond to their actions” (Alvarez & Barney 2007: 15). In that sense, the process of entrepreneurship starts from the idea of social learning.

Engeström (2001: 140) states, about the subject of learning: “There was no mythical collective subject that we could approach and push to take charge of the transformation. Top-down commands and guidelines are of little value when the management does not know what the content of such directives should be”. The same issue arises in entrepreneurship: the mythical white knight that has been so far categorised as an entrepreneur should be investigated from the perspective of the process, instead of the focus on trying to explain the entrepreneurial qualities of an individual (see Ogbor 2000). In Engeström’s (2001) words, the important thing is the transformation in the process of social learning. That takes place through systems of activity (i.e. the conceptual wholes consisting of subject, object, community, tools/signs, rules, and division of labour).

As such, the idea of transformation through the iterative process of social learning (i.e. the cycle of expansive learning, Learning III) reflects entrepreneurs’ actions when creating business opportunities. Firstly, there is no competent teacher who can direct you – you just have to do it. Secondly, there is an element of ambiguous knowledge: you do not know what needs to be learned. In Engeström’s (2001) words, the object of social learning is a moving target. This idea has its roots in social constructivism. Berger and Luckmann (1966: 15, italics in original) remind us that these questions of “what is real” and “how is one to know” are actually ancient problems that we deal with when discussing human life and thought. This indicates that social learning theory opens up a new perspective to understand what is going on (on the level of actions) when an entrepreneur is fostering novelty, movement, and change (see Holt 2008).

Even though novelty, movement, and change seem to be the appropriate targets when discussing the post-industrial version of entrepreneurship, elaboration of what is located behind the interactive elements of social learning...
(that is, change) is also needed. In this study, that kind of elaboration is carried out by analysing entrepreneurial actions. Social interactions (entrepreneurial actions, for example) are the basis of social constructivism – they create social constructions though human life (Berger & Luckmann 1966). In order to better understand the nature of change, it must be kept in mind that a subject is just a part of social activities. According to Engeström (2001), the other parts of activity systems are object, community, tools and signs, rules, and division of labour. This opens up the possibility of discussing the very nature of change as a basis of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

Organisational entrepreneurship holds the potential to foster change. In this sense, what characterises social constructivism is that change is seen as a standpoint of human life. Thus, change is not something that changes human life from A to B, instead, human life itself is a certain kind of social change (see for example the cycle of expansive learning). Its nature is in flux and its target is moving, therefore, the process cannot be seen as linear. In this project, I sought to investigate this kind of non-linear process through entrepreneurial stories that make sense due to the social constructivist nature of ontology I have affirmed (see Gergen 2001). Entrepreneurial actions creating spaces for play and innovation seem to have been carried out for their own sake. That is what organisational entrepreneurship is about.

Tsoukas and Chia (2002) suggest that change is a normal condition of organisational life and describe the ways in which actors’ webs of beliefs and habits of action accommodate new experiences obtained through interactions. Engeström’s (2001) application of social learning theory, structure of human activity and the expansive cycle of learning actions works in a similar way, explicating the ways in which social learning takes place and how it affects human actions. However, discussion of the processual nature of such a change is lacking in the entrepreneurship literature, because the starting point of such research is the human ability (for example, people’s webs of beliefs and habits) to accommodate new experiences through interaction. This is based on two ideas. Firstly, it is assumed that there is a business opportunity, for instance, located ‘out there’ that can be registered (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Baron 2008,). Secondly, there is a tendency to explain how such registration, as a process, starts at A and ends at B, teleologically (see Shane 2003, Eckhardt & Shane 2003, Alvarez & Barney 2007). As such, this reflects the problematisation of Engeström’s (2001) applications of social learning theory – the expansive element of social learning is missing.
As long as social learning theory can show how social learning takes place, it has explanatory power. However, actions of human life cannot always be explained in that way. For example, Czarniawska (1997b: 7) writes that “there is an abundance of stories and metaphors in scientific texts, while folk tales and fiction build on facts and sometimes even play with formal logic”. In this sense, it is not that obvious that a human (entrepreneurial) opportunity-creative life change runs from A to B. In contrast, when approaching change in a processual way, it seems that work-related processes are similar to art. As Tsoukas and Chia (2002) write, we have a tendency to see and analyse categories of things, rather than things as such (see also Seymour 2006). This leads to a situation in which where change is seen as a movement from A to B (that is, a teleological process).

When taking an approach other than teleological process theory (which is important, but not the only option) as the basis of a study considering organisational entrepreneurship, art-related practices become crucial. For example, Hjorth (2005) investigated organisational entrepreneurship from the perspective of art, and found that a construct of entrepreneurship (enterprise discourse) reduces the potential for organisational creativity in a (business) organisation. This is a reflection of the lack of processuality when we (as researchers or as practitioners) are trying to understand change. An artist creates an image on its own – not for the sake of the outcome (for example as a business opportunity), but because that image speaks on its own, and therefore makes its own meaning (Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

When creating and making sense of things or images, the potential of organisational creativity could be used by societies. Art as a creative element of human life reflects what the event of organisational entrepreneurship is also all about – an action related to post-industrial novelty, movement, and change (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Rindova et al. 2009). This is in line with Allen’s (2001) statement that as an entrepreneur you should do and discover what you love. In that way, play and innovation (related to what you love) is a transformational element (a social space) in creating novelty, movement, and change. This is similar to art-related work practices – doing things for their own sake in creative spaces for play and innovation (Hjorth 2004a).

Berger and Luckmann (1966: 39) write about the playful element of transition in terms of commutations that take place “between the world of everyday life and the world of play, both the playing of children and, even more sharply, of adults”. In that sense, a theatre is an example of the creation of a space for play on the stage (see Figure 1). Such a transition takes place between the space (for play and
innovation) and everyday life. In the case of a theatre, one mediator of transition is the curtain. Something happens in a space for play on the stage. That kind of action on the stage has “its own meanings and an order that may or may not have much to do with the order of everyday life” (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 39). However, such an action affects how the humans involved organise their lives. In spaces for play and innovation in terms of organisational entrepreneurship, this sort of influence reflects the same that I found when carrying out my ethnographical fieldwork for the project. It seemed to me that there was a tendency to rename things and beings, for instance. Let me briefly elaborate on this point.

It seemed to me that the playful and innovative parts of human life (i.e. the things we do as children) are also obvious requirements of organisational life and might be related to business too. For example, when observing the stand-up comedy firm mentioned above, I noted that both entrepreneurs wanted to adopt nicknames – God or Ceausescu, for instance. Moreover, they gave me the nickname, ‘wise man’. Another playful feature that I noted was constant recounting of anecdotes about themselves, how their firm was founded, etc. They also discussed the future of the firm and their aspirations for it. While these discussions and stories are not ‘real’ in the sense of objective knowledge (compare with Gergen 2001), they are aspects of the way in which the founders saw themselves and their stand-up comedy business. Schumpeter (1934) writes about recreating combinations of already existing ‘resources’. The resources available to the firm’s founders were their imaginations and – in that way – were socially created artefacts of their stand-up comedy firm (compare with Baker & Nelson 2005).

The other empirical data set used in this project shows similar results. The first dataset concerning the collaboration project of the Finnish and Danish firms more closely resembles Kirzerian (1973, 1997) innovation. As I highlight in chapter 7, the opportunity-creating person (the entrepreneur) tends to seek to establish something which he finds more interesting than the current state of affairs. With this, the expansive cycle of learning actions takes place and becomes a part of social becoming (see Engeström 1987, Engeström 2001). It is not as much about debate on what the object of learning is as it is an actualisation of it. The prior research on entrepreneurship discusses this as an exploitation of business opportunities, for example (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000). However, it seems to me that the shared object of the mutual interests of those two firms collaborating together around the brain stroke software is created and/developed
along the way. In the end of the process, they might know what the shared object (e.g. a business opportunity) is about. Before that, it is just an action related to something that they are not aware of completely. Due to this, taking social constructivism as a scientific philosophical approach works for this project, as the assumption is to study everyday practices and how they influence the lives of actors from the collective perspective (see Berger & Luckmann 1966).

Prior work has assumed that the principles of social constructivism are part of entrepreneurship. For example, Hjorth (2005: 395, italics in original) describes how the word ‘entrepreneurship’ is derived from the French words *entre* and *prendre*: “*entre* for creating space, spacing, and stepping into the in-between, and *prendre* for the grasping of opportunities”. Thus, the spatial nature of entrepreneurship is about having influences from somewhere that is not real, in the sense of everyday life (e.g. the stage of a theatre), but it can be actualised as novelty, movement, and change regardless of the fact that it might or might not have that much to do with the everyday life that people are parts of. In contrast, there is a potential to become something other than people are right now, that in turn offers a potential to overcome the post-industrial challenge of being creative and innovative.

As Berger and Luckmann (1966) write, everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally. Similarly, Hjorth (2005) describes the *in-between* as a transition between stepping into a space (*entre*) and grasping the opportunities inside it (*prendre*). This fosters change. Assuming that entrepreneurial actions are aspects of the lives of those creating new spaces for play and innovation (entrepreneurs), it would be relevant to make sense of the contexts that make the spaces for play and innovation (and therefore change) possible. Human life is always embedded in spatial-temporal spaces. For instance, we need to complete a specific level of education in order to practice a specific type of profession, we must wait until hotel staff have handled a request for a room before the reservation is completed, dinner needs to be prepared before it can be served, etc. These are examples of how social spaces can foster change in human life.

As described above, social spaces are like mediators transforming the actions that take place within them (e.g. studying, making a hotel reservation, cooking a dinner) into visions of their completion (a degree, staying in a hotel, eating dinner). This is what Hjorth (2005) describes as the creation of space, spacing, and stepping into the in-between, actions that make the creation of a business opportunity possible. Actions related to the creation of spaces for play and innovation are not only about the intention to achieve something, they also
possess productivity in themselves – like an action that the artists do (Dew 2009, Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). The productive element is about stepping into an unknown space (a theatre, for example) that creates images. The meaning of those images is such that they stand on their own (for methodology see Phillips 1995). In that way, they may make us consider life and act differently. That is why we may be able to discover new practices and work–life interventions by seeing how organisational creativity influences organisational entrepreneurship, for instance. It is a matter of understanding how the transitions of human life foster change through social spaces. That is precisely why social constructivism is taken as the scientific philosophical starting point of this study.

The need to create an understanding of the crossroads between business opportunities and contextual embeddedness opens up a way to move from being to becoming (see Figure 2). As Gartner (1989) wrote more than 20 years ago, the entrepreneur (as a being per se) is not the issue of entrepreneurship. The issue is understanding how people act when working in creative spaces for play and innovation (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). This is about investigating what happens when art comes to work (see Hjorth 2004a, Hjorth 2005). Spaces for play and innovation are important in the post-industrial age, in which almost everybody is asked to be creative and innovative. The critical problem in seeking to make sense of these kinds of spaces academically is that entrepreneurship research has traditionally been based on (and has therefore been a sub-discipline of) management research (Hjorth 2003).

The discussion above indicates that entrepreneurship research should be framed around creative human processes and work-related interventions (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). In doing so, the space for play and innovation becomes important, as current entrepreneurship research has called for future research to investigate the types of creative context that make possible the organisational version of entrepreneurship (Hjorth et al. 2008). It is also suggested that an ontological starting point could be processual. This makes it possible to handle how the ambiguity and fragmented knowledge (of markets or more broadly of what entrepreneurship is) influence societies, not only economies (Hjorth et al. 2008).

Entrepreneurship should be seen as a processual phenomenon because then, entrepreneurship can be seen to be located everywhere (Rindova et al. 2009). In this study, I used the approach of becoming in order to do this. Becoming is about subjectification of a subject. More precisely, it is about seeing a subject as something that is moving toward being something which right now it is not (see
It is what social constructivism creates a basis for. As noted by Berger and Luckmann (1966), human life is a combination of objective and subjective realities that are explored further in the scientific philosophical field of post-structuralism (see Deleuze & Guattari 1984). However, I did not wish to contextualise organisational entrepreneurship in the post-structuralist sense in this project: the crossroads between business opportunities and creative/contextual becoming (see Figure 2) needs to be clarified first through social constructive thinking, after this has been achieved (in my next research project), post-structuralism can come into play.

Objective reality is a matter of institutionalisation and legitimation, while subjective reality is a subject’s relation to socialisation, internalisation, and social structures. In that way, a subject is becoming along the way (see Jones & Spicer 2005). This is also what Foucault (1978) writes about with regard to the historicity of human life. Human life is always based on socially constructed ‘facts’ that are considered to be true. For instance, a knife suggests many meanings in different contexts, all of which are human-made in nature. A knife can be seen as a tool for cutting bread, but can also be a murder weapon, depending on the context in which it is registered. Those contexts are human-made – if we assume that a knife belongs in the kitchen, it is socially acceptable to see a person with a knife in a kitchen, but if the same person is carrying a knife in an office, the context related to the knife-carrying subject (an office) in conjunction with the socially symbolised object (a knife) does not reflect bread-cutting, but an intended murder, for example, instead.

In this way, we can see that the space for play and innovation becomes crucial. It is about making sense of new meanings and concepts that can be used creatively. More precisely, as researchers, we should concentrate our efforts on understanding the object of a phenomenon. This is particularly the case when discussing entrepreneurship. As Jones and Spicer (2005: 237) write:

> If we ever achieve the object of desire, it collapses – it falls apart and is changed inexplicably into a gift of shit. We find that Bill Gates is just an ordinary human being, with perfectly normal and human neuroticism, but he is elevated to heroic status as if there is something unique to his psyche that is the ultimate cause of his economic successes.

Traditionally, entrepreneurship is seen to be located in the context of management and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This means that the issue of interest is of course SMEs and managerial issues within them (such as leadership
or personality traits). In that way, entrepreneurship is seen as a productive force that an agent of production (such as a managerial entrepreneur) is driving. The problem in this is that then entrepreneurship becomes an industrial phenomenon. There are many (business) organisations that no longer work in that way. Therefore, we need a post-industrial understanding of what entrepreneurship is/could be in those types of contexts – more precisely, as a part of society (see Hjorth et al. 2008). Social constructivism helps us to understand entrepreneurship in a new light. That is why it was selected to be the scientific philosophical standpoint of this study.

In the managerial discussion sense, entrepreneurship does not belong to society as a whole (compare with Hjorth et al. 2008) and is not all around us (see Rindova et al. 2009). However, the current literature gives evidence for the argument that the nature of entrepreneurship can be located everywhere. As Steyaert and Katz (2004: 190) write, “when researchers become blinded by a focus on high-growth firms or business millionaires as the exemplars of ‘entrepreneurship’, they risk losing sight of the process of entrepreneurship in the larger society”. For example, Steyaert and Katz (2004) suggest future scholars should study the everydayness of entrepreneurship. This is the place where social constructivism, as a scientific philosophical starting point, offers a helping hand, as it seeks to investigate social practices. In this study, I was interested in social practices as work-related interventions. This not only creates a better life, additionally, a work-related intervention (for example, a business opportunity) could be created so that a new post-industrial business could emerge (see Fletcher 2006).

Following Steyaert and Katz’s (2004: 190) notion, entrepreneurship is all around us (see Rindova et al. 2009), because that “type of action that occur[s] nearly everywhere, at nearly anytime by nearly anyone” is also the basis of social constructivism. However, hardcore social constructivism-orientated philosophers do not empirically elaborate on how objective and subjective realities emerge at the practical level of human life. This creates a place for a study of organisational entrepreneurship. For example, Berger and Luckmann (1966) write about institutionalisation of human activities and how those activities are legitimised objectively (compare with Gergen 2001), adding that the internalisation of subjective reality takes place through primary socialisation (something that internationalizes a person as a child), secondary socialisation (in the workplace, for example), and how those issues are maintained within social realities (Berger & Luckmann 1966).
The focus of a study of entrepreneurship is more concrete than the core study of philosophy. The core interest is to problematise what is registered as entrepreneurship (see Hjorth et al. 2008). In this study, I carried out ethnographical fieldwork. In terms of becoming, my fieldwork showed that almost everybody is capable of being an organisational entrepreneur. I followed a person who sought to become a stand-up comedian. He had a desire to become something other than he actually was (not a stand-up comedian). In Jones and Spicer’s (2005: 237) words – referring to the Lacanian formula – “what desire desires is desire itself”. The human body can be understood as a separate entity from the mind. In that sense, it is a desire as a part of a person’s mind that desires something (e.g. a better life), but the reason for this is the desire to be something that a person is not at that time (e.g. a person acknowledged to be funny), it is desire as a part of a person’s mind itself.

The up-and-coming stand-up comedian who I followed as part of this study’s second dataset wanted to become a person who is seen as funny. In socially constructivist terms, this happens through creating a social role (institutionalisation) and legitimising that in a socially objective way (public recognition that he is a stand-up comedian). This is also based on the subjective side of reality – through primary socialization. It is his personal desire to become what he did not originally recognise himself as (a funny person) and secondary socialisation inside a group of other stand-up comedians (becoming part of the group) that could actualise his desire.

As Colebrook (2002: 145) suggests, the basic idea of becoming – based on the ideas of Deleuze – is the “creation and exploration of new styles of perception”. When comparing that kind of idea of becoming with an idea of being, social constructivist ontology becomes crucial. As mentioned above, socially constructed objects are socially shared. In this sense, human life is about eternal becoming. It is something that does not exist to date – like an entrepreneur striving for profits by driving his business on. The idea of business makes it sound like the becoming in question should be target-driven, but although it may be, that is not always the case. Usually, the target-driven way of understanding entrepreneurship starts from the inspiration of management. It is assumed that there is an agent (such as a managerial entrepreneur) who could drive the apparatus of production (such as the production machinery in a factory) in order to get output from it. However, the post-industrial economy does not seem to work in that way. Instead, there is a demand to be creative and innovative. Then the apparatus of innovation becomes important. An agent of the apparatus of
innovation is not a managerial entrepreneur, is a playful creator – an entrepreneurial, or more precisely, an organisational entrepreneur (compare with Hjorth 2005).

The approach to becoming shows its true potential in attempting to understand how the apparatus of innovation works. Becoming – the creation and exploration of new styles of perception – is pretty much what the space for play and innovation is all about. It is being both ‘in’ and ‘between’ in a spatial-temporal space of becoming (see Hjorth 2005). In this way, something that is not real as such can be actualised as a new image (see Hjorth 2012 forthcoming). Thus, the actualisations of images are the crucial difference between being and becoming: a being exists per se, but becoming is a process through which a new image can be actualised. As discussed above, something that is not real but that can be actualised as a new image (a play, a piece of art, a business opportunity) is an affirmative power behind human activities. These activities have the power to build the processes of organisational entrepreneurship.

The difference between dating and being in an established relationship shows its descriptive force as an example of becoming (see Gartner 1993). Involvement in a relationship reflects an ongoing state of affairs (being) while a desire to build up a new relationship is about novelty, movement, and change (becoming). Building a new relationship requires different types of actions than being in an established relationship does. An established relationship requires the maintenance and fostering of trust, co-operation, and understanding. In contrast, building up a new relationship requires precisely the same to be created out of nothing – nobody will be waiting to enter a relationship with you without you taking some affirmative action. The same is the case in terms of entrepreneurship – an already existing firm can be driven without the need to constantly create new initiatives all the time but generation of trust, cooperation, and understanding is crucial when creating a space for a new business opportunity (and therefore a new business organisation) (compare with Baker & Nelsson 2005).

My final two essays (chapters 8 and 9) take as their starting point the idea of becoming. Those essays also show the difference between business opportunity-based discussions (see chapters 6 and 7) and the processual approach to entrepreneurship. This is not about comparing which discussion is more relevant. My ambition is to create an academic space for those who are interested in discussing the different images of the event of organisational entrepreneurship that takes place in the post-industrial economy. Ontologically, this requires taking the perspective of social constructivism, which covers human life, as a starting
point. In that way, I believe that organisational entrepreneurship as an academic discourse opens up a perspective from which to see and register entrepreneurship in a way that will also make the empirical illustrations more fruitful.

1.8 The structure of the dissertation

This sub-chapter describes the structure of this doctoral dissertation. In chapter 1, I frame the dissertation both theoretically and empirically. I discuss the research gap, scope and setting that informed this process. I also outline the study’s research questions. The sub-questions are answered separately in the essays that make up this dissertation. I found it useful to propose four questions (and hence to write four essays that are based on my journal/conference publications), as it seems to me that organisational entrepreneurship is about human actions and entrepreneurial processes that emerge as different forms (e.g. business opportunities, internationalisation of SMEs, shared visions, expressions of entrepreneurial passion). Ontological and epistemological standing points are also discussed.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation is a literature review. I go through the critical literature on entrepreneurial actions and processes, discussing how spaces for play and innovation emerge from them. More precisely, there is a need to regard the event of organisational entrepreneurship, in which the space for play and innovation drives many simultaneous human-made processes. Some of those processes are platforms of (new) businesses which are based on the entrepreneurial actions.

In chapter 3, I explain my methodology (an interview-based data set as well as an ethnography). The open storytelling mode of interview is the basis of the expansive cycle of learning actions linked with the creation of business opportunities. However, this does not explain how the creation of business opportunities emerges as a part of human life. In contrast, entrepreneurial actions around the creation of business opportunities seem to involve a process of social learning. This fosters the internationalisation of SMEs, for instance. Therefore genealogic storytelling together with ethnographical fieldwork offers an opening for understanding the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

In the fourth chapter, I summarise the essays that build up the arguments of this study. This dissertation, as a compilation of essays based on forthcoming journal papers, is a kind of apparatus of academic production. Thus, the essays reflect how my life was progressing during the research process. On these
grounds, the essays not only consider the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, but also reflect how the research process regarding this project was carried out. The summaries in chapter 4 show how a by-product of my aspiration (i.e. to become a researcher) was actualised. That by-product is, of course, this dissertation.

The fifth chapter presents the implications and contributions (theoretical and empirical) of this study. I found it important to draw a larger picture of the academic discourse of organisational entrepreneurship on which I am elaborating. This does not happen only as an academic person (as most people assume), but also as a human being – a person aiming to become a researcher. The implications suggest that opening up human life to processes of social learning and becoming creates the space for play and innovation. This is discussed both theoretically and empirically. However, my life was the same during this complex, social and nuanced research process, and involved becoming something other than what I was at the beginning of the process.

As mentioned above, this dissertation is a compilation of four essays. The reason for conducting the dissertation in this way is that I encountered two critical issues in entrepreneurship: actions and processes. The first two essays are based on papers that I wrote on entrepreneurial actions. The first (chapter 6) was initially a co-authored conference paper with Professor Vesa Puhakka, which I presented at the EBRF Conference (Research Forum to Understand Business in Knowledge Society) in 2008. It has since been published in the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing in 2010. The paper conceptually presents how business opportunities can be seen as social actions from the perspective of social learning theory.

The second essay is a follow-up to the first, based on a conference paper co-authored with Anita Juho and presented at the McGill International Entrepreneurship Conference in 2010. The paper was rewritten and presented at the same conference in 2011, and is currently in review with a journal. The second essay (chapter 7) elaborates empirically how international business opportunities are closely connected with a set of socially co-created actions when people creating social spaces for play and innovation share objects in their everyday practices. The shared objects are international business opportunities. In the second essay, I argue that the critical issue in international entrepreneurship is not the entrepreneurial artefact itself (i.e. internationalisation of SMEs) but rather understanding how the entrepreneurial artefact is based on entrepreneurial actions.
Those actions also create a by-product which can, for instance, be the internationalisation of SMEs.

The third essay in this dissertation is a conceptual elaboration of the process of entrepreneurship, that is, entrepreneuring (chapter 8). More precisely, chapter 8 is based on the film *From Dusk Till Dawn* (released in 1996). The movie shows how an entrepreneurial context is created in the process of entrepreneurship developing as a socially shared and updated vision of a better life. On this basis, the entrepreneurial context seems to be more than just a factor influencing the process of entrepreneurship. In contrast, entrepreneurial actions frame the space that can be actualised as a (new) business, for example. This opens up a way of seeing the context of entrepreneurship as a social space for play and innovation. This is a necessary platform when creating novelty, movement and change.

The final chapter of this dissertation discusses the nature of the process of entrepreneurship and compares it to developing a romantic relationship. The work of entrepreneurial passion suggests that there is a distinction between dating and being in an established relationship. That distinction reflects what the event of organisational entrepreneurship is all about. From this perspective the emergence of a new (business) organisation is like dating, and driving an established business is like being in an ongoing relationship. The juxtaposition between entrepreneurial passion and dating (the process of falling in love) allows us to gain a better understanding of why entrepreneurs, for instance, work in a passionate way. This makes it possible to ignite the type of social fire (i.e. organisational creativity) that is needed in a post-industrial society. In the fourth essay, I explain how my ethnographical fieldwork on a stand-up comedy firm contextually frames an up-and-coming stand-up comedian’s desire to become-Other, which was investigated through the storytelling method in an open interview. This happens in a similar way to how a single person acts when trying to build up a new relationship, and is the same issue as with entrepreneurship: a person begins with the desire to become something other than what he or she currently is.
2 Framing the relevant literature

In this chapter, I go through the critical literature that contributes to the discourse of organisational entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial actions that foster processes of entrepreneurship are approached from the perspectives of social learning and processes. The research problems/sub-disciplines contributing to this project – business opportunity creation/development and contextuality/creative becoming – are also introduced. In this chapter, I focus on the issues that those research areas consider (i.e. entrepreneurial social actions and processes). Entrepreneurial social actions and processes related to these areas reflect what organisational entrepreneurship is about as an entrepreneurial event. The event of organisational entrepreneurship seems to be about acting in the process of what is co-created along the way, but is not always pre-planned or described at the beginning.

2.1 Entrepreneurial actions

Research on entrepreneurship begins with the ideas of Cantillon (1964), proposed in 1732. According to Cantillon, an entrepreneur is a person who is looking for the fit between demand and supply: he or she is buying products at a certain price and selling them at an uncertain price. This is similar to this dissertation’s understanding because Cantillon saw the difference between entrepreneurship and ownership of property. Nowadays it is not always clear that entrepreneurship can be something other than driving one’s own business as the owner of a firm. As I suggested in the opening section, there are social actions that drive people to follow their desires regarding entrepreneurship. This is similar to what Schumpeter (1934) writes about the creative destruction: the event of organisational entrepreneurship is a disrupter of the reigning order. That kind of event takes place through creating social spaces for play and innovation. Therefore, organisational entrepreneurship demands novelty, movement and change at the social level.

On the grounds of the discussion above, organisational entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial event that is fostered by organisational creativity. It can be seen as a form of entrepreneurial action. In that sense, Gartner (1989) was right in saying that the question of who is an entrepreneur is wrong. I suggest that entrepreneurship is a way of acting in a society (compare with Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Webb et al. 2009). The typical way to approach entrepreneurial actions is to consider the managerial or enterprise discourse around them (see Hjorth 2003).
From that perspective, entrepreneurship becomes a bundle of economic acts that are seen to be true.

Entrepreneurship is an issue that has been analysed as a phenomenon that could be used as a tool when a person or a group of people are creating a new business organisation (e.g. a firm) – like a social hammer. While working on this project, I found the notion of this social hammer difficult. People tend to expect that the entrepreneurial work that almost everybody is asked to do nowadays (a set of creative and innovative actions) is based on the industrial idea of the efficient man (*homo oeconomicus*) who could make the world better off by working efficiently, via the apparatus of production that is an industrial construction of work/business life interventions. In addition, there is a huge stream of literature that considers entrepreneurship as a bundle of personality traits. The assumption is that those personality traits or qualities could lead an individual to recognise and/or discover business opportunities more efficiently than non-entrepreneurs could (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Kirzner 1997, Gaglio & Katz 2001, Baron & Ensley 2006).

From the view of trait-based and cognitive approaches to entrepreneurship, an entrepreneur could be separated from the larger set of people by his or her personality qualities (such as the need for achievement, locus of control, self-efficacy or entrepreneurial alertness). Recent research has shown that there are differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs (Gartner 1989). In addition, critical voices have found that the differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs are no more outstanding than those within a group of entrepreneurs (Gartner 1989, see also Hjorth *et al.* 2008).

Following on from the finding that cognitive issues do not completely explain the personality differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, there is also a view of entrepreneurial orientation that investigates differences between specific behaviours (see Lumpkin & Dess 1996, Wiklund & Shepherd 2003, Covin, Green & Slevin 2006). Innovativeness, risk taking and proactiveness, for example, are seen to be important behavioural differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. However, the basic ontological assumption behind the discourse of entrepreneurial orientation, EO (as well as the trait- and cognitive-based approaches) is a realism that glues the critical issues of entrepreneurship together. Simultaneously, those approaches neglect the possibility that entrepreneurship could be something other than creating and finally driving one’s own business organisation (e.g. SME). On this basis, entrepreneurial traits and/or
personality qualities as well as entrepreneurial orientation seem to categorise entrepreneurs as different to non-entrepreneurs.

When assuming that entrepreneurs are something that other people are not, we end up at the point where the research interest is in investigating a specific issue, such as SMEs. This may sidetrack us, because the antecedents of entrepreneurship may be coming from elsewhere too. For example, antecedents of entrepreneurship can also be seen in actions that people perform in their everyday lives (see Allen 2001, Steyaert & Katz 2004). As Hjorth et al. (2008: 81) put it, “The stabilisations and ‘normalisations’ of entrepreneurship research are more the result of a prejudice, referred to by majority-voices as ‘normal’.” In this way, I suggest that social actions could be the bases of every type of work, including the business-related version of entrepreneurship. Those types of social actions should be taken into account in a more detailed way than previous scholars have done so far (see Holt 2008, Jones & Holt 2008).

If research on entrepreneurship could take social entrepreneurial actions into consideration in a detailed way, then it could be possible to see things that have been overlooked by previous scholars. As mentioned above, the stabilisations and normalisations within the research might be based on the prejudices of what has been seen as ‘normal’ in the field of entrepreneurship (Hjorth et al. 2008). Thus, inserting entrepreneurial actions into this project is a way to problematise the mainstream literature (what Hjorth et al. (Ibid) call “majority-voices”). It is about seeing things differently from the perspectives that have been widely used. However, I am not the first person to do this (see Steyaert & Katz 2004, Holt 2008, Hjorth & Steyaert 2010, Sørensen in press). Those critical voices make the assumption that entrepreneurship is something that is done instead of more or less static individual/personality qualities/traits, that is, something that already exists. As Mainela and Puhakka (2009: 130) write, “Academic and managerial interests could be then on the following questions: How are the opportunities socially created in the activity space in which the social space offers the dialectical tools and signs with which the opportunities for business are created? Where and why do the results (opportunities for business) change the global business landscape?”

As mentioned in the opening section of this dissertation, there is a more or less stabilised research problem/sub-discipline that considers business opportunities – driven by Shane and Venkataraman’s (2000) landmark work – which I problematise here using inspirations from the European School of Entrepreneurship. What, then, could the event of organisational entrepreneurship be in these kinds of research settings? The very nature of organisational
entrepreneurship is about the creative human actions that collectively create entrepreneurial processes. In this doctoral project I approached entrepreneurial actions from the perspective of social learning theory that differs from most entrepreneurial action and/or behaviour approaches due to its considering social matters of learning as the core of research (see Engeström 1987, Engeström 2001). Competing discourses for this could be, for example, corporate entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship.

The major interest in the discourse of corporate entrepreneurship is in finding a way for managers to handle a business organisation in a more entrepreneurial way. These circumstances involve an entrepreneurial element of acting in a creative way. However, the major challenge in terms of this study is that managers tend to understand things through the bodies of more entrepreneurial persons (i.e. employees) in an organisation (see Burgelman 1983, Day 1994, Amo 2006). As the name of the discourse, corporate entrepreneurship, suggests, it is about managerial desire to organise work better or more efficiently. However, it seems to me that the way in which entrepreneurs work and behave is about breaking existing rules and creating new things (see Rindova et al. 2009). Organisational entrepreneurship then becomes a non-managerial concept because it is fostered by organisational creativity rather than rationality and order (see Figure 1). For example, Hjorth (2003: 5, my italics) explicates organisational entrepreneurship from the perspective of organisational creativity by saying that such a “creativity disturbs the reigning order and, instead, also demands a new organisation”. In this way, entrepreneurship could be also something other than issues in an existing business organisation that might be more or less entrepreneurial by their very nature, for example breaking rather than maintaining order (see Rindova et al. 2009).

As the citation above suggests, organisational entrepreneurship as a form of organisational creativity is about understanding what is happening when a group of people (i.e. an organisation) is creating new spaces for play and innovation (see Figure 1). Hence, the discourse of intrapreneurship, mentioned above alongside corporate entrepreneurship, is not helpful here, as the basic assumption of both intrapreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship involves human entrepreneurial behaviour. Then the perspective returns to an individual again. The landmark work here is Kanter’s (1989) book When Giants Learn to Dance, which effectively describes what intrapreneurship is: an individual’s attempt to be more entrepreneurial and to behave in a more creative, efficient and productive way inside or outside of an existing (business) organisation (see also Pinchot 1985).
Entrepreneurship then becomes a question of an acting individual again. However, I believe that it is more important both empirically and conceptually to understand entrepreneurial actions that foster the processes of entrepreneurship.

As mentioned in the opening section, the first two of my essays (chapters 6 and 7) consider entrepreneurial actions. In those papers, I elaborate on how entrepreneurial actions take place from the perspective of social learning. The first empirical paper (chapter 6, the second essay in this dissertation) contains a contextual analysis of business opportunity creation in international settings. In both essays I use Engeström’s (1987, 2001) application of social learning theory (the structure of the human activity in the first essay and the expansive cycle of learning actions in the second essay) as a conceptual framework in order to better understand what entrepreneurial actions could be like in terms of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

Engeström’s (1987, 2001) approach integrates the actor and the object of action as a collective whole. This is appropriate for talking about organisational entrepreneurship. In fact, from the perspective of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, an entrepreneur is not like a lonely island, but is rather a collective human being creating movement and change through social spaces for play and innovation (compare with Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). Thus, the structure of human activity has been used in this study (see Figure 3). The whole idea of social learning starts from the assumption that there are objects of learning that a group of people are striving for. Those types of objects can be attempts at better understanding something, or creating, developing or acting on something that changes over time. For instance, in this study the collaborative project of two firms (the first data set) conceptually framed the co-created and co-constructed object of social learning between those firms. Empirically, that object of social learning was/is a piece of software that the firms are creating and developing together in international business settings. Due to the social nature of this type of learning, there needs to be more than one system of activity. As Figure 3 illustrates, at least two activity systems are needed so that social learning can take place as an expansive cycle of learning actions.
As Figure 3 illustrates, the structure of human activity describes social learning as a conceptual whole that integrates the subject, object, and community (Engeström 2001). The structure of human activity is the unit of analysis in Engeström’s (1987, 2001) studies of social learning, and is used as the level of analysis in the first and second essays of this dissertation. I used Engeström’s approach in this project because entrepreneurs are always learning new things, usually moving targets, in the processes that they are parts of (see Allen 2001). Individual-centric approaches and studies framed around firms (e.g. SMEs) neglect that issue. Moreover, Engeström’s application of social learning theory, which developed from actor-network theory (ANT), takes social context into consideration when analysing issues in entrepreneurship that change over time (see Görling & Rehn 2008, Hjorth et al. 2008, Rindova et al. 2009).

Even though Engeström’s (1987, 2001) approach comes from a very different discipline (i.e. social learning theory), it works in this study, as entrepreneurship is also an iterative process of learning (Alvarez & Barney 2007). Similarly to social learning, there are rules, tools/signs and divisions of labour that influence the actions that entrepreneurs undertake in their everyday lives. As Figure 3 illustrates, the analysis should take place on the level of systems of action (i.e. the structures of human activity) instead of individuals, because the actions do not happen by virtue of individuals alone. There are also social norms and rules of activity that must be followed in order to be a part of a specific organisation. In addition, a subject acts on an object (that finally creates an outcome) using a
specific set of tools under the division of labour (Engeström 1987, 2001, see Figure 3). In addition, the social constructivists agree with these kinds of assumptions (see Berger & Luckmann 1966, Gergen 2001).

Engeström’s (1987, 2001) approach to the structure of human activity was used in the first essay of this project. In the second essay, Engeström’s (2001) suggestion about the expansive cycle of learning actions was used. The approach taken in the first essay (1987, 2001) made it possible to analyse how any type of social action can work in social settings through systems of activity. Social actions are crucial in terms of organisational entrepreneurship, because entrepreneurship can then be described as a set of entrepreneurial actions related to business opportunities. More precisely, entrepreneurship is about “a tactical art of creating new spaces for play and/or invention within an established order, to actualize new practices” (Hjorth 2005: 387).

There is thus a need to understand what everyday practices (as entrepreneurial actions/processes) are about and how they take place in the life of entrepreneurs, not only from the perspective of a person recognising, discovering or developing a business opportunity, but from the perspective of the actions that people (e.g. entrepreneurs) are performing. Engeström (2001) suggests that this type of action is about social learning. It is an expansive cycle that starts from the historicity of the actions that the subjects (e.g. entrepreneurs) have been doing before. Learning is ignited by the problematisation of actions that those subjects have found difficult in work-related interventions, for example. According to Engeström (2001), this leads to circumstances in which subjects co-create the shared object of those actions. In the end, the process starts again, because people and organisations are always working on something that is not stable. Therefore, the cycle of social learning is naturally expansive (Engeström 2001). This is explicated in the second essay of this dissertation.

Engeström (2001) uses his approach to better understand issues around learning and teaching in schools and in other types of organisations in which social learning is needed. In terms of organisational entrepreneurship, this opens up a window to understanding entrepreneurial actions. Learning being a basis for entrepreneurial actions is not news (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Johansson & Vahlne 2009), but the way in which learning is approached often contradicts the idea of collectivity in those circumstances. Learning is seen to be a kind of action, in which a person (e.g. an entrepreneur) or business organisation (e.g. SMEs) learns crucial information from the market and therefore becomes better at conducting business-related interventions. Engeström’s (2001) argument features
the same issue: learning must not only happen in a way that involves a teacher who knows what should be learned. In organisational entrepreneurship there are no wise teachers, as the whole idea of entrepreneurship and business opportunity is a social construct of how to create a business as a part of an economy or society.

The second essay in this dissertation approaches internationalisation from the perspective of Engeströmian (1987, 2001) social learning. The issue of internationalisation is usually an interest area of international entrepreneurship, but, as I argue in the opening section (and in a more detailed manner in the third essay), the entrepreneur fundamentally matters in organisational entrepreneurship. This is especially the case when one considers the event of organisational entrepreneurship, because there is an outstanding number of different types of organisations, only a small fraction of them related to business, in which organisational creativity can be embedded (see Figure 1). Organisational entrepreneurship is actualised in many ways, one of which can be internationalisation, as I argue in my second essay.

2.2 Entrepreneurial processes

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I emphasise the theoretical nature of organisational entrepreneurship in the first and second essays of this dissertation. This is because entrepreneurial actions like social learning seem to be located within entrepreneurial processes (see Holt 2008). Social learning theory begins from the idea that there is no competent teacher to explain what is right or wrong, and that social actions co-create the tension necessary for the expansive cycle of social learning actions to take place over time.

According to Engeström (2001), ‘Learning I’ is about action, in which a student learns to belong to the learning group and to please a teacher (i.e. to be a student and to find out what material must be learned). In contrast, ‘Learning II’ involves social tension that manifests as contradictory demands between social groups and learning. In this way, it is possible to reach ‘Learning III’, which is about problematising learning as a context (i.e. why should this be done or why should one not neglect the object of learning and its targets). The critique is not only about problematising teaching, teachers and/or learning with them, but also involves problematising the context of those things (Engeström 2001). And all this must of course be based on the justified critique that heats up the contradictions. According to Engeström (Ibid), those social contradictions as human actions are the bases of social learning.
The activity-theoretical approach is interesting in terms of organisational entrepreneurship because entrepreneurial actions seem to be actualised as learning through social processes and as the creation of space for play and innovation (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Webb et al. 2009, compare with Shane & Venkataraman 2000). When creating new things in this way, it is important to work within Learning III to problematise the current state of affairs and create an alternative solution. Previous work that considers entrepreneurial processes approaches entrepreneurship from the view of business opportunities. In this way, it has been said that “to have entrepreneurship, you must first have entrepreneurial opportunities” (Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 220). This means that the phenomenon of entrepreneurship has been seen to be based on the existence of a business opportunity (see Venkataraman 1997, Shane 2003).

Similarly to business opportunities being seen to have an objective existence, an acting entrepreneur has been seen to be ready or ‘alert’ in order to recognise and/or discover opportunities (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Kirzner 1997, Gaglio & Katz 2001). However, the objective nature of business opportunities has been criticised, and some writers have proposed that the so-called creation theory of opportunities is more like mountain-building than mountain-climbing (Alvarez & Barney 2007). From the perspective of creation theory, possible market imperfections are not the main interest of entrepreneurial actions, unlike in the recognition and discovery theories/views of business opportunities. Whether there are market imperfections or not, these are created via entrepreneurial actions and not vice versa (Alvarez & Barney 2007). Schumpeter (1934) argues the same in the name of creative destruction.

In Alvarez and Barney’s (2007: 11–12) words, “Rather than searching for a clear opportunity to be exploited, entrepreneurs creating opportunities might engage in an iterative learning process that ultimately could lead to the formation of an opportunity. In the former case, entrepreneurs would spend a great deal of time and energy developing a single, comprehensive and complete business plan. In the latter case, entrepreneurs may find that business plans can only be written after an opportunity has been created.” In this way, Alvarez and Barney (2007) suggest that writing a business plan can be seen as unnecessary from the perspectives of both entrepreneurs and those who invest in them. This is because planning can take time and would waste resources that can be used in action to create and exploit a business opportunity (Ibid, compare with Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Sarasvathy 2001).
In this study, I found that the creation theory of business opportunities works adequately when the context is turbulent and changes fast (see Kim & Mauborgne 2001). This seems to be a feature of the post-industrial economy (Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). Therefore, I approach business opportunities from the perspective of creation theory (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003, Alvarez & Barney 2007). Two of the essays in this dissertation (chapters 6 and 7) start from the creation view of business opportunities, and on these grounds it seems that ideas about creative and contextual becoming make the picture of the event of organisational entrepreneurship more coherent (see Figure 2). This is because the business opportunity-based literature (the creation theory/view) is inspired by the recognition or discovery of ideas about business opportunities. Creativity, social elements and contextual matters around entrepreneurship have remained in the background (Hjorth et al. 2008). This study fills that gap by proposing four versions (the four essays) of what the event of organisational entrepreneurship could be, and how those four research problems/sub-disciplines form a coherent and alternative picture instead of contradicting each other.

Regardless of the fact that creativity, social elements and contextual matters have not been widely investigated in the previous research on entrepreneurship, there is growing pressure to see entrepreneurship as something other than ownership and/or management of SMEs (see Steyaert & Katz 2004, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Rindova et al. 2009). For example, the book series New Movements of Entrepreneurship (Hjorth & Steyaert 2003, Hjorth & Steyaert 2004, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Hjorth & Steyaert 2010) reflects the European way of seeing what entrepreneurship could be in a post-industrial economy (see also Hjorth 2012 forthcoming). In this context, entrepreneurship is created in everyday human practices that foster new ways of behaving, it does not only create new SMEs (compare with Gartner 1989, 2010). Entrepreneurial actions and processes may (but do not necessarily) have that function, as the organisational creativity behind those actions and processes creates many kinds of outcomes and by-products (see Figure 1).

Even though business opportunity creation is discussed in the first and second essays of this dissertation, my argument is that an economised view of what entrepreneurship is or could be is not the whole story, as there are also many other types of processes (see Steyaert 2004). Those other processes are based on the creativity and experience that a human needs in post-industrial urban life. Thus, the primary question is not only about SMEs, but also about what entrepreneurship could be and what type of role it plays as a part of current
societies (see Steyaert & Katz 2004). There are social processes that can lead a person or group of people to create, develop and act on business opportunities, but the opportunity itself is not the core interest (compare with Alvarez & Barney 2007). In contrast, the point is to live according to the finding that “there is an openness that resists all forms of system-building and that embraces a world of becoming” (Steyaert 2004: 19).

Steyaert’s (2004) notion of the world of becoming opens up a discussion of organisational entrepreneurship as a contextually-embedded phenomenon. In that sense, an organisational entrepreneur is not only a businessperson. Rather, that type of person is an organisational becomer, almost everybody trying to create novelty, movement and change at the level of society. A part of that novelty, movement and change can be actualised as a new business organisation, for example. The broader picture of entrepreneurship is not stuck in the field of businesses or business opportunities, but relates to human life practices and work-life interventions, and these have not yet been studied in detail (see Hjorth et al. 2003). This study tries to fill that gap.

Ideas of becoming are based on philosophers such as Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, Serres, Derrida, Bakhtin, de Certeau and Nietzsche (see Hjorth 2004b). In this dissertation, I follow Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) ideas of the process of becoming. They have created strong roots for what the process itself could be in terms of organisation theory (compare with Pettigrew 1997). Theories of organisational change and movement are also discussed in this dissertation, but its major aim is to better understand the process of becoming-entrepreneurial from the view of the event of organisational entrepreneurship (compare with Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). The point is not to understand what an acting subject (e.g. an entrepreneur) is doing in order to create new SMEs, but how the process of entrepreneurship occurs through entrepreneurial events (compare with Forbes 1999, Gartner 1985, 1989).

My approach here is a response to the need for seeing entrepreneurship as something other than the management and/or ownership of SMEs (see Rindova et al. 2009). Rindova et al. (Ibid: 477) define entrepreneurial as “efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or group of individuals”, and it seems that the process of entrepreneurship is characterised by actions related to the creation of spaces for play and innovation as a part of society as a whole (compare with Ireland, Hitt & Sirmon 2003). Philosophical ideas of becoming work along similar lines to this
kind of thinking about entrepreneurial actions and processes (see Colebrook 2002, Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

The perspective of becoming is about approaching something that does not exist, like the way in which the process of becoming-woman actually entails becoming something other than a man (see Colebrook 2002). Thus the becoming-process in the sense that Tsoukas and Chia (2002) use it is helpful for describing the emergence of organisations. In their words, an “organisation is a pattern that is constituted, shaped and emerging from change” (Tsoukas & Chia 2002: 570, italics in original). In addition, Tsoukas and Chia discuss the manager as an agent of change – an agent of production, in the industrial age – who has power over organisational actions that could lead to the emergence of a new (business) organisation, for instance (see Gartner 1989).

Seeing the manager as a change-making agent (i.e. an individual person with a certain role) is useful when discussing organisational emergence (see Gartner 1989). In this study, though, change itself is seen as an outcome of the process of entrepreneurship. The core issue is not to analyse the outcome of the process, but to problematise the very existence of entrepreneurship research that begins from the idea of individuals and businesses opportunities via emerging and/or evolving organisations (compare with Gartner 1993, Tsoukas & Chia 2002, Van de Ven & Poole 2005). When referring entrepreneurship to organisational becoming, the concept of organisational entrepreneurship becomes about the everyday actions that make up human life (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).

To elaborate, let us think about a man or woman walking down the street and who intends to create a “better world” (Sarasvathy et al. 2003: 155), to “develop a product that helps mankind” rather than just making more money (Gartner, Bird & Starr 1992: 25) or “the wife who negotiates a better price, the child who begins to trade collectible cards with friends, the homeless man who begins selling cheap umbrellas during a rainstorm or freshly dug worms to fishermen by a city lake” (Steyaert & Katz 2004: 190). If we consider these within the remit of organisational entrepreneurship, I argue that there is no result of the process per se. Therefore, it is less interesting to discuss outcomes of the process than to think about the process of becoming-entrepreneurial. Discussing the processual nature of the entrepreneurial process makes it possible to elaborate what the nature of change and movement in a society is about.

When considering the process of becoming-entrepreneurial in the sense discussed above, I conclude that Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) suggestion about the role of organisations and change can be found in the processual becoming of
organisational entrepreneurship. In Tsoukas and Chia’s (Ibid: 570) words, “change is the reweaving of actors’ webs of beliefs and habits of action as a result of new experiences obtained through interactions”. Entrepreneurship research’s emphasis on the actor (an acting subject of a study, such as an entrepreneur) and his or her webs of beliefs and habits of action emerging as a result of experiences through interactions, mean that the results or implications of a study end up with a managerial version of entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2003). More precisely, a researcher who is investigating entrepreneurial processes, as I am here, should not start with the assumption that a being (i.e. an acting subject, such as an entrepreneur) would enact or go through processes that have already been assumed to be entrepreneurial in their nature (see Colebrook 2002). Let me elaborate.

Usually, the nature of an entrepreneurial process has been understood as something that starts at A and ends with B. Of course there is an outstanding number of different process approaches (e.g. teleological, life-cycle, evolutionary and dialectical), but research on entrepreneurship is focused largely on what occurs with those who have been already categorised as entrepreneurs. This is the major difference between this study and work on the processes of creating business opportunities (e.g. Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). During this study I found that the non-processual parts of the process of entrepreneurship are well known, but the processual nature of the process of becoming-entrepreneurial is not well investigated.

I began working on this project from the perspective of philosophy of science in order to make sense of which background ideas would work with organisational entrepreneurship (see Steyaert & Katz 2004, Hjorth 2005, Hjorth & Peltzer 2007). There is a need to approach entrepreneurship from a social constructivist perspective, in which entrepreneurial actions and processes are conceptually embedded. For example, Shane and Venkataraman’s (2000) call for researchers to study entrepreneurship is similar to Schumpeter’s (1934) notion of products and processes driven in an entrepreneurial way, via innovations: there are different sources of social movement and change in a capitalist society that drive it and keep it going (Shane & Venkataraman 2000).

Furthermore, Shane and Venkataraman claim that the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities is a subjective process even though the opportunities themselves are objective by their very nature. Shane and Venkataraman (Ibid), Shane (2003) and Alvarez and Barney (2007) as well as more organisational theoretically inspired scholars, such as Steyaert and Katz (2004), examine the
process behind entrepreneurship, but previous work has primarily been focused on the economic side of the phenomenon (Rindova et al. 2009, Webb et al. 2009). In this dissertation, I argue that the many types of social processes are major forces that drive the action we call entrepreneurship in a capitalist society. By investigating this type of social issue behind the economic action in a society (i.e. the event of organisational entrepreneurship), social constructivist and post-structuralist approaches open up a way to see the broader issues around the organisational version of entrepreneurship (Hjorth 2005, 2012).

Those approaches (social constructivism and post-structuralism) take the context-dependent, creative and social nature of entrepreneurship into account. In this way, we can see what is actually going on in real-life everyday practices and work-related interventions. Entrepreneurs are also parts of these types of processes. Actually, the main interest of this study is not to suggest that only entrepreneurs create movement, change or value (compare with Ireland et al. 2003, Rindova et al. 2009). Rather, entrepreneurship is seen as a social power without economic meaning per se, and organisational entrepreneurship can have this function alongside many others.

The decision to not restrict the core of a study to economic processes allows the concept of organisational entrepreneurship to be seen as an entrepreneurial event (compare with Hjorth 2005). Therefore, entrepreneurship relates not only to the economy, but belongs to society as well. Organisational entrepreneurship is driven by many simultaneous human-made processes (see Webb et al. 2009). Some of those processes can be categorised as harmful, bad or suspicious (but also, depending on one’s point of view, as creative, good and new) (Rehn & Taalas 2004). However, these processes drive change and social movement. Those issues are seen as the core of entrepreneurship over time (Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Ireland et al. 2003, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Rindova et al. 2009). Entrepreneurship cannot therefore be restricted to the concepts of ownership and/or management of SMEs. It is a broader issue in society at large.

2.3 Lessons learned from previous work

To sum up this chapter’s discussion, I will clarify a few of issues around organisational entrepreneurship. Because the literature concerning entrepreneurship is fragmented, I found it necessary to frame this doctoral dissertation around two areas of interest: (1) entrepreneurial actions and (2) processes. The event of organisational entrepreneurship has value as the basis of
many types of discussions, not only as part of those issues of interest that consider business-based interventions as part of the economy.

The perspective of organisational entrepreneurship could open up novel approaches around entrepreneurial issues, if we do not restrict the analysis to economic issues only. In contrast, the primary interest here is to understand what entrepreneurship could become in a post-industrial society. Hjorth and Steyaert (2010: 4) list the following important topics around entrepreneurship as a disruptive event, creating new understandings of what entrepreneurship is and could be in the post-industrial era:

1. How entrepreneurship is produced and performed as identity in the social field of practices
2. How the entrepreneurial process is created as a work of art in the ensemble of time and place
3. How research will provide new knowledge on how entrepreneurship is governed, and
4. The passionate policies of entrepreneurship.

This dissertation contributes to this fourfold need, and four essays were written in this study. Each is framed around the need to understand entrepreneurship as something other than just management and/or ownership of a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). Hjorth and Steyaert (2010) suggest that the four issues mentioned above could be discussed through the politics and aesthetics of entrepreneurship, but that is just one story. In this project, I framed the discussion of organisational entrepreneurship around four separate discourses.

The first essay (chapter 6) discusses the creation process of business opportunities. It shows how the productivity of everyday social practices is performed as a novel activity around social learning. This shows how business opportunities can be created and responds to the first need described above. However, the first essay does not elaborate on identities as something located objectively in the human mind. Instead the focus is on the process of business opportunity creation, an action that entrepreneurial bodies perform as parts of their lives. This is a processually-based identity that changes and develops over time. This is how entrepreneurship is produced and performed in terms of organisational entrepreneurship.

The second essay (chapter 7) is a follow-up. It discusses how time and place in entrepreneurs’ lives create social tension (i.e. interaction) that makes an international business opportunity possible. A by-product of that type of action is
internationalisation of SMEs. In that sense, it seems that an entrepreneurial process is created in the process of social learning.

The third essay (chapter 8) opens up a discussion of the very nature of knowledge in entrepreneurship. It seems that there is no pure knowledge in the processes of entrepreneurship, called entrepreneruing in this essay. Instead, entrepreneurial persons have a shared vision that can be interpreted as knowledge. That type of knowledge is socially produced in an entrepreneurial process, the end of which is not clear, but is updated on the way. Thus, the entrepreneurial context changes over time, which is why the governance of entrepreneurship is based on the desire for a better life. This is elaborated in the third essay with an analysis of the criminals Seth and Richie Gecko in the movie *From Dusk Till Dawn*. Here the context of entrepreneurship is the two men’s passionate desire to become rich. This corresponds to the third of Hjorth and Steyaert’s (2010) needs outlined above.

The fourth essay (chapter 9) considers the issue of entrepreneurial passion. That essay suggests that the process of entrepreneurship is like dating, which has its roots in the process of falling in love. On that basis, the reason for the emergence of entrepreneurial passion is human willingness to become something other than what one is right now. This also the nature of post-industrial entrepreneurship: a creative and organisational phenomenon that takes place in certain types of passionate policies (see the fourth issue of interest suggested by Hjorth and Steyaert (2010) above).

Gartner’s (1993) later work concerning the creation of organisations – acting ‘as if’ – is important and also contributes to this type of research (see Gartner *et al.* 1992). Nevertheless, he does not specify where and how entrepreneurial actions and real-life social processes happen in the context of a post-industrial economy, as long as these actions are seen to be a human-made force that fosters the processes of entrepreneurship. An understanding of organisational creativity is therefore needed so that we can better comprehend how one of its illustrations (i.e. the event of organisational entrepreneurship) takes place and what it includes.

In this study, I develop the concept of organisational entrepreneurship further in order to create a more detailed understanding of what role entrepreneurial actions and processes play as drivers of the playful and innovative space creation that is behind social movement and change in the post-industrial age. My critique, based on my problematisation of individuals (e.g. entrepreneurs) and business organisations as the units of analysis in the research on entrepreneurship, is not about saying that individual- or firm-based studies of entrepreneurship are wrong,
quite the contrary. I recognise the potential of organisational creativity as a force that fosters organisational entrepreneurship or could do in the post-industrial age. The principles of the post-industrial age differ from the larger set of principles of the industrial age, on which prior research on entrepreneurship is primarily based (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

On this basis, it is clear that there is a dominant enterprise discourse with which researchers make sense of and write about entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2003). The processual parts of the processes are not very well investigated. In contrast, the unprocessual (i.e. stable) parts of the processes are well known. The major reason for this seems to be that the research methodology has been based on variance-based research methods (see Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). The European School of Entrepreneurship contributes to this doctoral project by providing the methodological basis for the study (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2004), based on genealogic storytelling (see Czarniawska 1997a, Czarniawska 1997b, Hjorth 2012 forthcoming). Genealogic storytelling, its methodological basis and the reasons for using it in this study are discussed in the next chapter. The research outline and methodological elaborations from the storytelling are also discussed there.
3 Methodological choices and empirical material of this study

The purpose of this study is to show the role that playfulness and innovativeness play in organisational entrepreneurship. In doing so, the research problems/sub-disciplines of business opportunities (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman 2000) and contextual becoming (e.g. Hjorth & Steyaert 2010) are integrated with each other (see Figure 2). This illustrates what the nature of organisational entrepreneurship is about and shows how organisational creativity fosters the potential that organisational entrepreneurship could have as a part of societies, beyond the level of the economy (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

This study has been conceptually conducted as a twofold issue because there is a need to understand how to respond to the demands of being creative and innovative in post-industrial work/business organisations. The integration of two research streams of organisational entrepreneurship (specifically business opportunities and contextuality/creative becoming) is a reaction to that demand (see Figure 2). Thus, organisational entrepreneurship is not a single issue but a phenomenon that covers at least those two streams of the research on organisational entrepreneurship. In addition, organisational entrepreneurship as a phenomenon reflects how the creative potential in current work/business life could be actualised through social spaces for play and innovation.

Conceptually, organisational entrepreneurship can show how playfulness and innovativeness can be released in- or outside of emerging, existing and/or evolving work/business organisations. This dissertation contributes to the existing research problems/sub-disciplines of entrepreneurship research in the following way. Firstly, business opportunity creation is discussed in the first essay (chapter 6). Secondly, internationalisation of SMEs as a research area is problematised in the second essay (chapter 7). Thirdly, entrepreneurial contexts are highlighted in the third essay (chapter 8). Fourthly, entrepreneurial passion as creative becoming is illustrated as an emerging field of research in the fourth essay (chapter 9). In this way, each separate contribution shows a conceptual and empirical reflection of organisational entrepreneurship that covers new ways of understanding what entrepreneurship is and/or what it could be in post-industrial business organisations. Those reflections are like separate versions of how the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship can be seen as part of society.

Empirically, I approached organisational entrepreneurship using interviews that were conducted in the manner of storytelling. Four of those interviews belong
to the first empirical part (reported in the second essay of this dissertation, chapter 7). In addition, an ethnographically framed interview was undertaken for the second part of the empirical material (reported on the fourth essay, chapter 9). My decision to use storytelling as a method is discussed in this chapter. The conceptual essays (chapters 6 and 8) were conducted as theoretical grounding for the empirical essays. Thus, the conceptual reasoning in them emphasises the empirical need to understand (1) entrepreneurial actions as social learning (i.e. the second essay, chapter 7 and (2) the process of organisational/creative becoming as entrepreneurial passion (i.e. the fourth essay, chapter 9. Social constructivism as a scientific-philosophical basis for this dissertation fosters the idea of using narrativity and storytelling in research. Gergen (2001: 3) writes that “narrative methods, collaborative methods, auto-ethnography and performance methods are illustrative” ways to do qualitative research in which social constructivism is the philosophical starting point (compare with Fletcher 2006).

3.1 Storytelling and narrativity as methodological background (and tradition) of organisational entrepreneurship

As Foucault discusses in The History of Sexuality (1978), the human life is always based on the human-made histories (i.e. social constructs). In this sense, human activities are reflections of past constructs. The same applies to organisational entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2003). Basically, this means that one could find out which types of issues are registered as entrepreneurship from the history of management theories. As chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation suggest, there is a need to shift the focus of entrepreneurship research from control-based approaches to approaches where the passionate elements of the human being are discussed (see Cardon et al. 2009). Passion is a powerful feature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, making it possible to create spaces for play and innovation. From the perspective of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, then, the critical issue is to understand how passion is organised through people within such an event.

In understanding organisational entrepreneurship, it is important to notice the opportunity for creative time as a creative event that is organised socially (Hjorth 2007). To study these events, Hjorth (2004b: 227, italics in original) suggests that genealogic storytelling could open up a possibility for studying entrepreneurial events, because genealogic storytelling “searches the in-betweens and makes use of opportunities as these are presented in the openings that moving into these
cracks generate. Entre- and -prendre of entrepreneurship is here given a translation’. The event named as in-between is defined as “the art of transforming the desire to create, of channelling or creating passages for this flow of life into a specified future” (Hjorth 2004b: 228).

Current research methods tame the potential for investigating entrepreneurial events. As Steyaert (2004: 15) writes, “Stories are thus interweaving personages that ‘speak’ with each other from their own developing languages.” Methodologically, genealogic storytelling reflects what happens in everyday practices that are located in the core of organisational entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2004a, Steyaert & Katz 2004). Thus, the core of organisational entrepreneurship is about actions that happen in the everyday lives of those who create new spaces for play and innovation (e.g. the entrepreneurs) in a society.

The creative potential of organisational entrepreneurship seems to be located in everybody and is therefore not only related to special persons such as entrepreneurs. In this study, I conducted four interviews that show how the interactive collaboration happened between two firms (the first is located in Helsinki, Finland, the second in Copenhagen, Denmark). They are the stories of two entrepreneurs who found it useful to collaborate to create value for their firms. However, the important thing is that their desires to do something relevant in their lives increased the social tension that was finally actualised as a new business organisation, or a collaborative effort between two firms. This is not only an economic issue, but also creates a new way of living (compare with Hjorth 2004b). Researchers then need to update our understandings of who entrepreneurs are (compare with Gartner 1989). Organisational entrepreneurship helps in this, as the focus is not located on individuals (i.e. entrepreneurs) but on entrepreneurial events instead.

As Hjorth (2004b) and Steyaert (2004) write, the stories show what happens in everyday practices. In an entrepreneurial event those kinds of stories can be found out from everyday practices. Moreover, Steyaert and Katz (2004) suggest that the phenomenon of entrepreneurship should not only be framed around business-related issues, but also around everyday practices. In this way, almost all the creative actions and processes of human life could be categorised as organisational entrepreneurship. In this study, I contribute methodologically to the discussion opened up by Hjorth (2004b), Steyaert (2004) and Steyaert and Katz (2004) by going through the open interviews (in chapters 7 and 9) that were conducted in order to show what role playfulness and innovativeness play in organisational entrepreneurship. Thus, it seems that organisational
entrepreneurship is the name given to an entrepreneurial event. That kind of event covers the creation of spaces for play and innovation in post-industrial business/work organisations. In order to do such a research, organisational entrepreneurship must be seen as a social force – a collective fire (see Hjorth 2007) – that opens up spaces for play and innovation in society at large. That social fire is not a single issue, but reflects a collective desire for change. This can be studied via entrepreneurial stories (Gartner 2010).

To date, the entrepreneurial stories mentioned above have been investigated through autobiographies (see Smith 2005). The most typical implication is that an entrepreneur is a heroic figure who overcomes obstacles and creates something that did not exist before (see Ogbor 2000, Smith & Andersson 2004). However, this study suggests that this is not the whole story of entrepreneurship (compare with Steyaert 2007). Entrepreneurship cannot be understood as an average phenomenon (Gartner 2010). Instead, there is an outstanding variety of what entrepreneurship is and what role it plays as part of society – not only as business-making initiatives, but also as organisational creativity that fosters the potential of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

The second part of the empirical material is drawn from a stand-up comedy firm located in Oulu, Finland (in the Northern part of the country). I undertook an ethnographically framed interview in which I show how the process of becoming a stand-up comedian takes place. Ethnography as fieldwork was important in order to make sense of the context – the Finnish stand-up comedy business – which the interview elaborates further. As Hjorth (2004b: 211) writes about genealogic storytelling, it “gives much more attention to cultural and institutional forces ordering the play of discourses”. When doing ethnographic fieldwork, I found the same to be true: cultural and institutional forces in the Finnish stand-up comedy business played a crucial role for the up-and-coming stand-up comedian. This is explained in detail in the fourth essay (chapter 9).

The up-and-coming stand-up comedian who I followed (or, in Czarniawska’s (2008) term, shadowed) in the field and through the interview tried to actualise his creative potential and desire to be a funny person. This actualisation was not easy. In contrast, the cultural and institutional forces of the Finnish stand-up comedy business (the stand-up comedy firm is still operating at the time of writing in April 2012) noticeably influenced his actions. Entrepreneurial transformation was therefore necessary in order to actualise his creative potential and desire to become a funny person.
An analysis of the ethnographically-framed interview of the up-and-coming stand-up comedian shows that the story (i.e. an interview done in the manner of storytelling) he told about his process of becoming a comedian does not differ from the larger set of similar stories of creative becoming. The ethnographical fieldwork therefore confirms that the story of this up-and-coming stand-up comedian is a typical example of stories that any up-and-coming stand-up comedian goes through when trying to become famous in the Finnish stand-up comedy business sector. However, this interview along with other related material (such as the public blog posts of the specific comedian) shows an in-depth reflection of what was happening when that person put his energy into the process of becoming-Other. A more detailed description of this can be found in the fourth essay (chapter 9).

As Czarniawska (1997a) suggests, storytelling as a scientific method does not propose an enormous difference between “science” and a narrative way of expressing things such as literature (compare with Figure 1). In contrast, the narrative way is much closer to science than one would expect (Czarniawska 1997a). Thus, the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship becomes part of the larger discussion of what entrepreneurship is about as an entrepreneurial event. For example, Gartner et al. (1992) opened up a discussion about the actions of entrepreneurs as a behaviour called “as if”. This means that the uncertainty and ambiguity of processes of entrepreneurship can be taken into account (see Hjorth 2004b). The principle of uncertainty has been discussed in earlier work (e.g. Knight 1921, Sarasvathy 2001). However, the nature of such uncertainty is not elaborated as part of human actions and life per se but rather considered as a part of businesses.

The issue of uncertainty is at any rate a crucial part of the event of organisational entrepreneurship. Sarasvathy (2001) writes that Knightian (1921) true uncertainty is like picking up balls with different colours from an urn. The situation of true uncertainty occurs when a person is picking up a ball from the urn without knowing how many balls are inside and what colours they are. When one picks up a ball (and is hoping for a blue ball, for instance), the truly uncertain situation is that one cannot know whether there are balls in the urn at all or what colours the possible balls are (Sarasvathy 2001). One cannot depend on any likelihood of picking up a blue ball. Similarly, in terms of organisational entrepreneurship there is no such a thing as an average entrepreneur, or entrepreneurship as a form of something we could expect before making sense of it (see Gartner 2010). Methodologically, storytelling is a way to comprehend the
possibilities of that type of situation: not as a likelihood, but as a potential which might not be likely. Regardless of the feature of true uncertainty, entrepreneurship is a part of society, even though it is not always quantitatively that likely. Thus, the event of organisational entrepreneurship is not always likely, but is still possible.

The approach of storytelling can contribute to truly uncertain phenomena (like the event of organisational entrepreneurship) when the narrators – the people who tell the stories – construct the context of their story on their own (Söderberg 2006). In addition, the story that they tell is dependent on the interaction between a narrator and interviewer (Spector-Mersel 2010). In order to make better sense of the context that a narrator is talking about through a story, one could be frame a study like this ethnographically. For example, Geertz (1988) writes that the role of an ethnographer (i.e. a person conducting an ethnographical study) is to understand values, expressive symbols and norms from the perspective of the culture that in question. In doing so, the contextually embedded frame can be better understood by a person who is not naturally a part of that context (in this case, the researcher of this doctoral dissertation, i.e. me).

As mentioned above, the first empirical data set is based on four open interviews that were framed around a collaborative effort (a project that two firms are driving together). Those interviews show how everyday practices are at the core of the very nature of organisational entrepreneurship. Those types of practices create a novel understanding of entrepreneurship as a part of societies rather than as only part of the economy. The second data set shows how the process of becoming can be seen to be located inside those creative practices. Thus, the story of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian suggests that the organisational entrepreneur is less important than the process of how such an entrepreneur comes to be (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). In order to articulate this, the ethnographical fieldwork (that aims to express a thick, contextually-embedded description) helps to analyse stories and see how a certain story and/or stories reflect the larger picture of the issue of interest (Hjorth 2009).

In order to make sense of the process of entrepreneurship as creative and contextual becoming, it is important to concentrate on the potential of organisational creativity as a facilitator for organisational entrepreneurship. More precisely, this means that the focus of that type of study should be framed around the collective energy that a group of people both co-create and construct over time. For example, Hjorth (2007) writes about the release of social creative energy under the term ‘social fire’. This seems to be the case of the interacting firms and
their collaborative project. Here the issue was (and still is) less about becoming something other than they right now are (compare with Gartner 1993) than about creating novelty and value in their larger meaning, from a personal perspective but also from the perspective of the network the firms are affiliated with.

That network involves two firms creating a business around a collaborative project, a piece of software that aims to let doctors treat and investigate brain stroke, this is the first empirical part of this project. In this way, the product (software that makes it easier to treat and investigate brain stroke in hospitals) is not only a business-related artefact but also an attempt to create a better life for its users. The users of that software are doctors in hospitals. In a larger sense, though, the software improves the lives of patients (i.e. the end-users of the product), as doctors’ life-saving actions become more promising. As a research method, genealogic storytelling shows how the software of the two firms and the life of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian are discussed as a part of larger social contexts. Those contexts are the software-producing business and Finnish stand-up comedy as a business sector.

Even though this study was not based on discourse analysis (as many studies based on storytelling are), genealogic storytelling as a method makes it possible to retrospectively investigate what happened in those cases. It is obvious that the idea of retrospective storytelling hinders the analysis of this study, because ongoing happenings cannot be captured in the same way as in an ethnographical or case study, for instance. This is why the interview with the up-and-coming stand-up comedian was framed ethnographically. However, the analysis of this part of the study was based on the retrospectively constructed story of what happened when he was (and still is) trying actualise himself as a stand-up comedian. In that sense, those ten months of ethnographical fieldwork are not the principal data source but did allow me to better understand the context, in which the narrator (the comedian) was/is embedded (see Hjorth 2009).

Genealogic storytelling as a research method is a relevant tool in this study. But as explained above, the study was not based on discourse analysis. In contrast, my aim was to shed light on silenced stories of entrepreneurship that Hjorth (2003) and Steyaert and Katz (2004), for example, highlight. In this way, it is possible to see the full potential of the organisational creativity that is located inside of everybody. The possibilities for actualising the potential of organisational creativity are particularly crucial in the post-industrial economy, where almost everybody is asked to be creative and innovative regardless of whether they are working for someone else or as independent entrepreneurs.
Genealogic storytelling opens up the discussion of possibilities for actualising the potential of organisational creativity methodologically, making it possible to study a phenomenon in atypical contexts. For instance, Mainela and Puhakka (2009) invite future scholars to consider where entrepreneurship happens, meaning that the context of such a phenomenon is not only related to businesses and economies. Hjorth (2004b) and Steyaert and Katz's (2004) work give more evidence for that argument, as described above. These arguments suggest that when using genealogic storytelling as a research method, there is a possibility of going into contexts where organisational entrepreneurship as business-making initiatives, for example, does not necessarily already exist. That might not be the case when working with a survey or another (post)positivistic research method, because these foster the need to generalise the case – or another empirical research object – to the larger population (see Eisenhardt 1989, Yin 1994). This is not to say that the event of organisational entrepreneurship is not located in the economy, but the argument is that organisational entrepreneurship can be located in many different types of contexts (not all within the economy), such as social learning and creative becoming. This would not be relevant for a case and cases – or another research object(s) – that represented a phenomenon in a predefined way (e.g. entrepreneurship as a feature of only business- or new venture-creation).

As Gartner (2010) writes, the famous PSED database of people who had ambitions to find a firm clearly illustrated what previous work on entrepreneurship has shown. However, it does not represent the nature of entrepreneurship: variation and uniqueness. One can consider how the phenomenon of entrepreneurship as a business-related issue differs geographically, for instance. Entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley is very different to what it is in a small, family-owned firm in Denmark or in Finland, for instance. However, both have been categorised as business-related entrepreneurship. The generalisation of such entrepreneurial events becomes more complicated. The methodological choice to use genealogic storytelling becomes more obvious when discussing what the event of organisational entrepreneurship could be. This is because entrepreneurship is an and-or not an either-or phenomenon. Along with the notion proposed by Hjorth et al. (2008), this is evidence for the argument that there is no such a thing as an average entrepreneur or entrepreneurship that could be investigated similarly in every context, as the PSED database, for instance, assumes (see Gartner 2010).

Discourse analysis could also be a potential way to conduct and analyse the empirical material of this doctoral project. However, the ethnographical fieldwork
that forms part of the second data set (concerning the process of becoming a stand-up comedian) was a better option for comprehending values, expressive symbols and norms from the view of the Other. The Other here was of course the up-and-coming comedian who I was following (or shadowing in Czarniawska’s (2008) terms) in the study. In this way I could be close to him and make sense of how his life operates within the Finnish stand-up comedy field of business. Discourse analysis is based on an analysis of discussions and their contents *per se* (who said what and with what consequences), which is why it neglects values, expressive symbols and norms as observations of the larger picture of what is happening in a certain situation/context.

Discourse analysis is a relevant method for making sense of the linguistic forces of human life, more precisely how the usage of language constructs a phenomenon of interest. In this study, however, I aimed to show what role playfulness and innovativeness play in organisational entrepreneurship. This meant it was not possible to focus on the linguistic aspects of the phenomenon of the event of organisational entrepreneurship. If I had done so, I would have ended up to the findings of how entrepreneurship is talked about and how that affects perspectives of what entrepreneurship is. This is also important and creates interesting findings, but when entrepreneurial actions and processes are the centre of a study, the focus should be on finding what the actions and processes reflect from the perspective of entrepreneurial events rather than on how they are talked about, because then the findings would reflect something other than entrepreneurial events. In that case, the findings could show how certain kinds of discourses create entrepreneurial events, but not how the spaces for play and innovation are socially constructed as actions and entrepreneurial processes.

Due to my choice not to analyse talks (in the sense of discourse analysis), I did not focus on what was specifically said in the interviews. Instead, I concentrated on what the knowledge claims in the interview transcripts reflect (e.g. statements of what happened and in which way). That is where genealogic storytelling shows its value. Such a study does not analyse what and/or how somebody expresses something, but comprehends what saying something means in a certain context. This kind of analysis leads to the need to use an ethnographical frame in an interview. That kind of need was seen, expressed and justified in the second essay of this dissertation. In that essay, I found that storytelling works as a method but does not elaborate the context in question. The unit of analysis in future research could be, for instance, the process of becoming. In contrast, the research focus of the second essay was a shared construct: a
software project. In the fourth essay, the unit of analysis is the process of becoming-Other that the third essay prepares conceptually.

If one attempts to reduce the scope of the research down to issues of smaller and smaller size, then the findings will become similar. In a postmodern sense, I agree with Katz (2004: 237) that “when any research situation is looked at in its smallest details, the precision that science aspires to becomes less and less”. This study thus aims to conceptually integrate business opportunity-based research problems and contextual becoming (see Figure 2). In doing so, the empirical approach of this dissertation is based on genealogic storytelling. It opens up storytelling as a way to express what the phenomenon of the event of organisational entrepreneurship could be (compare with Hjorth & Steyaert 2010).

In the next sub-chapters, I go through the interviews that I did methodologically. The business opportunity-based writings (the first and second essays of this dissertation) start from the idea of social learning. As Alvarez and Barney (2007) suggest, business opportunity creation is based on the iterative process of learning. However, this type of process has not been well investigated from the perspective of social learning. Together with storytelling, this reflects the nature of business opportunity creation. In contrast, contextual/creative becoming, when an entrepreneurial person creates new social spaces for play and innovation, is linked with his or her life. The third and fourth essays of this dissertation show that the process of becoming-Other characterises the event of organisational entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2005).

### 3.2 Stories of entrepreneurial actions as social learning

As described above, the initial empirical data set is based on four storytelling–type open interviews. This was done because the interaction between two entrepreneurs (one in Helsinki, Finland, and another in Copenhagen, Denmark) shows that the nature of entrepreneurship is based on social communication. The first empirical paper (the second essay – chapter 7) of this dissertation contributes to the discourse of business opportunities in the context of internationalisation of SMEs. However, the interaction between two firms via creative entrepreneurial actions, rather than the internationalisation of SMEs, is the core issue here.

The preliminary finding that, in fact, interaction constructs what is usually seen to be the main issue (i.e. internationalisation of SMEs) provides a good reason to frame this part of the study as a consideration of how the interaction influences internationalisation of SMEs. As the main interest of this project is the
event of organisational entrepreneurship, current concepts within the discourse of international business opportunities need to be reframed. The concept of internationalisation, for example, has previously been assumed to be the most important phenomenon. However, the findings in the first essay (chapter 6) show conceptually that this is not always the case. In addition, the four stories that the entrepreneurs told about their collaborative project foster that finding/problematisation further. In order to contribute to the discourse of international entrepreneurship, I decided to deconstruct the very nature of the previous concepts.

Genealogic storytelling shows its value when deconstructing these concepts (conceptually in the first essay and empirically in the second). Storytelling interviews usually open up the voice of the narrators, those who tell the story (see Czarniawska 1997b, Katz 2004). From the point of view of the research problem of international entrepreneurship, this sheds new light on perspectives that do not already exist, as international entrepreneurship is traditionally based on discussions of big corporations and their international expansion. The focus then moves to investigations of SMEs (Acs, Dana & Jones 2003). However, the nature of the processes of creating, developing and acting on international business opportunities still remains open. The second essay (chapter 7) responds to this need and elaborates the process of social learning around international business opportunities. In that way, the nature of international entrepreneurship is shown to be about interactions between firms. This leads to a crisis around what internationalisation of SMEs is about. This study suggests that it is about actions that opportunity-creative entrepreneurs perform to create a better life, for example.

Storytelling helped me to open up the new movement, different from the traditional ideas of business opportunity creator/developer (see Kirzner 1997, Shane 2003), because of the preliminary finding that the international expansion of SMEs is actually a by-product of entrepreneurial actions (see Schweizer et al. 2010). Entrepreneurial actions were therefore made the focus of the second essay (chapter 7). This allowed previous work on international entrepreneurship to be seen in a novel light. Thus, entrepreneurial actions were studied in terms of social learning. Social learning theory begins from the idea of change and movement (see Engeström 1987, 2001).

When analysing a phenomenon as change and movement, it is necessary to play with current concepts of business opportunities in a way that retains the old meaning but changes productivity. In Seymour’s (2006: 141) criticism of the mainstream literature on opportunity recognition/discovery, one of its basic
obstacles is that the investigations are based on “perceptions of things, not things in themselves”. This gives evidence for the argument that prior concepts do not necessarily present the nature of the phenomenon. In contrast, they are based on the assumption that current research follows things that are happening in society as well, because the language that the researchers speak and write is, of course, based on the language proper for discussions that have been opened before.

When starting the empirical work of the second essay, I encountered the pitfalls of this earlier research. Firstly, I did not notice outstanding difference in business opportunities, whether linked with the international context or not. Secondly, I agreed with Seymour’s (2006) critique of the lack of philosophical reasoning in empirical studies of (international) entrepreneurship. For example, Davidsson (2005: xiii) writes, “You will not find a lot of philosophy of science arguments or references in this book. Let me tell you a secret: philosophers of science often do not know much about conducting empirical research – they simply don’t have that experience and expertise.” It seems to me that this should not be a reason to separate philosophy and empirical studies of international entrepreneurship.

In the beginning of the first part of the empirical work of this project, I decided to open up a discussion of social learning theory that has its roots in the actor-network theory (ANT) (see Blackler 1995). This means that the interactive elements of activity theory – an application of the social learning theory proposed by Engeström (1987, 2001) – suggest new concepts to be studied and also make it possible to deconstruct the way in which we see those concepts. As Deleuze (1999) suggests, the concepts not only have their representational form, but can also produce new orientations and directions of thinking.

For example, if we consider the oral performance of saying “I love you”, it becomes clear that this is not only about categorising people. In Nordic cultures particularly, it does not make sense to create a category for a person you are in love with. The concept of being in love with somebody reflects, instead, a social transformation. For example, Hjorth (2004b) writes that marriage can be seen as an extension of love in the way that saying “I do” in the marriage ceremony opens a path to a new world. In Nordic countries at least, the assumption is that there is no going back after saying “I do”. A declaration or statement (an oral performance) is an oral expression of that kind of transformation.

And why are people attached to these types of categories anyway (single, couple, married, etc.)? It seems to me that categorisation is about making the transformation from one state to another clearer, even though those boundaries
are not usually all that clear. There is a need to deconstruct what is behind the concepts and their creation, not only what can be registered on their surface levels. In that sense, I disagree with Davidsson (2005). In my understanding, the philosophers of science do not usually complete successful empirical research because their desire is to open up discussions and create new concepts (see Deleuze 1999). It is not a case of their not having the ability, many philosophers are great speakers in a similar to Socrates. Walking and talking are about empirical work, perhaps not in the quantitative sense but in the sense where the pure empirical reasoning actually comes from.

What comes to scientific concepts, the example of weddings shows that, whatever the concept, the meaning of categorising things in a certain way is not only about the context, where they take place. Buttriss and Wilkinson (2006: 158) write about variance-based methods in the field of international entrepreneurship, “Objects that can be separated from their context and studied as isolated units [with] particular essences or attributes” (see also Van de Ven & Poole 2005). This argues the assumption that concepts always refer to what they are intended to refer to. In terms of this study, this means that entrepreneurship has traditionally been categorised in a managerial sense. For example, Hjorth (2003) proposes that the mainstream discourse of entrepreneurship assumes that the key actor is a managerial entrepreneur. This contradicts later findings of the creative and playful human being as an entrepreneurial entrepreneur, something that post-industrial entrepreneurial action is about (see Hjorth 2004a, Steyaert & Katz 2004).

As the example of marriage and love illustrates, sometimes there is no reason to create a category, and the productivity and creation related to the relevant concepts is more interesting and important. In that way, we can also better understand what is happening in entrepreneurial processes that are based on actions related to international business opportunities. The basic building block of this type of thinking is movement and change (compare with Tsoukas and Chia 2002). Social learning theory, for instance, is based on this sort of thinking (see Engeström 2004).

The abovementioned example illustrates the movement from post-positivist research methods to the so-called narrative turn in the field of entrepreneurship (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2004). For example, Hjorth (2007) has worked on Shakespeare’s *Othello*, concentrating on the role of Iago (a soldier who is completely in love). Iago’s narrative performances, from the point of view of creative time, are not representational, but more productive. Those types of representations, such as Iago’s oral performance “I am not what I am”, have their
own productive possibilities and power: they are illustrations of what an actor could become instead of being something that already exists (Hjorth 2007). In terms of entrepreneurship, this means that the concepts that we use (e.g. recognition, discovery, creation, and/or development of international business opportunities) should be deconstructed. Genealogic storytelling helps with this.

As Seymour (2006) writes, texts (such as interview transcripts) are only one form of data that a researcher gathers and uses in order to better understand a phenomenon of interest. He also suggests that researchers should be aware of the scientific philosophical bases of the methods used, as the paradigmatic assumptions behind them drive what is assumed to be correct in a certain discourse (Ibid). It seems to me that the ontological and epistemological approaches should be discussed in a more detailed way than previous work on international entrepreneurship has done (Ibid). In that sense, genealogic storytelling as a method opens up a window for understanding events that take place over time (Buttriss & Wilkinson 2006). In addition, genealogic storytelling responds to the need to understand the event of organisational entrepreneurship, not only as a bundle of characteristics and/or features of an individual and acting entrepreneur (Hjorth & Steyaert 2010).

Even though Buttriss and Wilkinson (2006) contribute to the methodological discourse concerning international entrepreneurship by suggesting narrative methods of research interventions, something critical (in terms of organisational entrepreneurship) is still missing: the fact that the event of organisational entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that is embedded in a certain spatio-temporal space or spaces (Hjorth 2005). Due to this, the concept of time needs to be taken into special consideration. For example, Buttriss and Wilkinson (2006) write that the research procedures concerning narrative storytelling as a method should cover the following three phases:

1. Identifying and classifying events that, according to the research data, seem to take place over time.
2. Identifying the sequences of those events that occur over time and place. In addition, their connections (and non-connections) should be analysed and put in chronological order.
3. In that way, it should be possible to identify the causal mechanisms or generative processes that drive the flow of those events.
Buttriss and Wilkinson’s (2006) strategy is based on the Bhaskar’s (1998) ideas about critical realism. The causal mechanisms that they write about lack precise definition. However, they contradict the experimental logic that natural scientists (such as biologists, chemists and physicists) use when trying to make sense of how something makes something else happen (Buttriss & Wilkinson 2006). For instance, it might make sense to look for a causal link between a cure for cancer and the outcome for patients who have taken that cure. However, this type of logic does not make much sense in social science and studies (e.g. organisational entrepreneurship), as human nature is based on many different types of simultaneous social processes. Therefore, some social affairs (e.g. criminal businesses) might be socially accepted in certain contexts even though they are not accepted in others (Webb et al. 2009). Thus, the nature of science explains why social science and its methodological approaches (e.g. genealogic storytelling) contribute to the research relevant to the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

What the abovementioned contradiction between the social and natural sciences means, and what Buttriss and Wilkinson (2006: 162) elaborate, is that the challenge and contribution of causal mechanisms/generative processes in international entrepreneurship “is to link causal mechanisms operating at different levels of aggregation to show how macro-processes and outcomes emerge from, or are at least consistent with, micro level processes and interactions”. The meaning of this is obvious. In doing research on international entrepreneurship in that way, one can see the underlying human forces that are socially constructed (compare with Berger & Luckmann 1966). The core issue is to analyse human interactions in a similar way as in genealogic storytelling (see Hjorth 2004b).

However, an outstanding difference between genealogic storytelling and Buttriss and Wilkinson’s (2006: 172) suggestion is that in genealogic storytelling there is no assumption of the possibility of identifying social mechanisms “connecting the events over time and place” that could open a way to “help sensitive managers to the often strange and counterintuitive behaviour and outcomes of the complex systems of which they are part”. In contrast, genealogic storytelling shows that certain events take place (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2004). The purpose is not to explain that those events could be generalised or validated, in the sense that they could propose a framework of the future actions for successful entrepreneurs or managers (compare with Shane & Venkataraman 2000). Those events, in turn, could help to explain how entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial potential of organisational creativity can contribute to society as a
whole, with the creation of spaces of play and innovation (compare with Hjorth et al. 2008).

In the first empirical part of this study, the reason for doing the interviews as genealogic storytelling is to show how the phenomenon of internationalisation of SMEs takes place as a part of society, not only as part of businesses and economies. The current nature of economies and businesses is an obvious a part of societies, but, curiously, this has not been investigated well so far (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). In doing this type of research, an assumption of linear time (as made by Buttriss and Wilkinson 2006, for example) is not obvious. In contrast, the entrepreneurial events should be analysed as spaces, in which time does not matter as a linear matter, but as a social construction – more precisely: how time is experienced. As Steyaert (2004: 19) writes, “Life has to be lived” in the meaning of an entrepreneurial event. Thus, business-related behaviour is a part of a larger set of interactions or processes in society (see Rindova et al. 2009).

I therefore decided not to focus on all events in the life-cycle of the software companies, but rather on the project that the two firms (Finnish and Danish) are doing together. In Czarniawska’s (2008) terms, this was about following the object. This matched Engeström’s (2001) application of social learning theory, in which the critical thing is the shared object (i.e. a social construct between two or more subjects, such as firms).

The Danish and Finnish firms’ project involves developing software that is used in hospitals for treating brain stroke patients. This collaborative project is interesting as an empirical phenomenon because it expresses how spaces of social learning develop when people construct and co-create an international business opportunity (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Holt 2008). This is not by nature related to businesses. The entrepreneurs’ aspiration was to create a better life for themselves and for the end-users of their software (i.e. the patients having a brain stroke). In other words, they wanted to create workplaces that could interest them more than being hired by somebody else. Both entrepreneurs had been employed in other firms before they created their own and established the cooperation between them. That cooperation is their shared object, which is why it seemed that the business and money-making was not a primary issue for them. In contrast, their desire was to create things that matter (for them and for the end-users of their product).

I interviewed the entrepreneurs, who are also CEOs of their firms, twice (four interviews altogether). In this way, I tried to analyse the brain stroke software project from the perspective of social learning in business opportunity creation.
The context of that activity was the internationalisation of SMEs. It reflects how change and movement (as a development of the brain stroke software) took place: not over time and/or place, but in entrepreneurial events that were discussed in the storytelling interviews I conducted.

The interviews’ perspectives were based on the viewpoints of interviewees, so I conducted them as open interviews. This is how Söderberg (2006), for instance, suggests doing narrative interviews. In those types of interviews, an interviewee is given themes that he or she is asked to talk about. This allows an interviewee to discuss issues that come into his or her mind. The role of an interviewer is to follow the discussion, and to elaborate on what an interviewee highlights and what issues he or she considers important. I conducted two of those interviews in Finland in 2009 and 2010. I also found that social learning is not only a strength but also a limitation in focusing on international entrepreneurship as a social matter. This is because social learning theory starts from the idea of movement in time as a linear meaning (see Engeström 2001). After conducting the interviews in Finland, I did similar interviews with their Danish partner in Copenhagen in the autumn of 2010.

The interviews were subject to the same tendency of linear time. My principal aim was to highlight events that took place by virtue of change. Buttriss and Wilkinson (2006: 169) write that “while some events are the result of rational actions, others may be irrational, happen by chance or be the result of tradition and various forms of social influence”. This was a feature of the interviews and crucial to the second essay of this dissertation (chapter 7) as well. Analysing them suggests that the life, and perhaps also the lifestyle, of acting entrepreneurs is critical. However, those interviews do not show how that type of life(style) emerges from the larger understanding of life. In contrast, those two entrepreneurs created an entrepreneurial event when they tried to build up a business (i.e. a piece of software) that makes it easier for doctors to treat and investigate brain stroke. That kind of co-creation is elaborated conceptually in the third essay of this dissertation (chapter 8). This leads to a conceptual crisis. As long as business opportunity creation cannot show the heart of entrepreneurship, what – and especially in which way – should we study those events?

The third essay of this dissertation responds to the need to see context as a fundamental matter of the opportunity event. Entrepreneurial actions frame how the context is built up. In the third essay, I use criminals as an example of how visionary entrepreneurial actions create context as a part of the process entrepreneurship. This leads to a crisis in understanding entrepreneurship as a part
of linear time. The third essay is based on the movie From Dusk Till Dawn. The criminals in that movie exhibit a social tension that is similar to entrepreneurial events in terms of organisational entrepreneurship.

The third essay suggests that the problems of social learning theory (i.e. an assumption of linear time) could be overcome so that entrepreneurial events could be put at the core of the empirical work of organisational entrepreneurship. As Seymour (2006) writes, texts (e.g. the transcripts of interviews) are only one source of empirical information, and other empirical data sources such as observation, documents and ethnography should be also taken into consideration. However, Seymour (Ibid) uses those sources of empirical data collection freely, without defining precisely how they could be used to better understand entrepreneurship. In the next chapter, I explicate my impression of how to use and apply ethnographical fieldwork as a source of empirical data gathering an understanding of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

3.3 The ethnographic frame around the process of organisational becoming as the entrepreneurial passion – a contextual understanding of a story

Czarniawska (1997b) is concerned about the social construction of (logo-)scientific and narrative knowledge in the social sciences. According to her, the traditional understanding of scientific knowledge and its production are based on Lyotard’s (1979/1984) idea that there is a socially produced distinction between those who are capable of producing appropriate (logo-)scientific knowledge and those who are not able to do so (e.g. women, children, primitive people, etc.) (Czarniawska-Joerges 1995). Without doubt, this fosters a crisis in methodology (regarding storytelling) in the research area of social sciences. Thus, genealogic storytelling as a methodological choice for research in the area of organisational entrepreneurship, for example, opens up a possibility for investigating something that is particular and unique in a certain entrepreneurial event.

The purpose of narrative research is not to generalise findings in the quantitative sense but rather to show an event or events that reflect happenings in real-life processes. Those processes take place at certain moments that should be taken into consideration when doing the research. This means that time should not be considered as a linear matter, but as an in-between event that breaks the reigning order and demands novelty (compare with Buttriss & Wilkinson 2006).
According to Dawson and Hjorth (2011: 12), this can “help us step into that time machine”. Basically, narrative storytelling as a method is a way to make sense of how stories explicate (“what does a story say?”) and explain (“how does the story say what it says?”) everyday interactions in a certain spatio-temporally embedded context (Dawson & Hjorth 2011). It is thus not possible to generalise the research findings empirically (or, more precisely, statistically), but the strength of the research is an ability to generalise the findings analytically, especially as a theoretical contribution to and/or critique of prior research findings.

The ability to generalise the research findings analytically reflects Czarniawska-Joerges (1995) and Czarniawska’s (1997a) concern about the distinction between (logo-)scientific and narrative knowledge. In other words, there are narrative ways of expressing things, including in areas of life that have normally been categorised as non-narrative. For example, in scientific writing, academic authors use certain types of rhetorical strategies (e.g. “I propose…”, “what this model suggests is that…”) in order to legitimise and explain what they have found (Dawson & Hjorth 2011: 4). Hence, the interactive practices of legitimisation and explaining do not differ between contexts (i.e. “science” and “non-science”) where they take place (see Czarniawska-Joerges 1995). In that sense, the assumption that there should be kind of empirically validated and/or generalizable way to do and explain things in academia loses its meaning.

In the second part of the empirical material of this study, genealogic storytelling as an empirical method proves its value in showing that organisational entrepreneurship is also a contextually embedded phenomenon that is based on events that time, as entrepreneurial events, frames. As mentioned in the previous chapter, social learning theory (and especially its active theoretical application proposed by Engeström (1987, 2001)) could not respond to the need to show the eventuality of organisational entrepreneurship in terms of entrepreneurial events. That is why the conceptual reasoning of contexts related to organisational entrepreneurship (the third essay, chapter 8) first problematises the very nature of the business-related contexts where the organisational version of entrepreneurship takes place. After that, the empirical data (i.e. the ethnographical fieldwork that is extended by an interview with an up-and-coming stand-up comedian) is a reflection of creative and contextual becoming. This fourth essay of this dissertation (chapter 9) is framed around that kind of conceptual becoming.

In order to reach the next level of understanding the empirical material in the sense of genealogical storytelling, a researcher must become an author, like an explorer (“what do I think about this”) (Dawson & Hjorth 2011). The earlier steps
explaining and explicating – suggest the researcher is more like a reader of the empirical material (“what does this mean and why”) (see Czarniawska 2004). The challenge is to create a personal interpretation of the stories in question. According to Dawson and Hjorth (2011), this is also an advantage of the storytelling method, the limitations being the inability to capture macro-level analyses and the time needed for this type of research as opposed to quantitative work (e.g. surveys).

For example, a special issue of the Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing in 2007 featured eight separate studies (Ahl 2007, Allen 2007, Baker 2007, O’Connor 2007, Fletcher 2007, Gartner 2007, Hjorth 2007, Steyaert 2007b) of the same story (“retail toy store – a Christmas to remember”, proposed by Allen 2001: 69–83). Different things were highlighted in these separate interpretations and the story thus has different meanings and shows different angles of the same issue of interest (see Riesmann 1993, Pentland 1999, Riesmann 2008). This is a characteristic feature of narrative studies, which propose variation from the same empirical material (Gartner 2010).

The ethnographic approach comes closest to the possibility of discussing the issues of interest from separate angles and points of views. The ethnographic fieldwork that I performed before making myself familiar with the up-and-coming stand-up comedian gave me access to the context where he was working and which he was effecting. More precisely, it helped me understand the everyday life of stand-up comedians and people related to that field (e.g. an artist doing design for comedy clubs, producers of those clubs and comedians themselves). In addition, it proposed an understanding of the ways in which comedy shows are produced and, especially, how difficult it is to become a stand-up comedian in this type of social environment. The process of becoming a stand-up comedian does not contradict the nature of the process of entrepreneurship in the business sense. All the stand-up comedians in Finland are individual entrepreneurs, that is, self-employed people. Thus, becoming a funnier person also means becoming a better businessperson in the strict sense, but it does not necessarily encapsulate the meaning of creative becoming that happens in a certain context. The meaning seems rather to be the entrepreneurial passion that I examine in the fourth essay of this dissertation (chapter 9).

All of the observations that I made in the field were written down as notes. At the end of the fieldwork, those notes were summarised into an approximately eight-page document that clarified what was happening in the Finnish stand-up comedy business during those ten months (2009–2010). The aim was to make a
thick description of the situation(s) and events that were going on in the stand-up comedy field in Finland, from the perspective of a firm called Ookko Nää Nauranu (this is a slang term from the Northern region of Finland and means “have you laughed”). According to Geertz (1973), the thick description is a way to illustrate underlying beliefs, expressive symbols and values from the perspective of people in a certain group. In this study, the group was a business organisation based on the desires of two friends to create the best possible environment for stand-up comedians to use their talents as artists, but also to maintain the stand-up comedy culture in Finland. This reflects the entrepreneurial passion that I examine in the fourth essay of this dissertation (chapter 9) via an up-and-coming stand-up comedian. Storytelling as an empirical research method is a useful way of expressing a thick description (Hjorth 2009).

The assumption of the event of organisational entrepreneurship goes hand in hand with the business context of Finnish stand-up comedy. Stand-up comedians are organisational entrepreneurs: people actualising their creative talents in a way that creates new social spaces for play and innovation as part of society. The Finnish stand-up comedy business sector is examined in the fourth essay (chapter 9). The emphasis there is context and its socially created features, because the current literature on entrepreneurship calls for contextually embedded research that considers organisational creativity from a processual perspective, like social fire (Hjorth 2007, Hjorth et al. 2008). Autobiography was thus not selected as a method in this study even though it shows the processual sides of a phenomenon (see Smith 2005). However, autobiographies (based on acting individuals as their units of analyses in such studies) have been effectively investigated in the field of entrepreneurship so far (e.g. Smith & Andersson 2004).

What, then, should we actually analyse empirically when creating and/or developing new understandings of the organisational version of entrepreneurship from the perspective of organisational creativity? Creativity is not like “the divine stroke of inspiration that lands a novelty among us like a meteorite ‘from outer space’” (Hjorth 2003: 5), but the most interesting and important issue is the social interaction that is organised collectively in the spaces for play and innovation. In Deleuze’s (1999) thinking, creativity is a genesis of intuition and intelligence. Creativity does not belong to certain types of people only, as the majority of individual-based approaches to entrepreneurship assume (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Baron 2008). In contrast, this study suggests that creativity as an organisational phenomenon is part of everyone’s lives. This is why
autobiographies were not selected as the empirical method underpinning this study.

Instead of conducting autobiographies, genealogic storytelling as a method helps to “acknowledge that subjectivities emerge on specific local-temporal fields of practices and focus on how these relations are played out in complex strategy games and tactical transformations” (Hjorth 2004b: 212). In terms of this study, I used genealogic storytelling because, as described in chapter 2, there is a need to see the event of organisational entrepreneurship, where eventness – rather than linearity – becomes crucial. In doing research like this, as Hjorth (Ibid: 228) explains, “entrepreneurship becomes the art of transforming the desire to create, of channelling or creating passages for this flow of life into a specified future”. Methodologically, then, the autobiographies of entrepreneurs (see Smith 2005) do not make a reasonable contribution to understanding the event of organisational entrepreneurship that Hjorth and Steyaert (2004), for instance, call transformation.

To overcome the challenge of seeing organisational entrepreneurship as a bundle of individual traits or qualities, the processual approach is needed (see Tsoukas & Chia 2002) in order to concentrate on organisational processes of becoming instead of on individuals or firms. The difference between the basic change and social learning theories and Deleuze’s ideas of becoming is that Deleuze understands becomings as “actions, perceptions, variations and so on”, and from this “flux of becomings, we perceive or organize things” (Colebrook 2002: 145). This means that the Deleuzian approach neglects the teleological side of human behaviour (compare with Ven de Ven & Poole 1995, Alvarez & Barney 2007).

As an empirical method, narrative/genealogic storytelling is framed around processual thinking (see Pentland 1999). According to Pentland (1999), the critical parts of building up a process theory (in his terms, from description to explanation) are these features of a narrative text or discourse: (1) sequences in time, (2) focal actors, (3) identifiable narrative voice, (4) canonical or evaluative frame of reference and (5) other indicators of content and context. Along similar lines as Czarniawska (1997b), Pentland (1999) argues that people do not just tell stories, but also enact those stories that provide legitimacy and accountability for their actions. This matches Weick’s (1979, 1995) ideas of sensemaking, in which people enact things when telling a story. In this sense, an action related to a phenomenon (e.g. the event of organisational entrepreneurship) is something that a narrator not only produces when he or she is a part of the phenomenon, but also when he or she is telling a story (Gartner 2010, Spector-Mersel 2010). In that
sense, the phenomenon does not exist *per se*, but is partially produced by the research and then revealed retrospectively.

Processually, this narrative way of conducting research opens up a path for considering the nature of social processes. In terms of entrepreneurship, the processual approach justifies a place for studies of non-teleological processes that the process-based literature of entrepreneurship is mostly based on (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Alvarez & Barney 2007). Teleologically-oriented studies see “entrepreneurial actions in terms of their impact on the ability of entrepreneurs to form and exploit opportunities” (Alvarez & Barney 2007: 12). However, there seem to be other processes (that are framed by the opportunity-seeking behaviour/actions) that also matter when a human is creating new economic and/or social artefacts in the form of entrepreneurship (Webb *et al.* 2009). This leads to a crisis around what organisational entrepreneurship is and what is included in the concept of it.

For example, with reference to the empirical method of storytelling in understanding entrepreneurship, Gartner (2010) highlights that neither individual entrepreneurs nor entrepreneurial situations can be understood as average, but involve variety and uniqueness instead. On this basis he suggests that future scholars investigate interactive mechanisms using narrative methods (Gartner 2010). Even though narrative methodology does not aim to provide generalizable results in the quantitative and therefore statistical sense, it opens up a way to reach the multifaceted reality that interpretative scholars have already called for (Hjorth 2009, Spector-Mersel 2010).

Spector-Mersel (2010) suggests that the narrative approach is not only an approach, it is becoming a paradigm. This requires future research to work on stories that entrepreneurs tell about processes that they are part of. In this way, the stories, their narrators and the researcher are involved in a continuous process when a story is told, meaning that there is no possibility of distinguishing a researcher and/or narrator from the context of storytelling: they both produce the phenomenon along the way. Additionally, there is no such a thing as an objective truth that could cover what exactly happened in a situation (i.e. historical truth) and what is included in a story (i.e. narrative truth). In Spector-Mersel’s (Ibid) words, narrative truth expresses *something* about historical truth and recreates it over and over again. This is why the holistic understanding of stories, as an empirical research material, is extremely important.

The fact that stories only express *something* about what has empirically happened is a pitfall. On the other hand, there is potential here to elaborate on
what entrepreneurship could be. Those types of potentials are also located in the core of organisational entrepreneurship in the meaning of opening up potentialities on how the research process is going on, whatever it is (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). Similarly, Gartner (2010) argues, when writing about interpretations of existing texts, that there is no need to analyse how ‘true’ a text is (see also Czarniawska 1997a, Czarniawska 1997b). Instead, the point is to create an interpretation of what it could be (Gartner 2010). This could open up potentials of novelty that Deleuze is writing about, for example (see Colebrook 2002). And this is definitely an important part of entrepreneurship, that is also a social construct: an organisational entrepreneur can create his or her meaning about how the research is processing.

In this study, the interview about the becoming-process of the stand-up comedian was framed around ethnographic fieldwork in order to make sure that the story (an open/narrative interview) would be analysed in a proper way. Czarniawska (2008) criticises ethnographic fieldwork by claiming that the research object can be simultaneously located at many places. In order to overcome this, Czarniawska (Ibid) suggests some techniques that an ethnographic researcher could use when trying to make better sense of the multi-placed object:

1. **Shadowing** – a double perception of the actions and happenings that a researcher finds on the field. This reflects the interactive part of a narrative study mentioned above, as the shadower and person who is shadowed are interlinked over time. I conducted my ethnographic framing in the second part of this project (the stand-up comedian) by shadowing. This took place especially after the fieldwork. I had a lot of online conversations with the comedian in order to make myself more familiar with the link between the interview and my notes on the field. These discussions took place on Windows Messenger as we could not meet face-to-face.

2. **Diary studies** – has at least two meanings. Firstly, such diaries are notes of the activities and happenings in the field. Secondly, they can be stories of the researcher’s perceptions in the field. I did both for this doctoral project. Furthermore, I wrote a summary of my field notes. This eight-page summary was a starting point for online communication with the comedian before the interview took place. I was willing to discuss how well my interpretations matched his ideas of the process of becoming that he was/is a part of. Moreover, he also wrote an autobiographical piece, that appears as an appendix to the fourth essay (at the end of the chapter 9).
3. **Following objects** – this technique makes sure that the object of research is kept at the core of the analysis. It is typical in studies in which the actor-network theory (ANT) is used as a conceptual framework. In this project, Engeström’s application (1987, 2001) of social learning theory that has its roots in the ANT was in used to analyse the first part of the empirical material, the two firms’ collaborative project. Shadowing and diary studies gave more evidence for the argument that an object of a research is not the only thing that I should be concerned about here. In contrast, there was a need to see the context of the empirical material in a more fruitful way. This was done by shadowing the up-and-coming stand-up comedian and discussing my interpretations (based on field notes and on his comments on my work) online. Moreover, the two entrepreneurs who were/are developing the relevant software jointly commented on the second essay (chapter 7), which empirically considers their collaboration project.

As Pentland (1999: 717) writes, “The significance of narrative data lies not just in their richness and near universal availability, but in the fact that they are the same kind of data that organisational members use to plan, enact, interpret and evaluate their own actions and those of others.” Planning, interpretation and evaluation of actions by organisation members are also features of studying the event of organisational entrepreneurship. Organisation members and/or individual entrepreneurs are always making sense of each other and the environment that they are part of (see Hill & Levenhagen 1995). For example, the collaboration project that was studied in the second essay of this dissertation (chapter 7) was largely based on the organisation members’ observations about each other (the organisation here being their collaborative project, even though both were/are individual entrepreneurs as well). Two people met online and found it useful to work together. The fourth essay (chapter 9) suggests the same: there is no such a thing as an individual hero (i.e. organisational entrepreneurship in the form of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian). Instead, perceptions of how the audience gets the comedian’s point – and hopefully laugh as a sign of that – create a social construct of a funny person. That is the person is who he is aiming to become.

Generally, in this project I found empirically that the ways in which people interact in their everyday lives determine what an entrepreneurial event is about (compare with Johanson & Vahlne 1977, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). It seems to me that the empirical understanding of how to gather that type of data is still developing. Gartner (2010) calls this the critical mess, especially from a
perspective that could take uniqueness and variation into account (compare with Dawson & Hjorth 2011). This leads to a crisis of how to gather empirical data from the field. Additionally, this problematises the fact that entrepreneurship could be seen as a bundle of individual traits or qualities of an acting entrepreneur and/or as a behaviour in- or outside of existing/up-and-coming firms (e.g. SME). According to Hjorth and Steyaert (2004), genealogic storytelling is a way to overcome this challenge.

The interesting thing in Pentland’s (1999) work is that he is trying to develop a way to analyse the narrative data that allows the processual parts of the phenomenon to be taken into account. However, it seems to me that previous work on entrepreneurship tried to capture the processual parts of business opportunity creation, for instance, in a non-processual way. The analyses are usually based on the fact that the empirical material is shown to be ‘out there’ (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Sarasvathy 2001, Baron 2008). Those types of facts or social constructs have been well analysed, but the empirical processes behind them have not. Pentland (1999) argues that the empirical material the researchers gather is always located on the surface level, meaning that we will never reach the point where a researcher could be able to be so close to the phenomenon that he or she could, for example, completely register the nuances of the situations that the social constructs are included in.

Additionally, Czarniawska-Joerges (1995) and Czarniawska (1997a) argues the same. She says that are three different ways to do narrative research: (1) to gather stories ‘of the field’ that are empirically located ‘out there’, (2) to write about the findings of a research in a narrative way, that is, stories ‘from the field’ (e.g. Van Maanen 1988), and (3) to conceptualise organisational life as story-making and then to consider organisation theory as story-reading (i.e. interpretative approaches). In this study, I integrated those three options. More precisely, I first found two separate stories that reflect organisational entrepreneurship in an interesting way (the collaborative project between two SMEs and the process of becoming a stand-up comedian). I gathered the stories through narrative interviews and ethnographical fieldwork that framed the final interview with the up-and-coming stand-up comedian. Secondly, I wrote two essays (the second and fourth essays, chapters 7 and 9) from that data in the storytelling manner. Thirdly, I conceptualised the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship as a story of an entrepreneurial event (the introduction chapter of this dissertation).
Empirically, working on the surface level is a challenge (see Gartner 2010). Basically this means that a researcher is analysing something that he or she assumes to be ‘out there’ (e.g. a story). However, Spector-Mersel (2010) argues that stories are always produced by the narrator and researcher in an interlinked way, meaning that a researcher is part of the phenomenon. In this way, the whole issue of what is ‘out there’ becomes problematic. As Pentland (1999: 722) writes, “Our literature is filled with statements about relationships between constructs that claim to offer an explanation (e.g., ‘this regression model explains 30 per cent of the variance in Y’). But the explanation lies in the story that connects X and Y – not the regression model itself.” This provides evidence for the argument that everyday life is partially produced through stories and additionally that telling those stories reproduces what is socially shared between people inside a story, and also between a researcher and narrator (Spector-Mersel 2010). This is why narrative means of doing research (proposed by Czarniawska-Joerges 1995, Czarniawska 1997a) were used in this study. In this way, genealogic storytelling as a way to understand the role of history, entrepreneurial bodies and events showed what is actually happening in entrepreneurial actions and processes in the storytelling manner.

Pentland’s (1999) principal argument is that we should use narrative approaches to overcome the challenge of following the quantitative logics of generalising and validating our “scientific stories” of a phenomenon – everything that is produced in order to make sense of things is a story. He also suggests that organisation theory could open up a way to analyse the features of stories – sequence in time, focal actors, identifiable narrative voice, canonical or evaluative frame of reference and other indicators of content and context – in a way that could help to use them as empirical bases for a study (Pentland 1999). In doing so, a researcher would definitely find pieces of interesting empirical findings from the data, but the question of non-processuality remains. There is a story ‘out there’ that could be analysed in that sense.

If one assumes that there is no story without the presence of a researcher, a richer way to approach empirical reality (that has an impact on the academic phenomenon of interest) is to show the story as it is and suggest an interpretation of it (Hjorth 2009, Gartner 2010). Even though interpretations of the same story can vary, this does not make any difference to the fact that everything is interpreted in an empirical reality of human life, including academic knowledge and its (re)production (Pentland 1999, Dawson & Hjorth 2011). This is assumed in the social constructivism that is the scientific and philosophical root of this
study (see Berger & Luckmann 1966, Gergen 2001). In that sense, the recognition of time, focal actors, their narrative voices, frames of references and contexts should be problematised. Hence, the question is not to make sense of how something happened, but how to problematise what effects certain moments, actors, their voices, frames of references and contexts have on the phenomenon. In Dawson and Hjorth’s (2011) terms, the fundamental question is “what does this mean” and how to interpret it.

In the case of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, it seems to me that the choice of conducting empirically interesting issues in the field (i.e. a collaborative project between two international firms and an up-and-coming stand-up comedian linked with a firm producing stand-up comedy clubs in the northern part of Finland) and analysing – I would rather say approaching – them through interviews does not provide a statistically generalizable and valid understanding. In contrast, two separate empirical essays in this dissertation (chapters 7 and 9) are voices that have the potential to better comprehend what is happening when we are talking about the event of organisational entrepreneurship as a part of societies. In addition, perhaps they do not always provide a toolbox for a person interested in building up a new collaborative effort or becoming a stand-up comedian, but they show how those things have happened before. In that way, they show how those things can be socially constructed at the empirical level in the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship that helps future practitioners do similar things as parts of their lives.

I believe that the voices mentioned above not only suggest that the nature of entrepreneurship is complex and fragmented, because this has often been found before (e.g. Gartner 1989), but also show how to actualise the entrepreneurial potential of creating/doing different types of things in human life at the empirical level. One of the major difficulties in creating/doing outstanding things (e.g. creating new firms and/or businesses) is the fear of making a mistake. As the post-industrial age demands that almost everybody be creative and innovative, this is something that should be understood better, in order to do things first and then see how they are proceeding regarding those actions and socially constructed processes (see McGrath & McMillan 2000, Baker & Nelson 2005).

To sum up, in this doctoral project I try to show empirically that genealogic storytelling works not only as a method of understanding organisational entrepreneurship in an academic piece of work, but also as a way to illuminate a reason to see what is really located in actions and processes of entrepreneurship at the practical level. This is done by approaching four narrative interviews that
consider the collaborative project around software that hospitals use to treat and investigate brain stroke. Moreover, the ethnographically framed interview of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian – by applying Czarniawska’s (2008) suggestions of shadowing, usage of diaries and following objects – opens up a discussion of how organisational entrepreneurs (who could be almost anyone) develop over time.

3.4 The strengths and weaknesses of narrativity and storytelling in understanding organisational entrepreneurship

Research on entrepreneurship has already found that the differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs are smaller than the differences within a group of entrepreneurs (Gartner 1989). Alvarez and Barney (2007: 16) add to this that “differences between these groups may be the result of the entrepreneurial path taken, not just a cause of entrepreneurship”. As discussed above, this leads to an empirical crisis. There is a need to do research on entrepreneurship empirically, but the same question remains: who or what should actually be studied? Previous work calls for researchers to approach entrepreneurship from the perspective of actions and processes (e.g. Hjorth et al. 2008, Gartner 2010). In order to do so, one needs to concentrate on processes that lead people to become entrepreneurs and especially entrepreneurial, rather than investigating what a person or firm is about per se. Studying the event of organisational entrepreneurship is one way to do that.

Because it is crucial to investigate the processes of becoming, autobiographies, for instance, do not fit with the targets of this study, they reflect what a person is and how he or she interprets things around him or her (see Smith 2005). Of course autobiographies could offer important information about the process of becoming as well, but as Smith (Ibid.) argues, one of their features is that entrepreneurs tell heroic stories about themselves. In addition, a typical story is ‘poor boy makes good’, meaning a person takes initiatives without having many resources but still achieves success, usually in terms of business (Ibid., Smith & Andersson 2004). This is largely what previous research has found, and is also the case with narrative approaches in general (see Obgor 2000, Gartner 2010).

Even though this study was framed around storytelling interviews about issues of social learning and becoming (a mode chosen in order to overcome the challenge of focusing on an individual entrepreneur and/or firm), there is still a
danger that the interviews too strongly reflect the individual parts of the narrators’ becoming. The same issue appears with all types of narrative studies. As Smith and Andersson (2004) write, there is a need to see entrepreneurship in a novel light through narratives, for example through the villainous story. Furthermore, Webb et al. (2009) as well as Mainela and Puhakka (2009) find that entrepreneurship should be investigated in contexts where it is not usually located. Storytelling, and more precisely the genealogic storytelling in this project, opens up a way to see how entrepreneurial events can be created in those types of contexts (i.e. the collaborative project between Finnish and Danish firms and the Finnish stand-up comedy business sector).

The abovementioned move from studies of individuals and firms (e.g. SMEs) to organisational analysis of entrepreneurship reveals what individual becoming is about. The narrative interviews work effectively as genealogic storytelling here, because they show how individuals comprehend their processual reality of becoming-Other in various ways instead of explaining what types of factors and/or independent variables affect outcomes or dependent variables (e.g. business opportunities) that are assumed to be entrepreneurial (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Shane 2003). In the latter case, the individual and personal voices of people creating new social spaces for play and innovation (e.g. business-related entrepreneurs) could be lost, which is why genealogic storytelling was selected as the method for this study.

As Söderberg (2006) writes, in the case of storytelling the focal actors make sense of the environment that they are parts of. For example, Gartner et al. (1992) write about “acting as if”, meaning that entrepreneurs try to make things simpler than they actually are. This allows them to have a better hold on what is going on in an uncertain business environment. More precisely, this is what Sarasvathy (2001) writes about in the name of effectuation logic. It controls what you have in your hands, therefore you do not need to predict what might happen in the future. However, this does not solve the problem, or empirical crisis, that was mentioned above, because the crisis is based on a more fundamental issue of what the concept of entrepreneurship is about.

Perhaps the most notable limitation of a focus on individual stories of what entrepreneurs are and how they develop over time could be overcome using a philosophical approach. One piece of good news is that using genealogic storytelling as a research method means there is a strong tendency to avoid outlining a study around an individual entrepreneur or firm (e.g. SME). Nevertheless, the shift from the attempt to understand individuals (and/or their
personal/individual becoming) and firms (e.g. SMEs) to organisational, creative and contextual becoming requires more elaboration of the concept of organisational entrepreneurship than genealogic storytelling offers tools to do. For example, Gartner (2010) suggests that a relevant way of doing entrepreneurship research could be to analyse texts that exist and are available to the audience of the studies. That was not done in this project.

However, Gartner’s (2010) idea about analysing texts that are available for everybody sounds promising. I believe this could provide a way to see what forms organisational entrepreneurship could take, because in that case everybody could see whether the analysis made makes sense. This could be an outstanding contribution, because current methods and work-related interventions have changed drastically. Today’s post-industrial work demands that almost everybody be creative and innovative. That is why we (as academic researchers) also need to update the methods that we use in order to understand entrepreneurship as a driving force of creation and organisational becoming.

There are two practical obstacles to my actualising Gartner’s (2010) invitation to show the empirical data to everybody so that everybody can double-check the interpretations. Firstly, all the empirical data drawn from the Finnish firms comes from interviews conducted in Finnish. Publishing that data as part of this dissertation would not make sense, because the principal target audience does not understand Finnish. The second obstacle is that the article in which Gartner (2010) invites researchers to show the raw empirical data (e.g. the interview-transcriptions and field notes from the ethnographic part of the study) to the audience was published after I had completed almost all the data gathering (2010), meaning that I did not ask the firms in question whether I could publish the raw data. Publishing the raw data as appendices, for example, would violate the rules of doing eligible research.

Even though I could not provide the raw empirical data as a part of this dissertation, as Gartner (2010) suggests, the storytelling mode of interview and ethnographic fieldwork still open up a discussion of the research method for studying entrepreneurship. This is because we should be able to evaluate ways of doing research alongside the findings that come from that data. This is similar to Deleuze’s arguments about sexuality: “We tend to think of sexuality as something ‘we’ do, as a relation between humans. But human bodies, for Deleuze, are effects of a sexual becoming, vehicles rather than agents of life” (Colebrook 2002: 142). This reflects the fact that human abilities to register something as something are
limited, for example it is difficult to see what sexuality or entrepreneurship as human acts are about.

Deleuze’s idea of sexuality is not only relevant to entrepreneurship (entrepreneurs as vehicles of an entrepreneurial event), but is also a feature of how we as academic researchers try to understand phenomena methodologically. However, the problem with understanding change-making subjects as vehicles (e.g. as entrepreneurs) is that genealogic storytelling does not tell us much about the vehicles *per se*. In contrast, a narrator (i.e. the person telling a story to a researcher) is seen as an agent who must be heard in order to better understand a phenomenon. Thus, the idea of the interviewee as a vehicle for showing what people do as parts of change-making apparatus (e.g. social spaces for play and innovation) remains unconsidered.

As Hjorth *et al.* (2008) discuss, the current uncreative and decontextualised research on entrepreneurship assumes that entrepreneurship belongs to a specific area (businesses/the economy). The same issue arises when an entrepreneur is creating business opportunities and/or businesses (see Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). The danger is that an entrepreneur is seen only as a special type of qualified person (in Deleuzian terms, an agent of action who can be used in a more efficient way as long as we understand the mechanisms driving him or her) who can create and develop business opportunities better than others (i.e. non-entrepreneurs) (see Gartner 1989). This finding can easily be reproduced in a study that aims to develop new knowledge in a novel way (see Ogbor 2000). As mentioned above, entrepreneurs – if we categorise them as agents of new business and/or value (as was done in this study) – also know what they are intended to be. I encountered this challenge when conducting the first empirical part of this doctoral project.

For the first part of this project’s empirical material, both entrepreneurs that I was interviewing tried to tell me what they assumed I wanted to hear (i.e. how their firm was created as a new business). However, I was more interested in the process of how they became entrepreneurs and which types of social learning processes were included in the relevant interactions. I tried to minimise the part of the interviews where the entrepreneurs told their heroic stories of how their environments changed and treated them differently due to entrepreneurship – like in a story where the hero rescues a young lady from the tower and gets half of the empire in return (see Greimas 1979). This might be, I believe, a challenge in every kind of research in which storytelling is used as an empirical data-gathering method.
Regardless of the tendency of interviewees to tell heroic stories about themselves, I still believe that, empirically, genealogic storytelling as a research method is not the best possible way to comprehend how the process of entrepreneurship happens in all the types of research settings (compare with Hjorth 2004b). A better way to approach the processes of organisational becoming that were investigated in this study is to get close to the research phenomenon and become a part of the complexity that entrepreneurial life and work are about. To me, it seems to be that this should be framed conceptually around philosophy that offers a variety of post-structuralist ways to conduct research on the images and potentialities of organisational becoming.

When starting a piece of research from the perspective of Deleuzian becoming in the organisational sense, we can see the crucial role of the entrepreneurial body as a vehicle rather than an as agent of entrepreneurial life. Nowadays this is important, as it seems that Foucault’s (1975) seminal illustration of the Panopticon is reproduced all over again. For example, Lyon (2001) writes that surveillance society is based on the fact that the dominating class can control citizens using modern methods (electronic vehicles, etc.). There is still an idea of control here (i.e. the Panopticon), and therefore the human body is a vehicle rather than an agent of some purpose other than what the action itself (e.g. entrepreneurship in its economic meaning) reflects.

As the fourth essay of this dissertation (chapter 9) proposes, action related to entrepreneurship is a release of human desires to create meaningful and relevant things in one’s life – not only to create new business and make more money. However, the ethnographically framed interview of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian does not show organisational becoming but is based on how a person becomes something over time. Therefore the interview is still about individual becoming related to other parts of organisational entrepreneurship in the field (i.e. the stand-up comedy firm and its partners), because I followed an agent rather than a vehicle. In order to contribute to the research relevant for entrepreneurial contexts (the third essay, chapter 8) and passion (the fourth essay, chapter 9), it seemed appropriate to first open up the discussion of the idea of becoming as part of the literature of entrepreneurship, even though this did not match perfectly with the post-structuralist idea of vehicles as a research object. Although the genealogic storytelling used in the current study could not reach this target, it will be part of my next research project.

The idea of a vehicle for entrepreneurship illustrates that current process descriptions of entrepreneurship should be aware of the processes of
organisational becoming rather than becoming a being. As Colebrook (2002: 126, italics in original) writes, “The actual world that we perceive is the composite of virtual tendencies. The colour we perceive as red and as constant is the eye’s contraction (or actualisation) of the light. The human eye actualises light as ‘colour’ but there are other beings who would actualise the flow of light in other ways.” In this sense, the human eye is the vehicle rather than the agent of the actualisation of colours. The interesting issue is not the human eye, like an entrepreneur in the research of entrepreneurship, but the process of actualisation (i.e. the process of colour-becoming). A vehicle is registered as an image, like a piece of art that stands and speaks on its own, and is important. The third essay of this dissertation starts this kind of discussion, with an analysis of the movie From Dusk Till Dawn. Nonetheless, the empirical object of this study is an agent (entrepreneur), even though it is studied via entrepreneurial actions and processes.

Related to Colebrook’s (2002) finding above is a similar interest in entrepreneurship: the process of becoming-entrepreneurial describes the nature of entrepreneurial action beyond the existence of an entrepreneur as an agent of some pre-defined activity like the creation of business opportunities (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). In the methodological sense, this fosters the idea that there is no single absolute interpretation of any sort of empirical material. Instead of that, there are many interpretations that the different studies could open up without being generalised and/or validated in the quantitative sense (see Gartner 2010). This becomes problematic if a researcher wants to show how a business opportunity is created in the universal sense. However, the way that it could work similarly everywhere shows how different potentialities can be actualised rather than explained. That is why the vehicles rather than agents should be studied in the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

From this perspective, an entrepreneurial body can be seen as a vehicle of becoming-entrepreneurial. More precisely, an entrepreneurial body is actually a host of many things that together create what the acting person experiences as outcomes of entrepreneurial action – that is, possible opportunities and/or new businesses (see Fletcher 2006). Methodologically, this means that the focus should be located on the images that human bodies (e.g. readers of an academic article) could register. It could thus be possible to conduct research that focuses on entrepreneurship in contexts where it has not usually been placed (see Mainela & Puhakka 2009). This is not to say that there is something wrong with previous attempts to generalise/validate research findings. Rather, there is significant potential to philosophically consider what the very nature of entrepreneurship is
and/or could be (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2010). It seems to me that genealogic storytelling alone does not make available this option. This was found in the first empirical part of this project (i.e. the collaborative project of the two SMEs). Due to this, the interview with the up-and-coming stand-up comedian was framed ethnographically in order to coherently maintain the methodological approach (i.e. genealogic storytelling). However, I suggest that future scholars open up that kind of study philosophically, perhaps by elaborating the concept of organisational becoming, and then conducting the empirical elements as a real-life observation, for example an ethnography or case study.

Atypical entrepreneurial contexts that could help us better understand organisational entrepreneurship might be, for example, trader tourism (Konstantinov 1996), business activities with unregistered workers (see Raijman 2001, Villar 1994), and music and/or software piracy (Givon, Mahajan & Muller 1995). These activities are illegal but still seen as legitimate by certain groups of people (Webb et al. 2009). These types of actions show, for example, what the process of becoming-entrepreneurial could be in terms of vehicles. This is different from what previous scholars have found, because the relevance of this type of approach is in seeing how things are organised rather than in the mediations between the human body as an agent of those actions and a business opportunity (compare with Davidsson 2006, Delmar 2006).

Webb et al. (2009) use the example of Napster, an illegal business involving software that made it possible to download pirated music from the Internet, to show how ‘entrepreneurs’ – in this case hackers on the Internet – built an illegal online system around pirated music. What entrepreneurship scholars (as well as entrepreneurs) could learn from this is that the virtual context, where the illegal business really happened, played a role as a space for creating a vehicle called Napster. Regardless of the fact that the action was illegal, it took place and was quite successful. To understand these issues, we need to understand the social spaces for play/innovation better (compare with Hjorth 2005). More precisely, the question is where and in which types of social spaces, and with what kinds of vehicles, does entrepreneurship happen? Organisation theory opens up a novel and promising way to approach these issues (Pentland 1999).

According to Hjorth (2005: 414, italics in original), “Entrepreneurship is then understood as the process of creating space for play/invention in organisational contexts. Entrepreneurship can then be described as the tactics of creating space in managerially determined places. Such spaces for play/invention we call simply ‘other spaces’.” The point in this is that the ‘other space’, or heterotopia, is not
something that already exists and could create new things through human vehicles. In contrast, it is about a process of becoming-Other. This is not discussed in the literature of social learning theory (see Engeström 1987, 2001). Social learning theory begins from an assumption about the people who, in the end, create the movement in a direction that did not exist before the process started (see Holt 2008).

Those types of research interests could be investigated by focusing on images. How could this happen? Phillips (1995) suggests that narrative fiction could offer a useful solution when investigating organisational affairs. He writes that “successful narrative fiction creates a world in which what happens is not simply plausible, but so realistic that readers can read from the fact that these things happened” (Phillips 1995: 634). This creates an image. It is the same as when one watches television and sees happy and/or scary things on it. These are not real, but they might lead the viewer to do something, for example to give money to poor people in Africa through an organisation like UNICEF. And as mentioned above, a notable feature of entrepreneurship literature is that it makes the reader do things rather than only reading it and accepting and/or rejecting what the author has written. This kind of effect can also be understood as a vehicle.

In this project, I use the film From Dusk Till Dawn to create an image. The essay concerned is conceptual (number 3, chapter 8) and elaborates on how entrepreneurial contexts are created. That essay problematises the assumption that an entrepreneurial context is only based on business. I agree completely that the outcome of an entrepreneurial context can be a business opportunity, for instance. However, this is not the whole story: entrepreneurial contexts do not differ from the larger set of creative contexts that organisational creativity fosters. The third essay conceptually shows the empirical crisis in entrepreneurship research.

The portrayal of the criminals (Seth and Richie Gecko) in the third essay show that the creative images of targeting visions are about creating entrepreneurial contexts. Those types of contexts have been analysed as starting points for creative business creation in earlier work on entrepreneurship (e.g. Bird 1988). The conceptual reasoning in the third essay gives evidence for Phillips’ (1995) argument that narrative fiction could empirically open up novel ways of seeing entrepreneurship. In order to do this, it is important to look for contexts where entrepreneurship does not traditionally belong (Hjorth et al. 2008, Mainela & Puhakka 2009, Webb et al. 2009). As the third essay proposes, there is a tendency to start the discussions from perspectives that a person (researcher, entrepreneur, etc.) is already familiar with.
This is an empirical challenge that genealogic storytelling is perhaps not capable of solving, as the narrators and their relations with a researcher or group of researchers are always historically framed (see Smith 2005). An advantage, though, is that this allows us to hear stories, often personal, that are important and interesting to the entrepreneurs. But in order to show how organizational becoming takes place, a study of entrepreneurship should go in directions where there is still some territory to conquer. This about more than deconstructing what previous work has found: it is especially about academically illustrating that new entrepreneurial events are vehicles of life that organizational entrepreneurship could affect.
4  **Summaries of essays**

This chapter summarises the essays of this dissertation and explains how they respond to the need to see entrepreneurial actions and processes at the core of organisational entrepreneurship (i.e. the scope of this study, see Figure 2). The principal research question, mentioned and described in chapter 1.4, is, “How do entrepreneurial actions and processes frame the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship?” I have answered this using sub-questions elaborated separately in each essay so as to suggest new directions in the field of organisational entrepreneurship that integrate the research streams of business opportunities from the perspective of the structure of human activity (the first essay, summarised in chapter 4.1), international business opportunity creation as an expansive cycle of learning actions (the second essay, summarised in chapter 4.2), entrepreneurial contexts in terms of entrepreneuring (the third essay, summarised in chapter 4.3) and entrepreneurial passion in the name of creative becoming (the fourth essay, summarised in chapter 4.4.). This makes it possible to show what role playfulness and innovativeness play in organisational entrepreneurship, which is the ultimate purpose of this project.

4.1  **Creating business opportunities: an organisational and social constructive phenomenon in the creation of new businesses**

The first essay of this dissertation (chapter 6) discusses the issue of business opportunity creation. It is a conceptual reasoning of how the creation of business opportunities happens through entrepreneurial actions of social learning. Current literature operates on the assumption that an acting entrepreneur (i.e. a subject) is the critical unit of analysis. In the first essay, I open up a possibility of seeing the creation process of business opportunities from the perspective of the application of social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity proposed by Engeström 1987). The purpose of the first essay is therefore to increase theoretical understanding of the business opportunity process from the creative point of view. The use of the structure of human activity as a conceptual framework problematises non-creative, non-processual and non-contextualised studies of entrepreneurship (see Hjorth *et al.* 2008).

In the first essay I suggest that, when studying the event of organisational entrepreneurship, the research focus should be imaginative human actions. However, current research on business opportunities is largely based on the idea
of the individual-opportunity nexus as an objective reflection on what the business opportunity is about. Previous scholars have been interested in the nature of business opportunities, whether subjective or objective in nature, and how they can be recognised, discovered, created and/or developed. The issue of entrepreneurial actions has thus not been effectively described (exceptions include Holt 2008, Jones & Holt 2008). On this basis, the research question of the first essay is, “What is the nature of the business opportunity creation process, assuming it to be linked with entrepreneurial actions?”

In the first essay, I discuss how the current literature approaches the creation of business opportunities. I then introduce the application of social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity) as an alternative theoretical framework for seeing behind the scenes. This makes it possible to make sense of what the imaginative, social and creative sides of business opportunity creation can be. The major point here is that entrepreneurship is a kind of process of social learning. This is based on Engeström’s (1987, 2001) argument that the target of learning is constantly moving. The same issue exists in entrepreneurship and especially in the creation process of business opportunities.

Social learning theory is based on actor-network theory (ANT) that starts from the assumption of who the focal actors (more precisely: actants) are and their relationships to the other parts of the social-actor network. On this basis, the structure of human activity is an application of ANT. Alternately, the idea of activity systems is an extension of social constructivism, where the critical issue is that a human being is the creator of his or her reality in his or her interaction with other people. This is in line with Alvarez and Barney’s (2007) study, in which they discuss the creation and discovery of opportunities. They argue that business opportunity creation and discovery processes are complementary, and call creation theory an “iterative leaning process” that ultimately could lead an entrepreneur “to the formation of an opportunity” (Alvarez & Barney 2007: 11–12).

However, Alvarez and Barney’s (2007) idea of business opportunities is teleologic by nature (compare with Van de Ven & Poole 1995). In a similar vein, Shane and Venkataraman (2000: 220) say, “Although recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities is a subjective process, the opportunities themselves are objective phenomena.” The first essay of this dissertation problematises the teleological assumption in terms of the creation process of business opportunities, as it seems that what entrepreneurs are actually doing is a complementary phenomenon to the processes of discovery and recognition (Sarasvathy et al. 2001).
Sometimes entrepreneurs create a business opportunity without recognising and/or discovering it first-hand (see Görling & Rehn 2008). To understand this we must investigate the actions of social learning that happen when entrepreneurs create and act on opportunities.

Sarasvathy (2001) writes that the logic of effectuation is about controlling the future with a specific set of means, which means it is not necessary to predict future happenings. Sarasvathy’s idea of effectuation logic is convincing but does not respond to the challenge of discussing what those actions actually are. Sarasvathy (Ibid.) and Sarasvathy and Dew (2005) write that one set of means that entrepreneurs begin with is “who are they”, “what they know” and “who they know”. Unfortunately this does not help us to understand what the action behind the individual entrepreneur is about, even though the subjective nature of the process of business opportunity creation has been acknowledged in previous work (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Sarasvathy et al. 2003).

The first essay of this dissertation responds to the need to see the social actions that underlie the creation of business opportunities at the core of studies of entrepreneurship. The use of the structure of human activity as a theoretical framework strengthens Alvarez and Barney’s idea (2007) of the iterative learning process that comes into play when entrepreneurs are creating business opportunities. However, the structure of human activity is based on the assumption that social learning is not a static issue (see Engeström 1987, 2001), as has generally been assumed in work on business opportunities (Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003, Alvarez & Barney 2007). In contrast, the nature of the social learning that Engeström (2001) develops in terms of human actions emphasises criticising the learning context and therefore constructing a wider alternative context (i.e. Learning III).

The question of how the structure of human activity contributes to entrepreneurship and the creation of business opportunities is similar to how social learning (Learning III) differs from the larger set of learning theories. When entrepreneurs create business opportunities, the purpose is not to climb an existing mountain but to build a new mountain instead (Alvarez & Barney 2007). In the first essay, I explain how social learning theory can help us see the fundamental nature of opportunity creation. As a theoretical implication, I propose the concept of ‘neutral opportunity’. This makes it possible to understand how human life is organised around the entrepreneurial lifestyle. As Steyaert and Katz (2004) argue, entrepreneurship can be found in many places and forms. This is important in the case of neutral opportunity and is the same in terms of social
learning: this learning takes place everywhere and all the time, as the object of learning is the moving target of human life (see Engeström 2001). The neutral opportunities are human life possibilities that can be created everywhere and at any time. Thus, a neutral opportunity is a possibility to create a space for play and innovation.

The first essay reveals the argumentation of this dissertation. I argue that organisational entrepreneurship is not only about businesses, which has traditionally been investigated in studies of SMEs and individual entrepreneurs in the field of entrepreneurship, but also about entrepreneurial actions which create things that foster change and movement as part of society. This is the meaning of neutral opportunity. As Fletcher (2006) writes, a person can create the starting point for a business opportunity when walking down the street and thinking of something that could be actualised as a new business. The critical issue behind this type of action is not the business itself, but the actions that happened before the opportunity has even been registered. This is important to social learning and is a reason why social learning theory contributes to the discourse on business opportunities.

The first essay supports the view that the creation of business opportunities is an iterative process of learning. However it is also important to use social constructivism as a scientific-philosophical standing point for that type of research. Seeing the concept of business opportunities in this way suggests that entrepreneurial actions should be investigated empirically so that the non-realistic parts of the process are taken into consideration. Hence, the first essay calls on future researchers to use longitudinal data-gathering in order to study business opportunities empirically. In addition, the essay proposes that storytelling could open up a novel way of understanding how business opportunities are created. This is because a business opportunity is a social construct (see Berger & Luckmann 1966) that can be investigated via storytelling (Hjorth & Steyaert 2004).

In Engeström’s (2001) terms, the critical issue is a shared object that two or more subjects are striving for. From the perspective of business opportunities, that shared object is the neutral opportunity that people (e.g. entrepreneurs) can actualise as a new activity. Some, but not all, of those actions might be new business opportunities that can be actualised as new business organisations (e.g. SMEs). However, a new business organisation is not the only possible outcome. There are also many other kinds of outcomes, such as better quality of life, that are more important from the perspective of the people who are performing these
entrepreneurial actions. In that case, a business opportunity or firm may be a by-product. The second essay discusses this issue in more detail.

4.2 Internationalisation of SMEs from the perspective of social learning theory

Social learning theory is also the theoretical framework of the second essay of this dissertation (chapter 7), which continues the discussion about business opportunities from the view of internationalisation of SMEs. This essay shows empirically how the expansive cycle of learning actions takes place in the empirical context of an international collaboration project between two firms. Thus, the empirical data comes from two separate firms that are developing software together. The software is intended to help doctors who are treating and investigating brain stroke in their everyday work. The data shows that the processes of social learning that take place around an international business opportunity construct the shared object – an action related to internationalisation. In this case the shared object is an international business opportunity. The software is developed as a project between a Finnish and a Danish firm.

Conceptually, the second essay problematises the assumption, made in previous research on international entrepreneurship, that internationalisation of SMEs is the core issue here (see Oviatt & McDougall 1994, McDougall & Oviatt 2000). Instead, essay suggests that the internationalisation of SMEs is a by-product of entrepreneurial action around international business opportunities (Schweizer et al. 2010). Based on previous research, the issue of learning is discussed. In this dissertation, the international context of SMEs is a way to show the role of entrepreneurial actions as part of the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship. This action takes place as an interaction. For this particular interaction between a Finnish and a Danish firm, the shared object is a collaborative project that is actualised as a new international business opportunity. In that project, the entrepreneurial actions construct and co-create claims of knowledge that create a better life through software. From the perspective of entrepreneurs, this means creating a workplace that would be more interesting than being hired by somebody else. From the perspective of end-users of that software, the improvements to quality of life are obvious when doctors treating and studying brain stroke use the software. Four narrative interviews show how the two entrepreneurs concerned interpret ‘better life’. The interviews are analysed in the manner of storytelling. As Czarniawska-Joerges (1995: 16) writes,
one form of narrative studies is to conceptualise “organisational life as story-making and organisation theory as story-reading (interpretative approaches)”. This was done in the second essay. The purpose here is to explicate the internationalisation of SMEs through the cycle of expansive learning so that we can better understand how such a by-product can be created. Answering the following research question makes it possible to achieve that in a narrative way: “How do entrepreneurial actions open up the possibility for SMEs to internationalise their actions related to international opportunities?”

In an empirical sense, Finnish and Danish people have created the collaborative project mentioned above in an international setting. Therefore, the context of that business opportunity is international. This is why I use the concept of international business opportunities in the second essay. As discussed in the first conceptual part of this project (the first essay), not all relevant opportunities are business opportunities, some are neutral. The first essay elaborates this conceptually, and the second continues the discussion. In the second essay I explain how the neutral opportunity is based on human life and interactive actions therein. On that basis, the interactive elements of human life around social learning contribute to society in a way that some of those interactions can be finally actualised as a business-based value as well (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

In a discussion of human life and the social processes of learning within it, the existence of the business opportunity matters less than the social actions performed by the people whom we categorise as entrepreneurs (compare with Companys & McMullen 2007). As Schweizer et al. (2010) argue, an international business opportunity is not a product of intentions linked with internationalisation but rather a by-product of other actions, namely entrepreneurial actions in the process of entrepreneurship (Ibid., see also Johanson & Vahlne 2009). On these grounds, there is room for the neutral opportunity: a possibility that can be actualised as a new business opportunity from which money can maybe be made.

Neutrality in terms of business opportunity creation is about understanding the basic things that matter during the creation process of business opportunities. In international settings, the context is the international markets, but internationalisation (more precisely an international expansion of firms, see Hohenthal et al. 2003) as a human desire is not crucial when creating business opportunities. Instead, the key issue is to see what people are doing in their everyday practices and how they, in that way, are acting on neutral opportunities of every type through social learning (see Engeström 1987, 2001). From that perspective, human life is an outstanding process of social learning. By better
understanding that, we can see how business-related issues are co-created and socially constructed as a part of creating a better life over time (compare with Rindova et al. 2009).

The current literature on internationalisation of SMEs is more or less based on the ideas of Oviatt and McDougall (1994) and McDougall and Oviatt (2000). Internationalisation was initially seen as an issue for large multinational firms, but the focus of research then turned to small and medium-sized enterprises, as it was found that SMEs also have a major impact on the issue of internationalisation (Acs et al. 2003). The idea behind this is based on the brokering, resource leveraging and risk-seeking behaviour that are intended to cross national borders when SME entrepreneurs create new businesses (Oviatt & McDougall 1994, McDougall & Oviatt 2000, Hohenthal et al. 2003). The challenge in this sort of research is that there are concerns about the size of the business organisation as well as whether a firm is ‘born global’ or whether international expansion happens later in that firm’s life cycle. The second essay shows that the size of firms does not completely explain the internationalisation of SMEs. The key issue here is rather the process of social learning around international business opportunities. The internationalisation of SMEs is a by-product of entrepreneurial actions regardless of the size of a firm, as the second essay shows.

However, the current literature on internationalisation assumes that the process of entrepreneurship is located within internationalisation (Schweizer et al. 2010). There is thus a need to approach internationalisation from the perspective of entrepreneurship and not only from the perspective of international business and multinational giants as research objects (see Fletcher 2006). In addition, there is a growing concern about linking the discourses of entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship more theoretically closely, as both are interested in similar types of social processes (Steyart & Katz 2004). The second essay responds to this need and proposes the concept of the international business opportunity. The term ‘business’ refers to the fact that there is something that we can call business (i.e. transactions that create value). Neutrality of opportunities means that there is something virtual that can be actualised as a business.

To understand neutrality in business opportunities, we need to examine what social learning actions are about. The limitation of the second essay is that social learning theory (and therefore the structure of the human activity behind the idea of the expansive cycle of learning actions, that is, the theoretical framework of the second essay) does not effectively describe what the process is about from a processual perspective (e.g. processual becoming-Other). There is a need to
understand what learning is about from the perspective of social processes. However, the question of the processual nature of this process remains unanswered (compare with Engeström 1987, 2001). The processual nature of processes is important in terms of organisational entrepreneurship because the reference point there is how things are organised processually (see Hjorth 2004b), rather than what the organisation as a set of chronologically ordered things is. Social learning theory does more than describe what role processuality plays in organisational entrepreneurship, which is the unit of analysis in this doctoral project.

The second essay proposes directions for future research. Firstly, future research should be more focused on the processual nature of the process. In organisational entrepreneurship this means that the process of becoming other than what a subject is right now should be put at the core of the research. Secondly, entrepreneurial actions in specific contexts should be studied, as international entrepreneurship seems to be a context-dependent phenomenon. The second essay shows that internationalisation of SMEs as a form of organisational entrepreneurship can be actualised through a social learning process in which the international business opportunity is crucial. In fact, internationalisation is actually a by-product of entrepreneurial actions. Thirdly, in order to understand processuality and social tension, researchers can use narrative fiction (analysis of movies etc.) to open up a discussion of things that are not true but seem to be, so that people interpreting them can believe them to be(come) true (see Phillips 1995). This helps us to understand what becoming-Other is about: an actualisation of something that is possible but is not always likely to happen.

The second essay empirically shows that understanding business opportunities is not enough to see the full potential of organisational creativity that fosters organisational entrepreneurship, wherever and whenever such a phenomenon occurs. Internationalisation of SMEs as a form of organisational entrepreneurship shows that the actions linked with business opportunities (financial transactions etc.) – but not always to the neutral ones – are actually based on human life, and multiply social processes (see also Steyaert & Katz 2004). Social learning is therefore just one process which illustrates how neutral and business-based opportunities are created. Nevertheless, there are also other sources for and outcomes of the creation processes: businesses are not the only outcomes of entrepreneurial life and lifestyle (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).

The second essay contributes to the discourse on internationalisation of SMEs and shows that entrepreneurial actions are part of the major issues in international
entrepreneurship in the post-industrial era. The unit of analysis should thus be reframed. The relevant issue is not always internationalisation of SMEs per se. The unit of analysis could be entrepreneurial actions of social learning from the view of organisational entrepreneurship. As the first essay suggests conceptually, this creates potential social spaces for play and innovation, and shows that entrepreneurship belongs not only to the economy but also to society (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

4.3 Visionary entrepreneurial actions: entrepreneurial platforms for (new) businesses in the process of entrepreneurship

The third essay in this dissertation considers the process of entrepreneurship from the perspective of entrepreneurial contexts. As the second essay suggests, there is a need to see the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship as a processual issue in certain contexts. The third essay conceptualises what an entrepreneurial concept like this could entail. I referred to Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) ideas of becoming, as the assumption behind their thinking is based on organisation theory, which uses change as a unit of analysis.

Given that the perspective of this dissertation is organisation theoretical, Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) approach helps to us see what the context of entrepreneurship could be from the perspective of entrepreneurial processes that change over time. I use narrative fiction to elaborate what the entrepreneurial context could be, suggesting that the desires of visionary people (in this case fictional criminals) reflect an entrepreneurial context. Those desires are human-made in the sense that criminals are usually aiming to become something other than what they are right now, for example richer people. In the third essay, this has been elaborated by juxtaposing the lives of criminals and entrepreneurial becoming (compare with Sørensen, in press).

The actions of criminals reflect what the process of becoming can be, as they are quite vulnerable. In the movie From Dusk Till Dawn suggests, two brothers want to get rich. The same process works in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs usually have an idea of what they are aiming to become – not necessarily rich, but something different to what they are. In this project I found that entrepreneurship can be seen as a lifestyle which is based on the desire to become Other (compare with Hjorth et al. 2003). The third essay discusses how different types of desire can be actualised as novelty, movement and change in the context of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.
In the film, the brothers’ original desire to become rich is updated to wanting to stay alive. Briefly, the two plan a robbery in Texas and must escape the country. They intend to meet a friend at dawn in a Mexican strip bar. However, they encounter a number of problems. They take a family hostage and head to Mexico. When they arrive at the strip bar to wait for their friend Carlos, who has promised them a safe house, it turns out that the employees are all vampires who try to kill them. Their original vision of becoming rich is updated and the only relevant vision becomes staying alive. One of the brothers and the daughter of the hostage family stay alive thanks to their ability to update their vision of life around the way things are happening.

As the second essay argues, entrepreneurial actions that are linked with neutral opportunities are crucial when, for example, an entrepreneur is creating business opportunities. However, the understanding of business opportunities is not enough, because human entrepreneurial life also involves something other than business-related issues (Hjorth et al. 2008). In the third essay, I argue conceptually that the process of entrepreneurship is a human ability to follow one’s vision. That vision must be updated along the way. In terms of entrepreneurial opportunities, this means that a business opportunity is the outcome of a specific type of human lifestyle (compare with Hjorth et al. 2003). In order to understand these lifestyles we need to realise that entrepreneurial contexts are not only about affecting the phenomenon of entrepreneurship (compare with Bird 1988). Rather, those contexts are created in a lifestyle that fosters the process of entrepreneurship (see Rindova et al. 2009). The emerging discourse that considers the process of entrepreneurship as entrepreneuring opens up this type of discussion (see Steyaert 2007a, Rindova et al. 2009).

The third essay contributes to a discourse of entrepreneurial contexts which is largely based on the assumption that the entrepreneurial context affects what entrepreneurs are willing and able to do (see Bird 1988). As some images of entrepreneurship already show, for example creating a venture by accident (Görling & Rehn 2008), the unintended discovery of business opportunities (Dew 2009) or illegal actions behind businesses (Webb et al. 2009), actions influence the contexts of entrepreneurship, but not always vice versa. Therefore, the purpose of the third essay is to discuss the contextual nature of the process of entrepreneurship – entrepreneuring – as entrepreneurial actions related to a shared vision rather than as a factor (e.g. a nexus between individual and opportunity) creating entrepreneuring.
This is not to say that entrepreneurial contexts do not influence the process of entrepreneurship. Indeed, this might go the other way around. This is a particular feature of contexts of entrepreneurship in the post-industrial era. With the aim of discussing the contextual nature of entreprenuring, the research question of the third essay is, “What types of entrepreneurial actions are needed when creating a context for the process of entrepreneurship – entreprenuring – through a shared vision?”. The third essay juxtaposes the lives of criminals and organisational entrepreneurs. The idea is not to say that criminality is a good thing but rather to show an alternative context in which entrepreneurial actions can take place, as previous work has suggested (see Mainela & Puhakka 2009). The idea of juxtaposition is also discussed on the third essay.

Creating an entrepreneurial context is about actualising and updating the desires that entrepreneurial people have. An activity-theoretical approach (e.g. the first and second essay of this dissertation) does not meet the need to show entrepreneurial contexts in a detailed way because entrepreneurship has traditionally been seen as a sub-discipline of management (Hjorth 2003). Juxtaposition between the contexts of criminality and organisational creativity thus facilitates the idea to see entrepreneurial actions as a core part of the entrepreneurial processes that this dissertation discusses. From Dusk Till Dawn is useful because of the images it shows of two criminals with a vision of becoming rich. Such images have been called for in previous work on entrepreneurship (e.g. Phillips 1995, Gartner 2010).

On the grounds of the discussion above, the shift from the creation of opportunities (the first and second essays) to the process of entrepreneurship expresses the fact that organisational perspectives on entrepreneurship can create room for studies that emphasise the social, creative and contextual parts of a phenomenon (see Hjorth et al. 2008) As Steyaert (2007a: 472, my italics) writes, “For those who want to shift the locus of analysis away from the entrepreneur or the individual-opportunity nexus, the possibilities are vast: one can explore contextual embeddedness, relational entourage, linguistic performativity, non-teleological openness, connective assemblage and creative involution as different points of entry into a social ontology.” The third essay is focused on contextual embeddedness and non-teleological openness. This means that the descriptions given by the opportunity-based literature (see chapter 2) are based on teleological assumptions of processes (see Tsoukas & Chia 2002). This needs to be refined, and Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) ideas of becoming are useful in terms of entreprenuring.
The refined version of opportunity creation-based literature is elaborated using the example of *From Dusk Till Dawn*. Even though it is an action/horror film, it shows how such potentialities can be actualised in the process of entrepreneurship. I do not mean that criminal actions are necessary to reach targets. Rather, I suggest that we can learn things from how the criminals plan the crime, commit it and finally update the vision related to it along the way. This is similar to the creation of new social spaces for play and innovation (e.g. entrepreneurs), as the entrepreneurial events related these types of actions are contexts for movement and change. Practically, this is a platform for something new that could be actualised as a new business opportunity.

The analysis of *From Dusk Till Dawn* shows that the criminals’ visions are updated according to what is happening in entrepreneurial contexts. Furthermore, the visions as such emerge of their own accord. Their original vision is based on the fact that it would be nice to become rich. Therefore they commit the crime and try to escape the country. Because of an unexpected series of happenings (the appearance of the vampires), their vision must be updated. Similarly, entrepreneurship can be understood as a processual creation of contexts related to entrepreneurial actions. In other words, entrepreneurial actions are not something that can be pre-defined and therefore pre-planned, but are rather based on context-related happenings. In the event of organisational entrepreneurship, like in the movie, there is no such a thing as a fixed vision. The analysis of the movie does not show how entrepreneurial actions should be done as part of businesses but rather reveals an alternative entrepreneurial context that can, by juxtaposition, tell us what kinds of actions create the possible process of entrepreneurship.

As Hjorth (2005) writes, spaces of play and innovation create the possibility of doing things for their own sake. These kinds of spaces illustrate the nature of entrepreneuring that I discuss in the third essay. The human desire to create organisations (e.g. the brothers wanting to become rich in the movie can be understood as an entrepreneurial organisation) seems to be a driving force behind why people interact and throw themselves into social situations that create novelty, movement and change. In the end, these types of actions release organisational creativity in the form of a human desire to be something other than what one is right now, and also give rise to the issue of becoming (see Foucault 1975, 1978). That kind of organisational creativity fosters the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

Alongside the theoretical reflections of Tsoukas and Chia (2002), *From Dusk Till Dawn* shows that human desires foster the process of entrepreneurship. More
precisely, the desire to become-Other is crucial when talking about organisational entrepreneurship, because such desires are basic concepts of organisational creativity. In this way, the process of becoming-Other is revealed, and it becomes possible to see what is actually happening when a person (whether he/she is conceptualised as an entrepreneur or not) acts in an entrepreneurial way. The third essay opens up this discussion and draws the conclusion that the process of entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that should be studied ethnographically, because human life issues are crucial here. This could make it possible to empirically investigate how organisational creativity fosters the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

Moreover, it is not enough to develop conceptual reasoning about entrepreneurial contexts as the third essay does, as the actors (e.g. entrepreneurs) are actually living and working in the field. Even though the narrative fiction used in the third essay opens up a way to see what can be actualised in the process of creating an entrepreneurial context, such contexts should also be studied empirically. In the methodological sense, there is a need to go into the field and make sense of those contextually embedded happenings in their actual form. One option could be to use ethnographic fieldwork to study the processes of organisational becoming. The third essay contributes to the research on entrepreneurial contexts (see Bird 1988, Gartner 1985) by showing the juxtaposition between the contexts of criminality and organisational entrepreneurship. The implications suggest that the emerging discourse on entreprenuring is a relevant way to make sense of alternative contexts of organisational entrepreneurship. This has been called for but is not often studied in a pure way (see Steyaert 2007a, Rindova et al. 2009).

4.4 The process of falling in love with what you do – entrepreneurial passion as creative becoming in post-industrial (business) organisations

The fourth essay of this dissertation discusses the process of entrepreneurship as entrepreneurial passion (see the extensive literature review proposed by Cardon et al. 2009). It is a response to the need that I frame conceptually in the third essay. The process of entrepreneurship as entrepreneurial passion is elaborated through an empirical approach. This essay shows that one reason why entrepreneurial passion happens is the desire to become something Other than what a person currently is. This becoming happens in the spaces for play and innovation. The
The fourth essay is based on the interview that was framed around my ten months of fieldwork in a stand-up comedy firm in Finland.

The ethnographic fieldwork consisted of participatory observation, interviews, Google-chats, e-mails and SMS messages with the informants: two entrepreneurs who are/were driving a firm that produces stand-up comedy clubs in Oulu, Finland. The up-and-coming stand-up comedian who I was shadowing was interested in becoming a funny person (see Czarniawska 2008) and was working with the entrepreneurs in the stand-up comedy firm. It was important to frame the interview with him ethnographically so that I could make better sense of the context he is part of. As the third essay suggests, entrepreneurial contexts are important creations of entrepreneurial actions.

The fourth essay is not only about drawing conclusions about the issue of an entrepreneurial action, but also proposes directions for future research more strongly than the previous chapters do. Entrepreneurial passion is a nascent discourse in the field of entrepreneurship, and therefore I argue that the process of entrepreneurship should be investigated through this framework in the future (see Cardon et al. 2009). The critical issues in this discourse are the creation of space for play/innovation and doing things for their own sake. The majority of previous work sees entrepreneurial passion as positive emotions directed towards attempts at venture-creation, which is why entrepreneurs are said to be good at overcoming obstacles and remaining engaged in the process of entrepreneurship (e.g. Baum & Locke 2004, Sundarajan & Peters 2007, Baron 2008, Chen, Yao & Kotha 2009).

When entrepreneurship is seen to be an organisational phenomenon that is part of society rather than only part of the economy, an assumption about entrepreneurs’ venture-creating attempts becomes problematic. As discussed in the first and second chapters, the focus of this study is not on individuals and/or firms (because the current research calls for processual and contextually-embedded investigations), but on actions related to entrepreneurial processes. Thus there is a need to elaborate what role entrepreneurial passion plays in an organisational manner. The purpose of the fourth essay is to discuss how entrepreneurial passion as a driver of the process of entrepreneurship fosters this process.

The finding that entrepreneurial passion fosters the process of entrepreneurship is not new. More than two decades ago Bird (1988: 7–8) wrote that entrepreneurial behaviour can be “passionate, full of emotional energy, drive and spirit”. Along similar lines, Smilor (1997) argues that entrepreneurial passion is perhaps the most observed phenomenon in the process of entrepreneurship. In
addition, Cardon et al. (2005: 23) propose that perhaps entrepreneurship could be understood as a “tale of passion”. In this way, I believe, it is possible to show the role playfulness and innovativeness play in terms of organisational entrepreneurship in more general terms.

In their extensive review of the literature of entrepreneurial passion, Cardon et al. (2009) state that even though the reason for investigating entrepreneurial passion seems clear, definitions of what entrepreneurial passion is and the reasons for why it happens are still lacking. The fourth essay fills that gap. Based on the third essay, in which I elaborate an example of what the entrepreneurial context could be like, it seems to me that as long as entrepreneurial actions are contextually embedded, there is an element of shared vision. This is why passionate people have shared visions of better life, whether they are categorised as business-creators (e.g. entrepreneurs) or not. On this basis, the research question of the fourth essay is, “Why does entrepreneurial passion, as a vision related to a better life, foster the context-related process of entrepreneurship?”

The finding of Cardon et al. (2005) that entrepreneurship can be seen as a tale of passion provides a justification for using genealogic storytelling as an empirical method in the fourth essay. It invites scholars to join the narrative turn that Hjorth and Steyaert (2004) are writing about. In the fourth essay I go through the ethnographically framed interview with an up-and-coming stand-up comedian which was conducted in the manner of storytelling. It reveals a story that can be interpreted as a passionate tale of entrepreneurship, which is why there is an empirical juxtaposition between tango dancing, one of the most typical images of passion, and entrepreneurship that Gartner (1993), for example, initiated in his ideas of entrepreneurship as dating. This was something that I concretely realised during the ethnographic fieldwork. The process of becoming a stand-up comedian is quite a lot like falling in love with what you do. Dating is an extension of that: it is a bundle of actions in which you express yourself as a person who is trying to become something other than what you are right now.

During the empirical fieldwork, I found that entrepreneurial life is based on principles that challenge the assumed principles of working life. Thus, the fourth essay agrees with Hjorth’s (2003) notion that an entrepreneurial entrepreneur is a playful and innovative being who can be distinguished from his or her managerial counterpart, that is, a managerial entrepreneur. I continue to argue that the process of becoming Other is a human desire that actualises entrepreneurial actions (see Tsoukas & Chia 2002). Colebrook (2002: 89) writes that Deleuze’s way of seeing the becoming process, which is based on his ideas of empiricism, is to “see the all
life as a flow and connection of interacting bodies, or ‘desiring machines’. These connections form regularities, which can then be organised through ‘social machines’.” This is a way of understanding the nature of the event of organisational entrepreneurship. As I empirically show in the second essay, social learning theory reaches the point where the acting agents (i.e. entrepreneurs) are analysed through the entrepreneurial bodies that are interacting and therefore learning in the process of developing software in a social way.

However, the question of the social machines behind those interacting bodies remains unanswered in the second essay due to the limitations of social learning theory. In the third essay I focus on the social machines (i.e. desires) that I call entrepreneurial visions. The current literature considers the process of entrepreneuring to be “efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or group of individuals” (Rindova et al. 2009: 477). As a suggestion of the research problem around the process of entrepreneurship mentioned in the third essay, this matches the idea of entrepreneurial passion in the sense that there is a social environment behind the process of entrepreneuring in general, and also behind the entrepreneurial passion that seems to be an outcome of the desires that enervate those processes. Entrepreneurship is thus a big chicken and egg problem. The critical issue is to find out how organisational creativity fosters those processes. One way to do that is to open the bodies to work towards desires. This way (and I think, only this way) it becomes possible to not only make life better (see the second essay), but also to create the movement and change that underlie the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

Firstly, the abovementioned definition of entrepreneuring refers to the tendency to see entrepreneurship as something other than what it has traditionally been seen as. This is in line with Webb et al. (2009) who write about illegal actions which, regardless of the fact that they are criminal and maybe even because this is attractive/desirable, emerge as new businesses. Secondly, the discourse of entrepreneuring opens up a possibility of approaching the processual nature of entrepreneurship in a detailed way. For example, Steyaert (2007a) writes that the connectivity of desire is about creativity when we are discussing entrepreneuring from the creative point of view (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003). This is also what happens with becoming-Other. The process of entrepreneurship is similar to the process of falling in love (see Gartner 1993), because both are based on the desire to become something other than what you are right now (e.g. an entrepreneur or a couple).
The critical point and difference between the second and fourth essays is that the phenomenon called entrepreneurship is not only about business – by its very nature it belongs to society. The up-and-coming stand-up comedian who I interviewed shows that doing something in a passionate way is entrepreneurial. I therefore make a thought experiment of connecting tango dancing (like an expression of sexual passion) with the process of becoming Other (e.g. falling in love with what you do).

The abovementioned discussion leads to a crisis in the field of entrepreneurship, not only in terms of research approaches, but also methodology. According to Geertz (1988: 177), one of the features of religious systems is that a person builds a temple: “The religious forms associated with the various temples, like the architecture broadly similar from temple to temple, are almost wholly ceremonial in nature” (Geertz 1988: 177). The critical issue here is to see ritual details that work in order to get things organised in a certain way. This is a similar issue to linguistic expressions of entrepreneurship – like social manifestations about what entrepreneurs are becoming – which show the possibility of organisational creativity.

Fomenting organisational creativity in a such a temple (e.g. a business opportunity) constructs social spaces of play and innovation. The possible outcomes – and, on the basis of the findings of my second essay, by-products – can involve a becoming. Such outcomes or by-products relate to Nietzsche’s (1990) ideas about good and evil. There is no eternal truth that we can approach. Thus, organisational entrepreneurship should be seen more as becoming-Other than as a bundle of personality traits (compare with Busenitz & Barney 1997). It is more interesting to discuss how an entrepreneurial life is organised and what its actualised form is.

The fourth essay gives a couple of novel suggestions for future research. Firstly, organisational becoming is a part of the process of entrepreneurship. However, this was not studied in this project, as the process of becoming a stand-up comedian, examined in the fourth essay, was about individual becoming. Secondly, the discussion of why entrepreneurial passion occurs shows the meaning of desire in that processual phenomenon, suggesting that desires themselves should be studied. This could be done in contexts that have not been linked to a traditional idea of the business-based nature of entrepreneurship (see Mainela & Puhakkka 2009, Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). Thirdly, the concept of becoming in terms of entrepreneurship needs a more detailed philosophical elaboration than was done in the fourth essay. The fourth essay is based on the
empirical material that revolves around the individual becoming of a stand-up comedian. This type of empirical reasoning together with a stronger conceptual/philosophical framing could illustrate the place of entrepreneurship in general, not only as a field of business schools, but also as a part of the larger discussion of creative working groups and interactions within them.
5 Discussion and conclusions

This section reviews the findings of this study. My argument builds a link between the research streams on business opportunity development/creation (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Alvarez & Barney 2007) and contextuality/creative becoming (e.g. Hjorth et al. 2008). From the perspective of business opportunity creation, the argument is based on the concept of neutral opportunity that I introduced in my first essay (chapter 6) using the structure of human activity (see Engeström 1987) as a conceptual framework. This is extended in the second essay (chapter 7) with empirical findings around the internationalisation of SMEs using the expansive cycle of social learning proposed by Engeström (2001). The second essay is based on the empirical material of the collaborative project between a Finnish and Danish firm. The software they are developing is the shared object here investigated through social learning theory. This leads to the methodological crisis that is discussed in the third chapter.

The second part of the dissertation considers the concepts of contextuality and becoming. The approach of contextuality/creative becoming is drawn from Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) contribution to process theories, that starts from ideas of organisational change. The third essay (chapter 8) shows an image of two criminals in the movie *From Dusk Till Dawn*. The contextually embedded action performed by the protagonist brothers expresses how contextuality can be seen from the perspective of the process of entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneuring). Alongside the findings about creative becoming, the fourth essay (chapter 9) proposes that entrepreneurial passion is a drive that fosters the process of entrepreneurship. The fourth essay features an ethnographically framed interview with an up-and-coming stand-up comedian. The entrepreneurial passion discussed here comes from the desire to become something other than what a person is right now, and is a reason why entrepreneurial passion develops. Methodologically, this invites future scholars to use narrative storytelling as a research method in order to understand the event of organisational entrepreneurship.

The traditional quality measurements of a qualitative study (e.g. validity, reliability, generalisation) cannot be used here (see Eisenhardt 1989, Yin 1994) because I am not willing to argue that the empirical findings of this study reflect how likely something is to happen. Rather, the finding in this chapter is that the event of organisational entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that is not always likely to take place. It can, however, occur, as the findings of this dissertation suggest. Even though I do not try to generalise my findings to the larger population of
entrepreneurs, they open up a critical discussion about what entrepreneurship is and how it should be studied. Genealogic storytelling as an empirical method covers human life, social actions and processes from an organisational perspective (see Hjorth 2004b, Gartner 2010). This makes it possible to frame future research so that we can ask different questions and draw novel conclusions.

Even though the phenomenon of the event of organisational entrepreneurship is not always likely to happen, there is still a possibility of opening up new social spaces for play and innovation. The event of organisational entrepreneurship takes place in those spaces. In this chapter, I provide three knowledge claims (in accordance with the roots of social constructivism) so that I can build up the contributions of the project, which can be found in chapter 5.3.

5.1 Theoretical implications and contributions

As I explain above, current entrepreneurship research is based on objective ways to understand the processes around the concept of business opportunities (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman 2000). In this dissertation, I investigate entrepreneurial activities that make the creation of a business opportunity possible through neutral opportunity. In doing so, I find that the interactive element of entrepreneurial process actually relates to human life around business opportunities (see Holt 2008). This leads me to elaborate the processual nature of organisational entrepreneurship. It seems that human desires drive people to become entrepreneurial. The next two sub-chapters elaborate the findings of this project. I propose three arguments based on the four essays presented.

Those arguments follow the basic principles of socially-produced knowledge that Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Gergen (2001), among others, write about. The arguments below are produced as a part of the process of this project that was, of course, a social interaction between me, prior work on entrepreneurship (books, articles, etc.), my supervisors and the empirical material that I gathered during the process. The arguments do not offer any eternal truth about organisational entrepreneurship, but are interpretations done during this doctoral project. Even though they are not ‘true’ or ‘false’ in the objective sense, they should offer a way to understand the roles that playfulness and innovativeness play in organisational entrepreneurship. This is similar to what happens in a market economy. It is about the co-creation of social constructs that make one’s life better: perhaps in the form of money, but that is not the main point, which is creative becoming as a processual phenomenon. Due to this kind of social constructivist idea,
contributing to the previous literature is not about telling the truth, but about having an influence on the current understanding of what the event of organisational entrepreneurship is about. It seems that this is a good idea, because even though some kinds of managerial spaces can be physically seen, the entrepreneurial counterpart of this (the heterotopia as an entrepreneurial space that Hjorth (2005) is writing about, for instance) cannot be seen. In contrast, those kinds of spaces are social constructs themselves (see Hjorth 2004a, 2005).

5.1.1 Entrepreneurial activities

Perspectives on business opportunity recognition and discovery in entrepreneurship argue that a business opportunity is an existing combination of entrepreneurial searches and findings from the market (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Venkataraman 1997, Shane 2003). In response, Sarasvathy (2001) and Sarasvathy et al. (2003) argue that the creation of business opportunities is actually an ontological counter-movement of opportunity-based entrepreneurship research. It originates from the assumption of the “possibility of creating new means as well as new ends” when creating a business opportunity that does not already exist (Sarasvathy et al. 2003: 146).

The discourse of opportunity creation has been important in developing an understanding of the nature of business opportunities. However, that discourse does not significantly discuss the actions related to the creation of opportunities. As Alvarez and Barney (2007: 23) write, “Creation theory suggests that a firm’s founding conditions may themselves be the result of actions that entrepreneurs take to form and exploit an opportunity. Indeed, it may be in these early actions of the entrepreneur that the seeds of an organisation’s future form are sown.” Without articulating whether or not personality differences matter in the creation of opportunities, the emphasis is on understanding how the actions related to opportunities create a new business.

Kirzner (1997), Busenitz and Barney (1997), Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2003), and Alvarez and Barney (2007) – to mention a few – are concerned about whether entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs differ from each other. The creation view believes that more or less outstanding differences in personality traits might influence the decisions that entrepreneurs make in terms of business opportunities ex ante. However, the differences personality traits (or, in Alvarez and Barney’s (2007) terms, cognitive attributes) seem to be different between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, because the path that entrepreneurs take reinforces the existing
personality traits or cognitive attributes. Therefore, even though systematic overconfidence and/or a willingness to generalise from small samples might differ between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, the point in terms of business opportunity creation is not to compare these issues, but to elaborate what happens in the actions that make up the entrepreneurial path [compare with Baron 2008].

On the grounds of the discussion above, I argue that entrepreneurial actions are fundamental to a discussion of the nature of entrepreneurship. What this means in terms of entrepreneurship research is that we should move the focus from the individual entrepreneur (as a person), business opportunity (as an individual-opportunity nexus) or entrepreneurial firm (as a vehicle to exploit a business opportunity as a new business) to entrepreneurial actions.

Entrepreneurial actions have been discussed in the literature before, but in relation to businesses. Even though one reason to conduct entrepreneurship research is to gain an understanding of how businesses create movements and change, I assert that entrepreneurial actions (e.g. interaction between individuals through firms) are the important issues, rather than possible differences between actors. In this project, I found that when assuming so, the interest lies not then on a business, but on the interactions that lead people (e.g. entrepreneurs) to do things together and thus to create something that might not be business-related action at all. This type of action can sometimes be actualised as a new business.

The implications of the second essay show that entrepreneurial actions may not initially seem to be creative from the perspective of businesses. In contrast, as the essay suggests, those kinds of actions can arise from ennui, for instance. In that case, ennui becomes an entrepreneurial event that happens in spaces for play and innovation. Organisational creativity – the collective force that makes novelty, movement and change possible – fosters these kinds of entrepreneurial events. I call those events organisational entrepreneurship. This dissertation contributes to the discourse of opportunity creation by arguing that concrete business-related artefacts (e.g. business organisations, internationalisation of SMEs, economic value, growth of a firm, etc.) should not be seen as outcomes or even targets of entrepreneurship as such, but rather as by-products of business opportunity creation. On this basis, I argue as the first knowledge claim that:

In the creation of business opportunities, the key issue is entrepreneurial action. An entrepreneurial action is about the interaction that underlies concrete business-related artefacts, but not about an artefact (such as a firm) itself. That is why the context of entrepreneurial action is the space for play.
and innovation (e.g. ennui). In these kinds of spaces, the entrepreneurial actions of social learning can create by-products, such as the internationalisation of SMEs, new ventures, business opportunities and the like.

The first and second essays (chapters 6 and 7) argue that there are interactions underlying social learning that create by-products like the internationalisation of SME, new ventures and business opportunities, among others. In this way, as social learning theory assumes, Learning III is about critiquing the whole context of learning (Engeström 2001). The same issue exists in the creation of business opportunities over time. There is an iterative process of social learning that can lead to the formation of a business opportunity (Alvarez & Barney 2007). More precisely, this means that we should see entrepreneurship as something other than actions that are happening only in SMEs (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

When addressing the creation of business opportunities as social interactions, any assumptions about a SME or the traits and/or personal qualities of individual actors (e.g. entrepreneurs) needs to be regarded as a by-product of entrepreneurial action. There is also a need to investigate the process of entrepreneurship. In the next sub-chapter I go through the processual implications that I encountered during this project. A business opportunity can be a set of actions that build up many separate social processes. However, an understanding of business opportunity creation is not enough, because the social processes around business opportunities are vast. That is why becoming-Other is the process that matters most in terms of the event of organisational entrepreneurship. The knowledge claim of this dissertation regarding the process of becoming-Other is discussed in the next sub-chapter.

5.1.2 Entrepreneurial processes

As explained in the previous chapter, current entrepreneurship research is generally framed around individual actors (e.g. an entrepreneur) and firms (e.g. SMEs). The entrepreneur, opportunity and/or firm has thus far been regarded as an interesting issue ex ante (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Kirzner 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000). There are two reasons why an entrepreneur, opportunity and/or firm have been considered central. Firstly, the focus has been on the subject (e.g. an entrepreneur), but little has been said about the subjectification of that subject (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). The critical issue of interest in the
mainstream literature has been on what happens at the level of businesses and economies. However, there are many separate social processes that a human (and therefore an entrepreneur) is part of (Webb et al. 2009).

Those studies that approach entrepreneurship processually depend on the teleological way of understanding what an entrepreneurial process is about (see Ven de Ven & Poole 1995, Alvarez & Barney 2007). The teleological approach to the entrepreneurial process is not the only possible way to understand it (Ibid., Van de Ven & Poole 2005). For example, the dialectical way to approach human life processes – like theses and anti-theses that are actualised as contradictions and confrontations – could offer an alternative to seeing what types of social processes a human life could be based on. That is why the process of becoming-Other is crucial (see Colebrook 2002, Hjorth 2004b). The dialectic nature of the process is obvious in the case of processes of becoming as well, because such a process is complex. That is what the dialectical theory of processes suggests, the complexity rather than the straightforward nature of human-life processes.

The dialectic process is a promising way to comprehend the phenomenon of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, because the ideas of dialectic process acknowledge that there is not always a direct link between the actors (e.g. entrepreneurs) and outcomes of business-related actions (e.g. business opportunities, ventures, etc.). More precisely, the idea of a business opportunity or new venture does not necessarily mean that this kind of opportunity or venture could be ‘out there’. Perhaps it can be created, but this does not have much to do with the idea of it. A more important issue is the process of the co-creating and constructing this sort of artefact. This implies that the fundamental part of entrepreneurship as a social action (i.e. a business-related artefact) happens in the early phases of a firm’s lifecycle (see Puhakka 2002).

It also seems to me that we should focus on the social actions that take place in the early phase of entrepreneurial processes (whatever those processes are), as there is evidence for the argument that many businesses are not only businesses but also other types of human actions, for example social encounters between friends, a friendship which eventually leads to the creation of a new business (e.g. Görling & Rehn 2008, Dew 2009). The critical thing here is to actualise these types of visions. In Shane and Venkataraman’s (2000) terms, this is about the exploitation of a business opportunity. The processes of exploitation have not been discussed at the level of actions in the literature of business. Emphasis has been on business organisations (e.g. SMEs) or acting individuals (e.g. an entrepreneur). Issues of creativity and contextuality have also been neglected
That is why creative and contextual becoming is the second research field in this dissertation, which I elaborate using entrepreneurial contexts (chapter 8) and becoming-Other (chapter 9).

In the second part of this project, I conceptualised the process of entrepreneurship as a process of becoming-Other. There is a need to re-analyse the nature of the process as becoming in the field of organisational entrepreneurship, because the creation of novelty, movement and change is seen to be a process of social learning. More precisely, it is an iterative process of social learning that goes on in a step-by-step manner (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Schweizer et al. 2010). Therefore, the process of becoming-Other is an in-depth illustration of that kind of process. I found that entrepreneurial actions produce by-products that match those that the prior work has assumed to be central issues of the whole phenomenon without doubt – that is, the units of analysis.

Previous literature discusses the processes as contradictory to so-called variation-based approaches, in which the focal actor is a subject (i.e. an entrepreneur) (Van de Ven & Poole 2005). Tsoukas and Chia (2002: 570) write about the “actors’ webs of beliefs and habits of action” that could lead to new experiences through interaction. Tsoukas and Chia (Ibid.) are writing about the actors’ webs of beliefs, meaning that these are the critical units. This assumes that the subject is located around the phenomenon. The challenge in applying this to the research on organisational entrepreneurship is that a human being (i.e. a researcher) needs to categorise who an entrepreneur is. This contradicts the principles that Gartner developed about 20 years ago.

In the title of the relevant paper, Gartner (1989) asks “Who is an entrepreneur?”, and replies that that is actually the wrong question. Even though Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) ideas about actors’ webs of beliefs and habits could sidetrack a researcher on organisational entrepreneurship (because they consider agents but not vehicles of organisational entrepreneurship, see the methodological discussion of entrepreneurial vehicles in chapter 3), they still consider the critical issue of becoming in terms of organisation theory, which is why their ideas are applied in this study.

Gartner’s (1989) argument is that entrepreneurship is a role taken by entrepreneurs in organisation creation activities. Being an entrepreneur is thus not a fixed state of existence (e.g. a bundle of personality traits and qualities), so we should study organisation creation rather than individuals (Ibid.). However, there is a need to reframe Gartner’s (1989) ideas. For example, Steyaert (2007) reminds us that the way in which the story around a subject is told and interpreted is
actually as important as the subject itself. This is how the subjectification of a subject becomes interesting. I call this the process of becoming. There is no eternal truth to what an entrepreneurial subject is, because entrepreneurship is full of stories of success (see Smith & Andersson 2004). Those stories construct how interpreters understand what ‘true’ entrepreneurship is (see Steyaert 2007b).

Regardless of the perspective on what entrepreneurship is or could be, the process of becoming-Other is located beneath the entrepreneurial process. When going back to the early phase of the process of entrepreneurship, we see that entrepreneurial subjectification is a kind of process of becoming (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2010). There is a desire to become something other than what an actor is right now (see Gartner 1993). In this project, I elaborate the issue of entrepreneurial becoming in a conceptual essay (chapter 8). This shows that the contexts of entrepreneurial action can be located everywhere, not only in economic processes. I then draw empirical conclusions using the ethnographically framed interview of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian in the fourth essay (chapter 9).

I found that becoming-Other is a process that creates a space for play and innovation. Conceptually, the space for play and innovation is a context in which the event of organisational entrepreneurship takes place. Within that space we find the many kinds of entrepreneurial interactions that the first and second essays discuss. The motivation behind these entrepreneurial interactions comes from the desire to become the Other, which the third and fourth essays consider. That desire drives people to organise things or, in Geertz’s (1988) terms, to build temples (i.e. socially constructed organisations). A business opportunity is also such a temple. Some (but not all) of those kinds of temples can be actualised as new businesses.

As I explain about neutral opportunities in the first essay (chapter 6), it seems that human life linked with every type of social interaction is a starting point for what we should be aware of when studying the event of organisational entrepreneurship. On this basis, I argue – as the second claim of knowledge – that:

*Entrepreneurial interactive elements create neutral opportunities. These neutral opportunities can be actualised as a human desire to become Other – other than what a person is right now. In that way, a passionate, playful, and innovative action can emerge as part of societies.*

As mentioned above, the process of becoming-entrepreneurial is based on the human desire to become Other. It is the very nature of human entrepreneurial life,
as we are always looking forward to becoming something other than that which we are now (see Gartner 1993). My investigation of the event of organisational entrepreneurship found that that phenomenon was strong. In terms of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, there is a change-process that makes novelty, movement and change possible at the level of society (see Hjorth 2003). This can be studied using social learning theory, for instance. However, the reason for the desires behind movement cannot be investigated in that way, here the approach of becoming is more useful and the research objects (i.e. units of analysis) must also be updated so that they are based on the processual (see Colebrook 2002).

5.2 Managerial implications and contributions

As a conceptual framework, the process of becoming-Other does not allow me to draw conclusions about business creation. Instead I argue that the people who we as researchers call or, more precisely, categorise as entrepreneurs can be examined from the perspective of lifestyles (see Hjorth et al. 2003). The main point here is not that a person interested in entrepreneurship should follow a certain path for creating business opportunities and acting on them. Rather, I suggest that there is a style of living that fosters actions that have a potential to be actualised as ventures. In this study, I found that this kind of lifestyle is what organisational creativity is about.

What, then, does it mean to approach entrepreneurship as an action? It means that social actions like those I empirically elaborate in the second essay of this dissertation (chapter 7) start from an interaction. Thus, everybody can be an organisational entrepreneur in the sense of actions. Rather than a bundle of personality traits or cognitive attributes (see Alvarez & Barney 2007), organisational entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial event that takes place as part of society. As a processual action, it is about creating social spaces for play and innovation: being in the correct place at the correct time with the correct people. As the discussion section of the fourth essay (i.e. the chapter 9) of this dissertation proposes, a person’s attempts to create networks (and therefore subjectify him/herself) produces an acting personification of a stand-up comedian. In that sense, the process of becoming is thus an important part of a person’s being (i.e. the subject) itself. The mind-related actions, from the perspective of becoming-Other, are other issues that could be regarded as a mental operation, which previous work has already broadly discussed in the name of individual-opportunity nexus (i.e. business opportunities).
On the grounds of the discussion above, I propose that academic teaching regarding entrepreneurship should be focused on actions that we want to see in society rather than only on business-related actions. Business-related actions are part of the story, but not the whole story. Actions like developing a knowledge of how to create, develop and manage an SME are important, but do not help us understand the fundamental nature of entrepreneurship. Sarasvathy (2001) suggested a crucial approach based on her ideas of effectuation. In the logic of effectuation, the starting point is understanding that a human being (e.g. an entrepreneur) begins from ideas of who he/she is and what and who he/she knows (i.e. his/her social network) (Sarasvathy 2001, Sarasvathy & Dew 2005).

The logic of effectuation is an excellent approach that upsets the idea of opportunity recognition and discovery as the ability to grasp a business opportunity from the market (see Sarasvathy 2001, Sarasvathy et al. 2003). The starting point of effectuation is to not find a knowledge gap in the existing market and then fill it with something one is linked with (i.e. an individual-opportunity nexus) (compare with Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Alvarez & Barney 2007). I agree with Sarasvathy (2001) in this sense, but in this project I found that the process of becoming-Other is actually more important than just acknowledging what is going on now (to know who I am, what I know and who I know) related to market demand.

In practice, the process of becoming-Other (e.g. an entrepreneur) means that a person or personality-related issues in general are not crucial issues for the event of organisational entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial event itself is the point. Human life and its social processes, as I discuss in the fourth essay, are not located only within the category of entrepreneurship. Human life also exists outside of that business-related category. There are many issues in human life that we should consider when trying to foster organisational entrepreneurship (see Webb et al. 2009). Life that is linked with and categorised as the process of becoming-Other belongs not only to businesses, but also to the society (Hjorth et al. 2008). Therefore, entrepreneurs are those who go out rather than stay at home: they meet people, discuss and create networks in spaces that are non-entrepreneurial in the strict meaning of that term.

Working on this project has suggested to me that the playful and innovative parts of human life increase the chances of creating by-products like new ventures and the internationalisation of SMEs. This type of action is based on the desire to become something other than what a person, working with others as an organisation, is right now. The play element is similar to what children do when
they play collectively. In terms of work and business life, this play is reproduced as a form of novelty, movement and change as part of post-industrial societies. For instance, the Finnish comedy firm assigning people nicknames was a social action that created an opportunity for the business. The entrepreneurs not only renamed themselves Ceausescu, Gods, of the Finnish stand-up comedy world, but also nicknamed me wise man.

The action of renaming was one of the social drives that the entrepreneurs of the stand-up comedy firm used to create new energy around their business. This shows that there is a need to be playful and innovative in work, just as artists are – that is, it is important to create something that does not already exist. There are also potentials for actualising new things with this type of name-giving action. For instance, the two stand-up entrepreneurs talked about the drives in which they discussed their business. In that way, they prepared an entrepreneurial event that was eventually actualised as a new business organisation.

The stories that they told about themselves (e.g. “I have told you about this, right,” “we are Ceausescu of the Finnish stand-up comedy”) created a shared social object of what they are (two people affirming several beliefs) in order to build up trust and allow them to create novel things together. This can also be understood as a vision that they were talking about (“we will gather so many people that we can organise two clubs per night within two years”, “this is going to be a cultural thing”, etc.). Their discussions reflect the knowledge claims used to co-create and construct novelty, movement and change – a scientific philosophical approach based on social constructivism.

Previous work has pointed out that social networks – and especially weak ties in those networks – matter in entrepreneurship (Granovetter 1973, Burt 1992). Entrepreneurship is not only located in place X, but is constructed through the social interaction both in AND between those spaces. This is the basis of the term “in-between space” that is discussed in the current literature on organisational entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2004a, Hjorth 2005). For example, novelty-creating vehicles (the apparatus of innovations, the car in which early discussions about the comedy firm were held, for instance) provide possibilities for spaces for play and innovation. Renaming things, telling stories of what something could be about in the future and creating visions of that desirable state of affairs can make this happen. Some of these types of action can be actualised as new firms, for instance. On this basis, I form my third knowledge claim:
Organisational entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial event in which something is done because it matters to human life. Renaming things, telling stories about what an action can hopefully achieve and creating visions of a desirable future can prepare the way for such an entrepreneurial event.

As I discuss in the third and fourth essays (chapters 8 and 9), entrepreneurial space-creation activities are parts of the process of becoming-entrepreneurial. In this way, the event of organisational entrepreneurship happens (as a social interaction) in contexts where it might not usually be expected. For example, the second essay (chapter 7) discusses how an atypical phase in the life of one of the actors in the collaborative project made him ready to actualise his organisational-creative potential in the form of a new international business opportunity. This led him to create a firm and finally construct a collaborative project developing software that is used in hospitals all over the world. In the sense of managerial entrepreneurship (how to create business-related issues), entrepreneurial illustration (the internationalisation of SMEs illustrated in the second essay) is a by-product of entrepreneurial action.

Becoming entrepreneurial is, I think, the main issue that future researchers should think about (see Steyaert 2007a). Investigating the becoming-processes makes it possible to see the organisational-creative potential of human life. The key issue is to start with an assumption that entrepreneurship is not a phenomenon that is only framed around business-related places (see Hjorth 2005). In contrast, entrepreneurship should be seen as an organisational issue inside all post-industrial (business) organisations. The phenomenon is located in many separate spaces simultaneously (Webb et al. 2009). Similarly to human life itself, entrepreneurship consists of many issues that exist at the same time. Those kinds of issues, which are not usually categorised as entrepreneurial, show alternative forms of organisational entrepreneurship as a part of the post-industrial age.

Methodologically, the narrative/storytelling approach is useful for investigating the event of organisational entrepreneurship (see Czarniawska-Joerges 1995). It reveals that entrepreneurial events are those in which entrepreneurial-becomers (e.g. an up-and-coming stand-up comedian who is also an up-and-coming entrepreneur) act in a playful and innovative way. The question here is not how the process should be managed, there is no such a thing as a managerial agent in post-industrial entrepreneurship. There is an idea of control behind the management of industrial organisations that is not relevant to post-
industrial organisations. Organisational entrepreneurship can be discussed in the context of post-industrialism instead.

One implication of this kind of discussion is that entrepreneurial events open up a way to create new innovations. Those kinds of innovations might also be something that can be bought and sold. The social processes involved in creating such innovations are similar to children’s play. Renaming things, telling stories about what a social action might hopefully achieve and creating visions of a desirable future are examples of how organisational entrepreneurs can foster entrepreneurial events. This is about organisational creativity.

5.3 Summary of the implications/contributions

Everything mentioned in the previous chapters can be seen as parts of every single social phenomenon. Therefore the event of organisational entrepreneurship can be seen as a phenomenon in societies (see Hjorth et al. 2008). My argument is that entrepreneurship, from the perspective of organisation theory, is a question of how people learn in a social way and how they become something other than what they are right now. In the current chapter, I go through this argument step-by-step.

As Hjorth (2005) states, organisational entrepreneurship is a tactical art of creating a space for play and innovation. It seems that there is an element of novelty, movement and change in the processes that Hjorth (2004a), Steyaert and Katz (2004), Hjorth (2005), and Rindova et al. (2009) isolate within entrepreneurship. As chapter 2 proposes, the traditional view of entrepreneurship begins from the idea of businesses that drive actions and processes of entrepreneurship. However, my findings suggest that this is only one story of what organisational entrepreneurship can be. It can also be an entrepreneurial event. The European School of Entrepreneurship fosters that idea. Previous work has not clearly elaborated how the creation of new businesses (through business opportunities) happens in societies as a tactical art of contextual becoming-Other (the scope of this study, see Figure 2).

Table 1 is a response to the lack of the literature examining the event of organisational entrepreneurship from the perspective of the intersection between the research problems/sub-disciplines of business opportunities and contextual becoming (see Figure 2). Table 1 shows that there is, on one hand, a need to understand how business opportunities are created in certain types of contexts. In this study, the context was the collaborative project of two firms. On the other
hand, such a context is also a social construct, as there is no such a thing as software without the co-creation and construction of the actions related to it. In this case, the action is the treatment and investigation of brain stroke. This contradicts the prior work on entrepreneurship where the unit of analysis has generally been an individual entrepreneur and/or firm (e.g. SME). The second essay’s (chapter 7) theoretical application of social learning theory (the expansive cycle of learning actions outlined by Engeström 2001) problematises this.

Going further, the processual context of that type of creation is about contextual and creative becoming. This is an empirical argument made in the fourth essay (see Table 1). Becoming is a concept that philosophers like Deleuze and Foucault discuss. In this project, becoming has been analysed through an organisation theory approach (e.g. Tsoukas & Chia 2002). This reveals shortcomings in current work on entrepreneurship, because the process has largely been discussed without an awareness of process. There is a tendency to see the phases, or stable states, of the process of entrepreneurship but the main point is more connected to the expansive nature of such a process. In that way, the process repeatedly re constructs and deconstructs itself. That is why I suggest that future scholars could unearth interesting insights by going through the concepts (e.g. becoming) in a more detailed way than has been done here.

Table 1. Summary of implications of this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual finding</th>
<th>Empirical illustration</th>
<th>Example of use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A business opportunity is a social by-product of collective learning in a certain context</td>
<td>A business opportunity for the software emerged from the desire to create a better and more meaningful life, as business opportunity is a shared object/construct</td>
<td>If you are willing to create a business opportunity, you should put yourself in a group of people that has the potential to share a vision of the future and learn in that way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial passion is a human desire that can be actualised through becoming the Other</td>
<td>An up-and-coming standup comedian had a desire to become a funny person that led to the social potential to actualise what he wanted to be(come)</td>
<td>To actualise the shared future, it is crucial to have a dream – as ambitious as possible – and pursue it, no matter what happens in the specific contextual event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship is something enacted in an entrepreneurial unexpected event as part of society</td>
<td>Certain contexts of the creation of a space for play and innovation do not happen in a vacuum, but due to personal desires and their actualisation</td>
<td>The way to a better future is located in an entrepreneurial event that can be prepared by actions that lead towards the processes of becoming-Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows that the question about the creation mechanisms of new businesses is actually wrong. From the perspective of organisation theory applied in this project, there is no such thing as a creation mechanism that already exists ‘out there’ (compare with Fleetwood 2005). For instance, Bhaskar (1998) suggests that there are generative mechanisms behind the human-made processes of life. This research shows that whether there are generative mechanisms or not, the key issue is to actualise the desires that are located inside everybody. This type of research reveals that the possible generative mechanisms, whether they exist or not, are secondary, the point is to head towards a better life.

The first row in Table 1 shows that a business opportunity is based on human action. The application of social learning theory (the expansive cycle of social learning proposed by Engeström 2001) is valuable for understanding how the shared objects of human life (that business opportunities are part of) frame how people work in different contexts. The story of social learning was crucial for my investigation of the software that makes it easier for doctors to treat and investigate brain stroke academically. Academic discourses of international business opportunities have not effectively explicated this. Therefore, the second essay (chapter 7) not only problematises the central role of internationalisation of SMEs as a unit of analysis of academic studies, but also recalls what Schumpeter (1934) wrote about economic development.

Schumpeter (1934) argues that when analysing economic development, we should also understand entrepreneurship as a force combining pre-existing resources. The implications of this project differ in the sense that Schumpeter assumes the relevant resources already exist ‘out there’. In contrast, I am interested in how those resources (e.g. a SME or an entrepreneur) come to be and become (compare with Sarasvathy 1997, 2001). From the perspective of the event of organisational entrepreneurship, Schumpeter (1934) was right in the sense that we should understand entrepreneurship as a driving force behind economies. However this is not the whole story. The findings of this project suggest, instead, that the resources are created while organisational entrepreneurship takes place. I have examined this idea empirically as well as conceptually (see Table 1).

In contrast to Schumpeter (Ibid.), Kirzner (1973, 1997) argues that a business opportunity already exists and that an actor (i.e. an entrepreneur) must be capable of finding it in order to shift an economy towards equilibrium. In that sense, a business opportunity is a kind of innovation and/or invention. Schumpeter (1934), on the other hand, argues that an entrepreneur is a visionary who is creating a state of disequilibrium in the economy. In addition, his definition of an
entrepreneur is notably different: for him an entrepreneur is a person who creates new combinations of pre-existing resources. The implications of this project are located somewhere between these two, but without having an interest in the individual entrepreneur.

In this dissertation, the process of creating and developing a business opportunity (the first and second essays, chapters 6 and 7) is understood as a disruption of the reigning order and the creation of new spaces for a kind of Kirznerian invention or innovation. The third and fourth essays (chapters 8 and 9) consider processual and contextual becoming in the sense that Schumpeter (Ibid.) uses it. The philosophical idea of becoming is framed around connections between objects and/or subjects, in a similar way to how Schumpeter writes about creating combinations of already-existing resources. As an example, Colebrook (2002) writes about bicycles: a bicycle and the human riding it cannot move separately. Rather, it is the connection between human and bicycle (i.e. the Deleuzian machine) that is interesting, like Schumpeter’s (1934) idea of creating a combination of existing resources. Accordingly, I consider the concepts of play and innovation in both the Kirznerian (1997) and Schumpeterian (1934) senses.

The twofold nature of this project fosters the idea of having two empirical data sets. Organisational entrepreneurship allows for a critique of both Schumpeter (1934) and Kirzner (1973), who originated the idea of investigating individual entrepreneurs and firms (e.g. Busenitz & Barney 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003, Baron 2008). In contrast, I argue that the main point of post-industrial entrepreneurship is that organisational entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial event. More precisely, an entrepreneurial event is a social matter, which is why studies of individuals do not adequately describe the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship (see Figure 2).

Let us consider Facebook, for instance. The business is based on one person’s idea, but it is now organised in a social way. It is the users who actually create what it is about. In that sense, it is not worth investigating the creator of the idea (i.e. a Kirznerian innovator or Schumpeterian combiner of resources), we must look at the entrepreneurial actions and processes around that idea instead. In other words, entrepreneurial actions and processes show that what disrupting the reigning order and creation of new spaces for play and innovation (e.g. Facebook) can do. The current study follows that lead. Its implications show that a desire can be ignited by striving for a better life. In practise, this means that opportunities for businesses are actually located in everyday practices rather than out there,
somewhere without human imagination. The first essay (chapter 6) suggests that this type of opportunity is necessarily ‘neutral’.

The issue of a ‘better life’ is complicated. Can anyone really define what a better life is about? I doubt it. This is why we must reconceptualise what a better life means for us as readers and as writers. The collaborative project that I investigate in this dissertation was a shared attempt by the entrepreneurs of two firms to make meaningful things in their lives. It is a story of how to become a better person – a person who can do relevant things in his or her life. In that sense, it is a question of courage and of aiming for things that matter. It does not matter what these things are, organisational entrepreneurship as a research phenomenon suggests that the feeling of entrepreneurial passion is a driver that everybody should follow. Some things – such as a better life – are worth striving for, not only because they might make life nicer, but also because they can open up a possibility of making money in that way.

Hence, neutrality in terms of business opportunities means that actions related to the desire to create a better life are what matter most for entrepreneurship in the post-industrial era. Entrepreneurial actions are actualisations of entrepreneurial desires to become something other than what a person is. During my fieldwork in the stand-up comedy firm in Oulu, Finland, I found that a human being as a social animal (e.g. an entrepreneur) has a need to be playful and innovative. The entrepreneurs in question experienced a drive to rename people, including themselves, to tell stories of themselves and to build up visions of how things progress. This is similar to what children do when they play – renaming toys, telling stories about them and their personal relations to them and co-creating what could happen for them.

Play is not only part of children’s lives but can be understood as parts of the lives of adults as well. Maybe this can help us better understand how innovations are built up too. In the first empirical part of the project, this happened through international opportunity creation. The stories of the entrepreneurs who built up their businesses and developed the software together reveal that *ennui*, for instance, can provide the spark for entrepreneurial actions and innovations. In that sense, being bored at the start of the process of entrepreneurship is actually the beginning of becoming-Other and means that renewal and change can happen. This is also how innovations can be analysed in the research on entrepreneurship. The word ‘innovation’ comes from the Latin *innovates*, the noun form of *innovare*, meaning ‘to renew or change’. This shows that the concept of renewal and change is built from *in* – into’ and *novus* – ‘new’. Innovations are the by-
products of entrepreneurial actions related to play. These types of actions occur in entrepreneurial events.

Another finding of the current research is that entrepreneurial passion is byproduct of the first finding that organisational entrepreneurship may be considered social learning. The nature of entrepreneurial passion is to try and achieve something, even though there may be obstacles on the way. In the second empirical part of this project, the organisational entrepreneur or stand-up comedian had only one relevant desire: to become a funnier person. This reflects becoming. In its pure empirical form, the desire was an attempt at individual becoming, but this project shows that there is something else at stake here: organisational becoming is the key thing when a person is willing to become the Other. In the fourth essay, I juxtapose entrepreneurial passion and dancing the tango. Earlier work on entrepreneurship has shown that entrepreneurship is more like going out and meeting people than like staying at home and waiting for something to happen (see Gartner 1993). The second implication of this dissertation is to provide support for that idea.

The idea of becoming-Other has been thoroughly discussed in the field of philosophy, but entrepreneurship researchers have neglected the idea of organisational becoming. The fourth essay of this dissertation (chapter 9) proposes that even though there is an element of individual becoming in entrepreneurial actions and processes, there is still a space for studies that start from a philosophical perspective on organisational becoming. As the up-and-coming stand-up comedian explained to me, people always exhibit a desire to become something different: a funnier person, in his case, a part of the Finnish stand-up community and business sector. It does not make much sense to talk and write about beings per se. It is more useful to consider how people affect and influence each other as part of a social group, and become Other in that way. At the practical level, it is critical to create a context where this can happen. It is a social space for play and innovation.

It is easy to appreciate that the life of an up-and-coming stand-up comedian is full of obstacles. Firstly, getting the opportunity to get on stage for the first time is difficult and especially to be paid due to that. Thus, the individual becoming is also about organisational becoming. The only way to become famous in the field of stand-up comedy is to perform shows and earn money from them. Organisational becoming is thus always going to be a part of society (in this case, the society of Finnish stand-up comedy). Secondly, even though the comedian’s desire to become a funnier person is based on getting a better life – it must be fun
to be a funny person, otherwise that desire would not make any sense – the context is not the attempt to become rich that is usually assumed in the literature on entrepreneurship. Thirdly, and as the first and third essays suggest (chapters 6 and 8), the spatial-temporal contexts become relevant when a person – as a part of a social group – tries to actualise his or her desires to do and/or create a business through business opportunities.

A contextual understanding of entrepreneurship is currently lacking (see Hjorth et al. 2008). Thus, the third implication of this dissertation relates to a certain type of context. As Table 1 shows, the third implication suggests that it is in the nature of organisational entrepreneurship to do things for their own sake. Along similar lines, this possibility is a social construction in a similar way that a market economy is. In practical terms, this means that we should be concerned about opportunities (e.g. new initiatives inside or outside of a SME) when ‘doing organisational entrepreneurship’. In this sense, organisational entrepreneurship is about heading towards things and therefore becoming an Other, not about staying at home as a stable being. Previous work touches on this, but my study opens up a discussion of how these issues can be elaborated on further through storytelling/narratives. I found that renaming things, telling stories about what an action might achieve and creating visions of a desirable future are practical ways of becoming Other.

As the first and third essays (chapters 6 and 8) argue, contextual understandings of entrepreneurship are needed. The first essay shows the place for work in activity theory – related to social learning – in entrepreneurship (see Engeström 1987, 2001). Moreover, the essays also show that contextuality is a social construct, as the idea of contexts is based on social constructivism (see also Gergen 2001). I use this to analyse the movie From Dusk Till Dawn from the perspective of entrepreneurial contexts in the third essay (chapter 8). That essay shows that the criminals’ entrepreneurial actions are creative in the sense that they have a vision that they must update along the way. Hence, it seems that organisational entrepreneurship as a phenomenon is not only part of society, but also illustrates how creative organisations work. Some neutral opportunities (see above) can be actualised as new businesses, for example. This involves a belief in the visionary elements of human life which can also be understood through play.

It is easy to see how children create an imaginary vision of what can happen to them and/or to the toys that they play with. The same happens with the criminals in From Dusk Till Dawn. They created a shared vision of becoming rich and tried to realise that vision, but, due to unexpected events along the way, they
needed to update that vision to better match the reality they found themselves in. The same happens with entrepreneurship. Sometimes people have a vision (of becoming rich, for instance) and they may start to realise that vision through entrepreneurial actions. But once the process has started, it is critical to avoid thinking about whether one has succeeded or not. This is because there is no such a thing as a fixed vision. Visions should always be updated, this is why precise business plans can actually cause us to get sidetracked in terms of opportunity creation (see Alvarez & Barney 2007). A better idea is to follow and update the shared vision along the way (see Table 1).

All the implications in Table 1 are based on the conceptual and empirical reasoning of this project. As a methodological suggestion, I follow the direction that the European School of Entrepreneurship has called for (see Hjorth & Steyaert 2004). For those interested in the actions and processes of organisational entrepreneurship, genealogic storytelling and narrative approaches offer a useful methodology for analysing what is going on practically and conceptually in the lives of organisational entrepreneurs. This leads to the possibility that almost everybody can become an organisational entrepreneur. This suggestion problematises the research on entrepreneurial traits/personality qualities and studies of firms, making it impossible to generalise and validate the findings of those studies in a quantitative way (see Eisenhardt 1989, Yin 1994). The reason is that the interpretation that a researcher makes is not intended to suggest likelihoods of success in terms of new businesses, for example. In contrast, this type of research reveals the nature of entrepreneurial actions and processes in certain contexts that might help future researchers and practitioners to better understand how those phenomena can happen (whether likely or not, they are possible) and how to investigate and/or actualise them.

My findings can also be problematised. One can say that, because I am not generalising and/validating the research findings, this study offers everything of nothing. However, an understanding of the everyday practices that may open up and create spaces for play and innovation is definitely needed in the post-industrial economy, in which almost everybody is asked to be creative and innovative. This, as a counter-movement to its industrial counterpart, illustrates that research methods and practices should follow the nature of the phenomenon that we are interested in. If we are willing to make sense of the practical processes of entrepreneurial becoming, for instance, why not get close to that empirical process and see what is happening as it occurs practically in the everyday lives of
people affecting the field? This could be framed as a case study or ethnography, for instance.

This is not only part of the work that we as academic researchers are doing, but it is also a part of the findings of earlier work suggesting that organisational entrepreneurs are “all around us” (see Rindova et al. 2009: 490). In addition, the creation of spaces for play and innovation is based on the movement and change that previous work discusses only minimally. Storytelling is a valid way to approach something that is all around us and that is obviously a social construct in a similar way to business organisations as parts of societies. The need to generalise and/or validate is not a major difference between those studies that can do it and those cannot (see Gartner 2010), academic work itself is a construct, and shared understanding of its principles could lead us to a better understanding of all sorts of phenomena.

On the grounds of the discussion above, I suggest that future researchers of organisational entrepreneurship could utilise the potential of organisation-creative contributions. This is not about insisting that everybody should become an entrepreneur in an economic/business sense, because the organisational version of entrepreneurship definitely shows that this is not the case. Not all creative and innovative initiatives are actualised, but some of them are. I am certain that research on entrepreneurship could help academics and practitioners to actualise all types of organisational-creative potentials, which is indeed a target of entrepreneurship.

5.4 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations of this study. I argue that entrepreneurship is an organisational issue. Therefore, the implications summarised above discuss what an organisational-creative action is in the post-industrial age, in which everybody can be an organisational entrepreneur in its broadest sense. Fletcher (2006) writes about a would-be entrepreneur who was walking down the street when an idea came into his mind. This was the first step on the road of entrepreneurship. In this dissertation I argue that, in fact, this idea was not the first step. From the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship, the starting point was an action that the person performed when creating a social potential for actualising his or her desires as a form of new business organisation. That happens as a social interaction, before a person finds inspiration inside themself. Some of those interactions lead to opportunities to realise a new business, for instance.
The perspective of organisational entrepreneurship both narrows and broadens our view of entrepreneurship. On the one hand, defining entrepreneurship as an organisational phenomenon neglects the option of seeing what happens outside of the constructs that absorb me in this dissertation (i.e. business opportunities, social interactions, entrepreneurial processes, spaces for play and innovation, etc.). It would be interesting to explore this further and investigate how different constructs influence different institutions at the level of societies. More precisely, the question is how do socially created institutions (marriage, illegal business-based actions or religions, for example) work and affect organisational entrepreneurship, and vice versa, at the level of societies?

On the other hand, the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship makes entrepreneurship broader than the key issue. The psychological aspects of human life have inspired previous work on entrepreneurship (see Busenitz & Barney 1997, Gaglio & Katz 2001), although personality-based issues are often neglected in work on organisational entrepreneurship, which investigates the processes of movement, change and becoming rather than the entrepreneur as a subject. However, it is obvious that the acting researcher (myself in this dissertation) affects the conclusions.

Because an acting researcher (myself) is part of the phenomenon in a study like this (see Spector-Mersel 2010), the nature of that researcher should be explained more extensively than I have done in this dissertation. I did not analyse myself as an acting body in the field because it was more important here to analyse how the subjectification of a subject (i.e. an actor within the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship) took place through the stories that I gathered. My body was a kind of vehicle that made it possible to get access to the relevant material that was approached from the emic perspective in this project (see Geertz 1988). According to the methodological literature, the emic perspective is about seeing issues of interest from the view of the Other (see Geertz 1988, Van Maanen 1988).

From the emic perspective, there are outstanding strengths in the empirical side of the phenomenon. There is an urgent need to get updated information on entrepreneurship, as the world is changing fast (Johannisson 2007). Using survey-based databases (e.g. the quantitative GEM or PSED datasets) means that we are actually investigating the past. Finding out what is happening right now makes it possible to make sense of current issues of entrepreneurship (such as lifestyle issues). However there is then a danger that a researcher may draw conclusions that are not clearly linked to current challenges. In this case, the researcher must
find out what is currently important in post-industrial (business) organisations. Sometimes this is not an easy task. In this study, based on retrospective stories of events that have already happened, this was a problem that genealogic storytelling could not solve.

5.5 Potential directions for future research

As Rindova *et al.* (2009) argue, entrepreneurship can be seen as emancipation. This means that we should approach entrepreneurial issues (actions, processes, etc.) as phenomena “all around us” (Ibid.: 490). On this basis, it seems that human life should be the focus of research. Then we are looking at a methodological issue as well as a question of the approach. In order to draw novel conclusions about entrepreneurship being “all around us”, we need to conduct research in a way that investigates what entrepreneurship could be (see Hjorth 2004b). The issue of interest should be to develop an understanding of the multiple natures of the phenomenon that we call entrepreneurship (see Webb *et al.* 2009).

In this section, I propose some possible research directions that I encountered in this project but could not investigate (see the limitations of this study outlined in the previous chapter). As I wrote in chapter 1, entrepreneurship can come about in many different ways, not only as business-related actions or processes (e.g. the creation of SMEs). We need to reconsider (and rewrite) what entrepreneurship means in current society, not only from the perspective of businesses but also from the perspective of people who create entrepreneurial constructs – whatever they are. Those constructs are socially shared ideas about what entrepreneurship is or, more precisely, what we register as entrepreneurship (see Hjorth *et al.* 2008).

When taking the direction that I propose above, a study should problematise distance, objectivity, predictability and control (Hjorth *et al.* 2008). I argue that this could be done in a study that starts from an open assumption about the nature of entrepreneurship. If we (pre-)categorise entrepreneurship or entrepreneurs as something that is acknowledged up to the present time and/or before us (e.g. the creation of businesses or firms), it becomes obvious that we sacrifice the possibility of seeing new ways of doing things (e.g. the creation of value). Economic value creation in particular is an important feature of the scientific concept of entrepreneurship (Ireland *et al.* 2003, Ketchen *et al.* 2007). Thus, it could be useful to avoid categorising entrepreneurial constructs *ex ante*, and to do it *ex post* instead. Perhaps this would make it easier to understand the concept of value, for instance.
For example, inductive-based empirical research could respond to the need to see entrepreneurship as something that is becoming rather than already existing (see the discussion in the third and fourth essays, chapters 8 and 9). After the Industrial Revolution there was an urgent need to separate the individual from the work in order to increase productivity. However, principles of working life have changed in post-industrial economies. An increasing number of people are living in cities all over the world, and a new type of (urban) lifestyle is constantly encroaching (see Hjorth *et al.* 2003). To understand this “new entrepreneurship”, we must understand value creation in its broad meaning. For instance, we could try to explicate what kinds of unregistered forms entrepreneurship could have as a part of economies and societies, and how whose forms influence on the business-related understandings of entrepreneurship.

Theories of value fall into two categories. Value can refer to a larger number of things being more valuable than a smaller number of the same things (a quantitative description). Alternatively, value can be seen as a subjective experience that satisfies human wants and needs (a qualitative description). The current literature on entrepreneurship, which is concerned with economic value creation, addresses the quantitative version of the concept of value. Our construct of valuable issues (e.g. an assumption that economic growth is ‘good’) is based on a narrow-minded idea of what good and/or bad is. As Nietzsche (1990) writes about good and evil, there is no eternal truth of what good and evil are. Rather, the human co-creates ideas about what good and evil are. The same applies here: by categorising valuable constructs or subject matter, we lose the ability to see what else could be important and valuable in human life at the level of society.

In the course of this doctoral project, I found that many issues that are categorised as socially ‘bad’ (e.g. lying, spying, committing a crime, etc.) happen within organisational entrepreneurship (see the third essay, chapter 8). If we then frame the ‘bad’ issues outside entrepreneurship, we cannot see the whole range of organisation-creative potential that could be linked with the phenomenon of entrepreneurship (Smith & Anderson 2004). To date, it has been found that many elements underlie the usual constructs of entrepreneurship (e.g. neutral opportunities, social interaction, illegal actions, etc.) (Görling & Rehn 2008, Webb *et al.* 2009, Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). This is not to say that those types of actions should be encouraged. In contrast, I argue that by analysing those events and, especially, the contexts where they take place, we can better understand how human interactions happen and how these types of actions can
foster other processes, for example the creation of new businesses or value in its
largest meaning.

On the grounds of the discussion above, I call for future researchers to see the
whole range of entrepreneurship, whatever it is or could be. I remind people who
are doing this to be aware of the social constructs that post-industrial people filled
with. For example, the assumption that ‘economic growth is good’ is dangerous,
because humans are actually quite lazy. Thus, the assumption of ‘good growth’
goes against the nature of human beings who hunt to eat and are willing to do as
little as possible. It could be interesting to investigate what ‘being busy’, ‘being
active’ and ‘being productive’ actually mean in terms of post-industrial
entrepreneurship. As Hjorth (2004b) suggests, the effect of the Industrial
Revolution was enormous and still impacts on post-industrial societies and
economies.

In addition, the issue of vehicles as units of analysis could help to make sense
of entrepreneurial actions in the name of organisational entrepreneurship. As
discussed above, entrepreneurial agents (e.g. entrepreneurs and firms) have been
investigated, but vehicles and social machines (e.g. the apparatus of
production/innovation) could be analysed further. Ideas of becoming-Other would
be useful in doing so. For instance, a study could try to make sense of how the
social vehicle known as groupwork operates.

To sum up, possible research questions could cover the followings topics: (1)
why does quantity matter more than quality in terms of value creation in current
societies, (2) what types of agents (of production and/or innovation) can be found
underlying the post-industrial economy, (3) what are the outcomes and by-
products of the process of becoming-entrepreneurial, and (4) how do social
vehicles work in the creative processes of becoming-Other in terms of the event
of organisational entrepreneurship? As I wrote in the opening section of this
dissertation, and as I elaborate upon in the essays, I found that organisational
entrepreneurship constructs not only registered and business-based forms of
entrepreneurship (e.g. business opportunities, internationalisation), but also the
processual becoming that is a larger issue than the business-based understanding
of human life. We need to see what is happening beyond these acknowledged
forms that have been called and categorised entrepreneurship (or even parts of
entrepreneurship) since the Industrial Revolution. The reason for doing this is that
those constructs are relatively new (just as homo sapiens are quite novel within
the larger history of cosmos). Thus, we need to be more aware of the social
mechanisms and especially the possible limitations of these forms when doing
research that tries to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of the event of organisational entrepreneurship.
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Creating business opportunities: an organisational and social constructive phenomenon in the creation of new businesses

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Abstract

This conceptual essay approaches the process of creating new businesses from the perspective of organisational creativity and imagination in the process of creating business opportunities. Currently, organisational creativity and imagination have been linked to the creative view or creation theory in the business opportunity field of research. I argue that the application of social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity) describes an early phase of the creation of new businesses. From the perspective of the structure of human activity, entrepreneurs create new unknown effects from given means or tools (i.e. the logic of effectuation) in the creative space, called in-between. In this manner, the creative space, including subject, object and community (i.e. neutral opportunities), is empty at the beginning of the process of creating business opportunity and it is completed by elements of the business environment (i.e. intention-driven business opportunities), such as rules, tools, signs and division of labour.

Keywords: creative view, creative space, logic of effectuation, neutral opportunities, intention-driven entrepreneurial opportunities, structure of human activity.
1 Introduction

The creation of business opportunities as a research phenomenon seems to be a considerable and continually developing research stream when understanding entrepreneurship (see e.g. Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataraman 2004, Chiles, Bluedorn & Gupta 2006, Companys & McMullen 2007). Research is most often approached from the perspective of the allocative, discovery or creative view (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataraman 2003). Additionally, the more precise identification and development of business opportunities has been the focus of the current research (Ardichvili, Cardozo & Ray 2003). The above perspectives differ significantly from each other in the theoretical premises of entrepreneurship, and especially in the ontological stance of business opportunities (Sarasvathy et al. 2003, Companys & McMullen 2007). Most of the research bases the phenomenon on objectivistic ontological foundations and overwhelmingly adopts variance-based methods to explain and predict the recognition or discovery of a business opportunity.

The present study problematises the previous studies, which see business opportunities as objectively defined phenomena (see Schumpeter 1934, Kirzner 1973, 1997, Eckhardt & Shane 2003, Shane 2003). These studies approach the phenomenon without seeing the need to acknowledge human awareness and the social constructive nature of creating business opportunity. I argue that variance-based research on the process does not take into account the fact that human events in the social world are embedded in cultural and historical contexts, in which events do not invariably follow a determined and recurrent pattern (Bhaskar 1998, Hedström & Swedberg 1998). It could be argued that although the business opportunity process has been widely acknowledged as being central in entrepreneurship (Davidsson 2003), only a few studies explicitly conceptually develop the process from the creative point of view and build upon the theoretical framework (see the extensive review by Alvarez & Barney 2007).

In doing so, the activity-theoretical approach proposed by Engeström (1987, 2001) is a social constructivist starting point (see Berger & Luckmann 1966). The reason is that the application of social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity) is coming from the actor-network theory (ANT), which has its roots in the ideas of actions in human life. In this essay, it is assumed that organisational creativity fosters the kinds of social actions that entrepreneurs, for example, do when creating business opportunities. In addition, the idea of learning is typical in
the field of entrepreneurship (Alvarez & Barney 2007). Consequently, it seems to be that the structure of human action is a contextual whole that research on creating business opportunity could employ when trying to study entrepreneurial actions. This is discussed in this essay.

Following the above reasoning, this conceptual study strives to build a more subjective theoretical framework for the phenomenon. This is grounded in the organisational approach (e.g. Hjorth 2004, 2005) and the social constructive approach (e.g. Fletcher 2007, Holt 2008, Sarasvathy 2001) on entrepreneurship (see also Weick 1979, 1995). This equates to how Engeström (1987) applies social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity). The structure of human activity supports the organisational issues surrounding the creation of business opportunity. This helps us to elaborate upon the creative parts of that process by better understanding the actions related to the business opportunities. This essay explores the process of creating business opportunity from the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship (see Sarasvathy 2001, Hjorth 2003, Gartner, Carter & Hills 2003, Steyaert & Hjorth 2003). Most of the previous research has put more emphasis on the micro aspects (e.g. individual traits, motivation to start a business and recognising an opportunity) and macro aspects (e.g. the foundation of a firm, and the evolution of industries and venture capital markets) of the phenomenon (Hjorth 2004). Consequently, entrepreneurship as a cultural-historical embedded creative activity has stayed in the background (Engeström 2001, Steyaert & Hjorth 2003, Holt 2008).

The central concept of this study is business opportunity. This ontologically controversial concept (see Alvarez & Barney 2007) also defines the research gap in this study. Neoclassical economics sees the whole concept of entrepreneurship, and therefore the process of creating business opportunity, as an allocation problem (the allocative view), while business opportunities are understood to be objective phenomena (e.g. Marshall 1920, Hayek 1945). The second perspective – discovery view or discovery theory – is headed by Schumpeter (1934) and Kirzner (1973, 1997). This type of research provides evidence for the argument that business opportunities exist objectively, human awareness of these opportunities is not necessary.

In the present study I adopt the third approach: the creative view or creative theory (see Alvarez & Barney 2007, Holt 2008). Supporters of the creative view argue that neoclassical and Austrian schools have failed to show that business opportunities exist objectively, instead they are waiting to be recognised or discovered before being created (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003). This does not only
problematise the objective nature of the process of creating business opportunity, but also the role of the entrepreneur in that process. It seems that an entrepreneur is not the crucial element. In contrast, the issue is to understand how the creation of business opportunities takes place through human action. In this essay, I argue that actions matter most in creating business opportunity. In that sense, almost everybody has a potential to become a creator. Earlier work categorises that type of person as an entrepreneur.

The purpose of this essay is to increase theoretical understanding of the process from the creative point of view. To reach this goal, I propose the following research question: What is the nature of the business opportunity creation process, assuming it to be linked with entrepreneurial actions? I follow the scientific philosophical principles of social constructivism in this essay (see Berger & Luckmann 1966). The main emphasis in this essay is to develop an understanding in what happens in a cultural-historical activity system when business opportunities as behavioural objects are fostered by organisational creativity (see Hjorth 2004, 2005) and imagination (see Sarasvathy 2001). The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the cultural-historical activity theory on human activity put forward by Engeström (1987). It is suggested that the contribution of this study is the integrated and subjective conceptualisation of the process of creating new businesses. It helps to see how organisational creativity fosters the event of organisational entrepreneurship. The findings of this essay suggest that an entrepreneurial event is a set of social learning actions that can be studied through storytelling.

In this essay, Engeström’s cultural-historical activity theory (e.g. 1987, 2001) and the literature on the entrepreneurial opportunity process – consisting of the allocative view, the discovery view and the creative view – are discussed next (Section 2). After that, cultural-historical activity theory is discussed in detail. It is divided into two parts to facilitate the analysis of the business opportunity process (Section 3). The first part includes subject, object and community, while the second comprises rules, tools, signs and division of labour. The process as a cultural-historical creative activity is then elaborated upon (Section 4). This essay concludes by proposing the theoretical and managerial implications and possible directions for future research (Section 5). The concluding remarks are presented at the end of this essay (Section 5).
2 The conceptual approaches to business opportunities

Studies on organisations, including on entrepreneurship, are facing a paradigm shift, moving the research towards cultural, linguistic and postmodern premises (Westwood & Clegg 2003). However, previous research on the process of creating business opportunity has emphasised the objective understandable nature of business opportunities. Casson (1982) defines business opportunities as “situations in which new goods, services, raw materials and organizing methods can be introduced and sold at greater than their cost of production” (Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 220). In line with Casson (1982), Shane (2003: 35) defines a business opportunity as “a situation in which a person can create a new means-ends framework for recombining resources that she believes will yield a profit”. Additionally, Shane and Venkataraman (2000: 220) cite Kirzner (1997):

> An entrepreneurial opportunity differs from the larger set of all opportunities for profit, particularly opportunities to enhance the efficiency of existing goods, services, raw materials, and organizing methods, because the former require the discovery of new means-ends relationships, whereas the latter involve optimization within existing means-ends frameworks”.

In contrast, Alvarez and Barney (2007: 15) claim that “in creation theory, entrepreneurs do not search – for there are no mountains to find – they act, and observe how consumers and markets respond to their actions”. Rather than studying how, where or why entrepreneurs search for opportunities – where there is nothing to be found – there is a demand to make sense of the actions of entrepreneurs per se, as “they build the mountains” (Alvarez & Barney 2007: 15). In this study, we found that applying social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity) provides a promising way to do that. The reason is that the assumption behind the structure of human activity is that human actions create a contradiction that is solved by social learning (Engeström 1987, 2001). In that way, the structure of human activity opens up a novel way to understand social learning while researching the creation of business opportunity. This has not been done as broadly as this before, even though learning has been seen as a critical element in the creation of business opportunity (Alvarez & Barney 2007). The structure of human activity elaborates upon learning as a social matter, something that earlier research on entrepreneurship discusses only touches upon.
Nevertheless, in all of the above approaches, business opportunities are seen as situations where it is possible to generate new economical means-ends frameworks that are recognised in the allocative view, discovered in the discovery view and created in the creative view (Venkataraman 1997, Shane and Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003, Sarasvathy et al. 2003). This study adopts the principles of the creative view (see Alvarez & Barney 2007). In the following section, the allocative view, the discovery view and the creative view are discussed briefly. Table 1 below illustrates the main principles of these three approaches in the process.

Table 1. Different approaches to business opportunity process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Allocative view</th>
<th>Discovery view</th>
<th>Creative view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Business opportunities exist or have been just realised to be refined</td>
<td>Business opportunities exist, but some of the elements wait to be discovered</td>
<td>Business opportunities are not existing, but are socially constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Refining existing</td>
<td>Solution making</td>
<td>Creating new realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rational analysis</td>
<td>Discovering the most suitable option</td>
<td>Creating along the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-making in a given problem solving place</td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Sense-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Searching inefficiencies and operating efficiently</td>
<td>Sense-giving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty of the business environment</td>
<td>Both the initial and the end situation are known</td>
<td>The end is unknown, but initial situation is known</td>
<td>Both the initial and the end situations are unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the actor (entrepreneur)</td>
<td>Improver</td>
<td>Alert developer</td>
<td>Challenger, web-viewer, meaning builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past oriented</td>
<td>Present oriented</td>
<td>Future oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear and visible solutions</td>
<td>New solutions to existing problems</td>
<td>New realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New applications to existing solutions</td>
<td>No best or most suitable solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-result</td>
<td>Place, in which transactions happen</td>
<td>Happening, in which a search occurs</td>
<td>Space of play and innovation</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.1 Allocative view

In the allocative view, the phenomenon of the entrepreneurial opportunity process is a statistical issue that can be solved by calculating probabilities (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003). In this way, the business opportunity process is based on the neoclassical approach and thus on a linear process of recognising a business opportunity (Sarasvathy et al. 2003). Because there is an assumption of a linear process, business opportunities are assumed to exist objectively in the risky business environment (see Knight 1921, Arrow 1974).

On this basis, a relevant incentive to start new ventures or create new businesses in a perfectly competitive market (i.e. one in a state of equilibrium) is the usage of incomplete, frequently distributed and contradictory knowledge (Hayek 1945, see also Marshall 1920). Therefore, the role of entrepreneurship is to allocate resources more efficiently (see Penrose 1959). From the perspective of the allocative view, an entrepreneurial event is essentially a place where business-related transactions take place. Hjorth (2005) elaborated on this, stating that this kind of event is a strategised place that is appropriated by management knowledge. This indicates that research on entrepreneurship is a sub-discipline of management studies. At the practical level, entrepreneurial transactions in this context are those carried out by the improvers of business (e.g. entrepreneurs) to remain rational (e.g. to make money).

2.2 Discovery view

In line with the trait and cognitive approaches in organisation theory, the discovery view in the field of research on the process of creating business opportunity suggests that objective business opportunities are discovered by entrepreneurs (but not by others). It is assumed that they are talented or ‘alert’ enough to notice them (Kirzner 1973, 1997). In this context, entrepreneurs are seen as agents correcting the market from disequilibrium to equilibrium (Kirzner 1997, see also Sarasvathy 2004). Schumpeter (1934), in turn, says that entrepreneurship, and therefore the process of creating business opportunity, is about ‘creative destruction’. More precisely, it means that the basic state of the market is fundamentally chaotic, ranging from disequilibrium to equilibrium and vice versa, largely because of the processes of discovery of business opportunity.

On the whole, the discovery view sees the market environment as complex in nature (Sarasvathy et al. 2003, see also Knight 1921) and entrepreneurs as those who
connect pieces of information to create a business opportunity. This is exemplified by
the studies conducted by those following the cognitive school of thought in this
process (e.g. Baron 1997, 1998, Corbett 2007, Fiet & Patal 2008). Researchers in this
field have studied how entrepreneurs perceive and process information. This tradition
is rich and promising. However, the problem (in the context of this essay) is that
entrepreneurs are separated from their cultural and historical contexts, and are seen
merely as intellectual processors of information. An entrepreneurial event thus seems
to be happening, that is, the entrepreneur is searching to discover a business
opportunity. More precisely, such a search can be intentional (see Schumpeter 1934)
or unintentional (see Kirzner 1997) but a business opportunity is undoubtedly ‘out
there’ before it is discovered. A person who is alert enough (an entrepreneur) can find
a business opportunity because he or she has a set of personality qualities or traits that
others (non-entrepreneurs) do not have.

2.3 The creative view

Researchers who hold the creative view have seen business opportunities as
subjective phenomena (Buchanan and Vanberg 1991, Jack and Anderson 2002,
Sarasvathy et al. 2003, see also Companys and McMullen 2007). The approach they
take seems to emphasise, for example, organisational creativity (Hjorth 2007) and
imagination (Sarasvathy 2001) in the actions around business opportunities. The
creation of business opportunity is seen as taking place in a truly uncertain market
environment (see Knight 1921). Here, entrepreneurs construct business opportunities
through their activities (Alvarez & Barney 2007). This is also the focus of this essay.

In this essay, entrepreneurship is seen as a cultural-historical process of creating
of social learning theory. Holt (2008) is one of the first scholars to approach the
business opportunity process as a cultural-historical human activity (see also Jones
& Holt 2008). This theoretical tradition is also followed here. The main guiding
principles of the approach that Engeström (1987, 2001) brings to the cultural-
historical activity theory are as follows:

1. A collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity system as the actor.
2. The multivoicedness of the activity system.
3. The historicity of the actions of the system.
4. Contradictions as source of change and development.

Engeström’s (1987) activity system (i.e. the structure of human activity) presented in Figure 1 is assumed to comprise the individual practitioner, colleagues and co-workers in a workplace community, the conceptual and practical tools and the shared objects of the activity as a unified and dynamic whole. Learning within the activity system creates business opportunities (see Holt 2008). As Figure 1 illustrates, tools (including signs, symbols and various kinds of representations) as well as less visible social mediators of the social activity – rules, community and division of labour (organising in this study) – mediate the subject’s interaction with the object (i.e. a business opportunity).

![Fig. 1 The structure of human activity (Engeström 1987: 78, published by the permission of Interscience Enterprises Limited).](image)

In this essay, I use the concept of organising instead of division of labour, because ‘organising’ refers more closely to the organisational and social constructive phenomenon, which is the focus of this essay. In this essay, entrepreneurship as an event (see Hjorth 2004) is a process of creating business opportunities for the purpose of developing new businesses. According to Engeström (1987), the structure of human activity is a way to conceptualise this complex phenomenon. The approach taken by Engeström (1987) is ontologically quite close to social constructivism, here, the socially constructed reality is understood as a ‘sense-mechanism’ created through the interaction of people (see Berger & Luckmann 1966).
In that sense, it is not that clear what is actually happening in that particular entrepreneurial space. To make sense of it, entrepreneurs are creating new realities because business opportunities do not wait to be recognised or discovered. In contrast, they need to be created (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003). In this kind of approach to business opportunities, organisational entrepreneurship means that such an entrepreneurial event is a social space for play and innovation. It can take place just because it does – just as artists create new masterpieces. It requires considerable preliminary understanding and knowledge of that area. Nonetheless, to actualise such a masterpiece requires action rather than searching. It is the same as when creating an opportunity.
3 Entrepreneurship as an event to create business opportunities

The creative view described above fits well into the nature of the contemporary and rapidly changing business environment, in which the success factors of firms have clearly changed. Currently, business is characterised by continuous change, which can now be, and indeed should be, managed differently. The current business environment can be seen as a game. The rules, and even the type of game, are not clear, they must be created while playing the game (Christensen & Raynor 2003, see also Sarasvathy & Kotha 2001). In the creative view, the actors within the business create the surrounding uncertainty but not vice versa (Companys & McMullen 2007). It thus seems to be that the business environment is ambiguous (Christensen & Raynor 2003) and blurry (Johannisson 2007) in nature.

The game metaphor discussed above works well with Engeström’s (1987) structure of human activity (as illustrated in Figure 1). The following sub-chapters describe my application of Engeström’s (1987) structure of human activity. The elaboration is twofold. Firstly, I discuss how the process of creating new a business works in the business opportunity process, this includes the triangle of subject–object–community that comes from Engeström’s (1987) model. Secondly, Engeström’s (1987) larger triangle, consisting of rules, tools, signs and division of labour (organising in this study), is analysed from the point of view of creating a new business. Engeström’s (1987) activity-theoretical approach is based on Russian psychology (see Vygotsky 1978, Leontjev 1977, 1981, Luria 1979).

3.1 Subject-object-community

In Engeström’s (1987) approach, the triangle of subject–object–community refers to all those participating in constructing the same object (subjects individually and a community collectively). The main point in Engeström’s (1987) model is that an individual (i.e. the subject) is not constructing the object alone, but is doing so collectively (i.e. the community). It is the same in the case of the creative business opportunity process (Holt 2008). Business opportunities as social constructions (see Berger & Luckmann 1966) cannot be created alone, they be worked on collectively through organisational, social and creative action, see Hjorth’s (2004) description of organisational entrepreneurship.
Moving away from managerial and linear thinking, the creation of business opportunities looks complex – much as the human life is per se. According to Hjorth (2003: 5), “creativity disturbs the reigning order and, instead, also demands a new organisation”. This is pretty much of how human life is organised from the perspective of social constructivism. Berger and Luckmann (1966: 14) write:

The man in the street does not ordinarily trouble himself about what is ‘real’ to him and about what he ‘knows’ unless he is stopped short by some sort of problem. He takes his ‘reality’ and his ‘knowledge’ for granted

In this sense, people live their lives without problematising the very nature of reality and knowing in everyday practices. However, when something special happens (e.g. an entrepreneurial event), registration capabilities are turned on and humans try to explain it in some way.

According to Hjorth’s (2005) approach, entrepreneurship is event-based in nature. This is similar to how Van de Ven and Poole (1995: 517) describe the dialectical theory behind the dialectical process: “a pluralistic world of colliding events, forces, or contradictory values that compete with each other for domination and control”. Van de Ven and Poole (1995: 517) also state that “change occurs when these opposing values, forces, or events gain sufficient power to confront and engage the status quo”. From the perspective of this study, theses and anti-theses together either amplify or counteract the whole process of the business opportunity process in terms of Hjorthian (2005) entrepreneurial events.

What are, then, the roles of subject, object and community in the business opportunity process? Above, I argued that the business opportunity process is dialectical in its nature. However, when the entrepreneurs (i.e. the subjects) are creating new business opportunities (i.e. objects) together with others (i.e. the community) in this sort of process, there seems to be no connection with the dialectical entrepreneurial opportunity process and new businesses. Actually, the triangle of subject–object–community seems to describe all sorts of opportunities, not only business opportunities. These types of opportunities have been described in the previous literature (e.g. Hjorth, Johannisson & Steyaert 2003). In this essay, the perspective from the triangle of subject–object–community is too narrow. By using it, we can see that the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) are creating new business opportunities (i.e. the objects) together with others (i.e. the community) in the dialectical opportunity (but not business opportunity) process. We must
broaden our analysis to see the whole phenomenon of the business opportunity process in the process of creating new businesses.

3.2 Rules – tools/signs – division of labour (organising)

In this essay, the triangle consisting of rules, tools/signs and the division of labour (organising) in Engeström’s (1987) model describes the business environment in which business opportunities are created. This is inevitable because the triangle that includes subject, object and community (discussed above) illustrates only the opportunity process (but not the business opportunity process) in an organisation (compare how Hjorth et al. (2003) describe entrepreneurship as a lifestyle). In the business opportunity process, subjects, objects and the community all play crucial roles, but the meaning of their activities is entrepreneurial. For example, making a cup of coffee is not itself a part of the business opportunity process, but selling that cup of coffee to somebody who wants to buy it can be a part of the business opportunity process in terms of creating new business.

The difference between an opportunity process and a business opportunity process can be found in the purpose of those activities. Because current business life and the success factors within it are changing continuously and dramatically, it is necessary to rewrite the basic principles of the business opportunity process. For example, it is argued that Fayolian, Weberian and Barnardian principles of rationalisation and control are no longer valid because of the growing centrality of knowledge-intensive work (Hjorth 2004). Nowadays, there is growing pressure to see the business opportunity process more as a creative phenomenon, in which the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) create new unknown effects (i.e. the objects) from the given means or tools by effectuating (Sarasvathy 2001). In effectuation, there are means or tools (e.g. coffee beans, coffee machine, etc.) to be used creatively and with imagination (Sarasvathy 2001).

The effects of this sort of working are not clear, and they cannot even be seen before the entrepreneurial actions (this also refers to the concept of sense-making). We see sense-making activities as Weick (1979) does, He states that sense-making should be understood literally. “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” (Weick 1979). This means that the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) manage controllable matters to create (to effectuate) something new (i.e. objects in the form of business opportunities) in a business environment (see Sarasvathy 2001) in which the rules are not stable (Christensen & Raynor 2003). In that sense, the rules equate to the sense-making actions that the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) are part of. This fosters
the idea of social constructivism behind the research on creating business opportunity. Because the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) can choose the way – the division of labour as organising in Engeström’s (1987) approach – they play this truly uncertain business game (see Knight 1921), they must seek some signs or tools (e.g. the coffee beans mentioned above as an example) to attain their objectives.

The nature of this sort of dialectical process is like how Hjorth (2005) describes the concept of entrepreneurship. Hjorth (2005) refers to the French term for entrepreneurship: entreprendre. Here, ‘entre’ refers to stepping into the creative space (in-between) while ‘prendre’ refers to the grasping of opportunities in the creative space. This is similar to the assumption in social learning theory. As Engeström (2001) writes, there is no wise teacher who could elaborate upon what is to be learned. Therefore, the object of an activity is a moving target, such as a business opportunity from the perspective of the creative view (see Sarasvathy et al. 2003).

In that sense, the creation of social space for play and innovation is an action that should be understood from the perspective of Engeström’s (1987) larger triangle. Otherwise, the creation of business opportunities becomes a business-related issue only, that seems not to be true (see Hjorth, Jones & Gartner 2008). A business opportunity can be an outcome of entrepreneurial actions, that is why the antecedents of such an entrepreneurial action should be well known. Engeström’s (1987) larger triangle can help here, because it takes collectivity, multivoicedness, historicity and contradictions as sources of change, and opportunities for expansive transformations into account. Those kinds of elements seem to be the basic building blocks of current business life. They reflect social learning, which the process of creating business opportunity seems to be by its very nature.
4 The creative (empty) space for business opportunities

In this chapter, I demonstrate firstly my application of the business opportunity process from the perspective of Engeström’s (1987) triangle of subject–object–community. This refers to neutral (not business) opportunities. Secondly, I will show that this sort of creative activity is illustrated through Engeström’s (1987) larger triangle, consisting of rules, tools, signs and the division of labour (organising), which is in accord with Hjorth’s (2005) description of eventual entrepreneurship. In this context, entrepreneurship is about stepping into and out of the creative entrepreneurial space event. This provides an integrated theoretical illustration of the phenomenon of the business opportunity process from the creative view.

4.1 Neutral opportunities

In this essay, it has been argued that the subjects, objects and community do not themselves illustrate the whole phenomenon of creating business opportunity. Therefore, the opportunities that are created at the level of Engeström’s (1987) subject–object–community triangle are neutral (not business related) in their very nature. Business opportunities arise from a business-specific environment – the triangle of rules, tools/signs and division of labour proposed by Engeström (1987). The subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) operate actively towards objects (e.g. neutral opportunities) in a community (e.g. a group of people around an individual entrepreneur) to make sense of opportunities in an organisation. However, those things do not in themselves have direct links with the business environment – the triangle of rules, tools/signs and division of labour (organising).

Neutrality in (business) opportunities is an important starting point for the process of creating new businesses (see Baker & Nelson 2005). This type of neutrality can be understood as the first and very early phase of the dialectical process of creating new businesses. Creating new unknown effects from the given means or tools – effectuating in Sarasvathy’s (2001) terms – is a fundamental part of human life. For example, making a cup of coffee may be a neutral opportunity as long as it has been actualised as an outcome. However, these types of neutral opportunities are often neglected as opportunities to create a new business. For example, Fletcher (2006) describes a case where an entrepreneurial process has been started by the personal experience of a specialty coffee bar. Fletcher (2006:
Fletcher (2006: 429) describes the beginning of the entrepreneurial process as a “shock to realize that you could not stop off for an even half-decent cup of coffee anywhere”. I argue that this is the early phase of opportunity, which is neutral in its nature. Such neutrality refers to Hjorth’s description of the “stepping into the in-between” (Hjorth 2005: 395), here, neutral opportunities are like raw materials for business opportunities. The critical question is which of those neutral opportunities are actualised as outcomes of such an action (see Figure 1). Therefore, the movement from object to outcome is about actualising the potential that is located in the neutral opportunities, which are social constructs. They arise from the action(s) of the subjects (the entrepreneurs), the objects (neutral/business opportunities) and the community (the group of people affecting the individual entrepreneur).

Neutral opportunities occur when entrepreneurs step into the creative space – Hjorth’s (2005) in-between. In this space, imagination – the logic of Sarasvathy’s (2001) effectuation – has a permission to work. In this way, it seems that the very nature of entrepreneurship is eventual and therefore dependent on time in a non-linear way. This is similar to how Weick (1979) describes the start of sense-making as enactment (saying), this leads to selection (seeing what I say). Where do these neutral opportunities come from? Weick (1979) asks: How can I know what I think until I see what I say? If neutral opportunities are only the raw materials of business opportunities, neutrality in the case of opportunities must refer to the creative space, which is empty in nature. The subjects (i.e. the entrepreneurs) are those who benefit from the creative space (in-between) as a result of their imaginative and organisational creative action. That this happens eventually contradicts the idea of time as linear. Because of this, we need to understand how organisational creativity fosters organisational entrepreneurship.
4.2 Intention-driven entrepreneurial opportunities

According to Hjorth (2005), entrepreneurship is about stepping into (*entre*) the creative space (in-between) and grasping opportunities in it (*prendre*). The neutral opportunities described in the previous chapter turn into intention-driven business opportunities in this phase. Fletcher (2006: 429) describes this as “the first step in the journey of entrepreneurship”. From the perspective of this essay, the first step in organisational entrepreneurship is not the first step proposed by Fletcher (2006), because the activities surrounding the business opportunity process are started earlier (the neutral opportunities). Neutral opportunities are not easily observed because they are fundamental parts of the activity of subjects (e.g. the shock of realising that one could not stop anywhere for a half-decent cup of coffee). Consequently, a business opportunity is a social construct.

The triangle of rules, tools/signs, division of labour (organising) developed by Engeström (1987) describes a business environment involved with intention-driven business opportunities from the perspective of this study. This type of business environment is not neutral in that we could see neutral opportunities as fundamental parts of the activity of subjects. This fundamental and neutral human activity must be contingent upon the business environment in that we are even able to talk about business opportunities (see Sarasvathy 2001, Gartner et al. 2003, Hjorth 2003, 2004, 2005, Steyaert & Hjorth 2003).

If the rules of a business environment are not clear (Christensen & Raynor 2003) or they are even “blurry” (Johannisson 2007), the entrepreneurs (i.e. the subjects) must organise themselves – this refers to division of labour in the approach taken by Engeström (1987) – and the business opportunities (i.e. the objects) in a way that allows them to reach their targets (i.e. an actualisation of objects as outcomes) in business. Hill and Levenhagen (1995) propose that entrepreneurs apply metaphors and mental models to develop a vision of how the surrounding and uncertain environment works (i.e. sense-making). The entrepreneurs also pass this vision onto others in an organisation, this refers to sense-giving (Hill & Levenhagen 1995). This reflects how the structure of human activity (see Figure 1) considers rules from the perspective of creating business opportunity. In that sense, the rules are not predefined in entrepreneurial actions. In contrast, in the context of sense-making, the rules are socially constructed in the process of creating a business opportunity.

The approach taken by Hill and Levenhagen (1995) reminds us that the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is a dynamic whole, such as Engeström’s (1987)
approach to the structure of human activity. Entrepreneurship as a business opportunity process is not free of its context either, and so environment really matters, see also Venkataraman’s (1997) weak and strong premises. It is not possible to understand the phenomenon of business opportunity process by the activities of human beings alone – the triangle of subject–object–community in Engeström’s (1987) approach – but these sorts of neutral opportunities really matter too. Engeström’s (1987) broader triangle – comprising rules, tools/signs and division of labour (organising) – matters in the sense of an uncertain business environment effectuated (see Sarasvathy 2001) by sense-making and sense-giving mechanisms (Hill & Levenhagen 1995, see also Weick 1979, 1995). In this way, sense-making and sense-giving together play the role of retention in the basic sense-making recipe proposed by Weick (1979). This creates the rules for entrepreneurial actions: what is allowed and methods of execution.

Following from the discussion above, although the previous parts of the sense-making recipe (i.e. enactment and selection) enable neutral opportunities to become part the business opportunity process, the phase of retention controls this dynamic whole – “knowledge of what I said” (Weick 1979). This sort of knowledge stops the process of creating new business. Then, business opportunities are created within organisational and socially constructed activity. In this case, a new organisation does not emerge as a new hierarchy, but in the form of new business (see Hjorth 2003). And what comes to the nature of the new businesses, they are social constructs in a similar way as how the market is as well (see Sørensen in press). Tools and signs (such as the coffee beans mentioned earlier) relating to that offer a way of actualising an outcome (e.g. a new business). Sense-making actions create the rules of what a subject (e.g. an entrepreneur) is allowed to do in order to reach that goal (i.e. object) as a part of a group of people (i.e. community), for instance. Efforts at organising this type of event (i.e. the division of labour) seem to be a highly turbulent and complex in the global business environment nowadays.
5 Discussion and directions for future research

In this study the following question has guided my conceptual considerations: What is the process of creating a business opportunity like when it is assumed to be linked with entrepreneurial actions? In this chapter, I illustrate my contribution to the discourse of the business opportunity process, both theoretically and practically. This is based on Engeström’s (1987) approach to the structure of human activity. While primarily opposing the approaches of neoclassical economics and the Austrian school, I suggest that the process of creating business opportunity is dialectical in nature, and that business opportunities are not objective phenomena. In contrast, they are socially and organisationally constructed human creations in a (business) organisation. Those business opportunities are located in the creative spaces (i.e. in-between). It is about the eventuality that Hjorth (2005) writes of.

5.1 Theoretical implications

Earlier research on entrepreneurship assumes that the start of the entrepreneurial process is a ‘light bulb’ moment, when an idea for a new business pops into an entrepreneur’s mind (see Fletcher 2006: 429). In this study, it is assumed that the entrepreneurial process starts much earlier, with neutral opportunities. Neutrality means fundamental human activity engaged with Engeström’s (1987) subjects, objects and communities. This sort of activity is not linked directly with business. For example, making a cup of coffee may be a neutral opportunity (i.e. an actualised outcome of an entrepreneurial object). Neutral opportunities are theoretically like raw materials or given means/tools (see Sarasvathy 2001) for possible business opportunities (i.e. an actualised object of entrepreneurial actions that can be a cup of coffee, for instance).

Entrepreneurial objects are not like ideas in terms of entrepreneurship, but more about thoughts about some unknown activities, which can be turned into parts of the business opportunity later on. This is linked very closely to the Sarasvathy’s (2001) logic of effectuation (using imagination to create new unknown effects from given means or tools). Neutral opportunities are created at the point that Hjorth (2005: 395) describes as “entre”. This is the first part of the French term for entrepreneurship (entreprendre), and it refers to stepping into the creative space – “in-between” (Hjorth 2005: 395).
When talking about the creation of new businesses, neutral opportunities and stepping into the creative space (in-between) are not enough. Neutral opportunities (i.e. actualised objects of an entrepreneurial action) and creative space together create the possibility of something new in a process, which is dialectical in its nature (see Van de Ven & Poole 1995). The dialectical theory behind the thinking of dialectical processes assumes that the theses and antitheses compete. Change occurs when opposing values, forces or events gain sufficient power to confront and engage the status quo (Van de Ven & Poole 1995). This is also the case in organisational creativity (see Hjorth 2003, 2004, 2005). According to Weick (1979), the so-called sense-making recipe can be explained as follows: How can I know what I think until I see what I say? In this way, saying refers to enactment and seeing what is said to selection. This sort of sense-making occurs in the creative space (in-between) mentioned above. In that way, the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) co-create (in a community) the social rules of how to behave properly.

Weick’s (1979) retention (i.e. knowledge of what I said) is in turn linked with the intention-driven business opportunities involved with the larger environment surrounding the business opportunity process. This reflects how socially constructed rules work with entrepreneurial actions. The entrepreneurial way of acting and behaving might break social rules – what a person is allowed to do or not allowed to do. In that sense, entrepreneurship is a certain social construct of what is proper and what is forbidden within a certain group of people (i.e. community). That is why we need to understand the disruption of reigning order and the creation of new social spaces for play and innovation when we are talking about organisational entrepreneurship. Those kinds of actions frame what organisational entrepreneurship is all about – an entrepreneurial event.

When neutral opportunities are involved with their environment – Engeström’s (1987) triangle of rules, tools/signs, and division of labour (organising) in the structure of human activity – we have business opportunities. In this way, entrepreneurial intention (e.g. selling a cup of coffee) pushes the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) to meet the larger business environment, which is turbulent, vague and complex (Christensen & Raynor 2003) or even blurry (Johannisson 2007) in its nature nowadays. In this sort of environment (i.e. the division of labour), the subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) must organise themselves to play an uncertain business game (see Knight 1921), which can be characterised by the continuously changing rules. The subjects (e.g. the entrepreneurs) often use metaphors and mental models (see Hill & Levenhagen 1995) to develop a vision
that can explain how the environment works (i.e. sense-making). From the perspective of this study, it seems to be that the nature of the business opportunity process is a dynamic and context-dependent whole.

5.2 Managerial implications

The phenomenon of the business opportunity process can be seen in current business news. Nokia’s acquisition of Symbian in June 2008 exemplified that. Success factors of firms have been changed, nowadays it is no longer that important to fight for the endowments (referring to the allocative view in the entrepreneurial opportunity process discourse) but to apply and exercise knowledge in a useful way. Researchers who follow the Austrian school of thought (e.g. Kirzner 1973, 1997) discuss how business opportunities are ready and waiting to be discovered. In this paper, I suggest that business opportunities cannot be discovered before they are created (see also Sarasvathy et al. 2003). In this essay, I propose that the creation process is twofold. It consists of neutral opportunities and their more sophisticated counterparts: intention-driven business opportunities.

The integrated and conceptual illustration of this paper describes how – from the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship – new businesses are created as entrepreneurial events. It seems that research on business opportunities is a subfield of organisational entrepreneurship. When it comes to exploiting a business opportunity, I agree with the view held by Shane and Venkataraman (2000), this proposes that the business opportunities can be exploited by creating new firms (hierarchies) or by selling explored opportunities to existing firms (markets). In this way, the perspective of organisational entrepreneurship allows us to describe that the process of creating new businesses consists of a firm’s internal development as the business opportunity process (and its sale as the exploitation of the business opportunity) as well as the phenomenon of creating a new venture. These are examples of entrepreneurial events. Moreover, the idea of organisational entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurship is a processual and organisational phenomenon. In that sense, organisational entrepreneurship together with the application of social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity proposed by Engeström 1987, 2001) opens up the possibility of problematising the very nature of entrepreneurship – both conceptually and practically. In this essay, I suggest that an organisational version of entrepreneurship can be an entrepreneurial event.
The main managerial contribution of this study considers the subjective and twofold nature (neutral and intention-driven) of business opportunities. Neutrality in applying this conceptual study refers to seeing or observing the potential early phases of business opportunities (neutral opportunities) more clearly. Although not all neutral opportunities are business opportunities (i.e. it is not possible to actualise every collective creation as a new business) or vice versa, imagination (see Sarasvathy 2001) and organisational creativity (see Hjorth 2004, 2005) both seem to be crucial in the contemporary knowledge-intensive business environment. They foster the event of organisational entrepreneurship. When we see the process of creating new businesses as a dialectical business opportunity process, the outcomes or effects are not all that matter. The dynamic and dialectical business opportunity process is the one that finally allows new businesses to emerge, and this matters in dynamic business environments.

5.3 Concluding remarks

This essay approaches the business opportunity process from a theoretically complex perspective. Many types of approaches are linked. This is our way of showing that the nature of the process of creating business opportunity is not straightforward, but a dialectical phenomenon by its very nature. This is how new businesses are created nowadays. Currently, this essay’s approach is based on social learning theory (e.g. Engeström 1987, 2001) because the business environment and especially the success factors of firms have been changed drastically. They are the moving targets that need to be constructed in order to make sense of what these types of complex, blurry or even hostile environments are about and how they work.

This essay takes the Knightian (1921) assumption of true uncertainty as its basic premise. Previous literature has discussed the concept of uncertainty in the creation of business opportunity, but the emphasis has not usually been on the processual and cultural-historical embedded social activities of entrepreneurs. In this essay, social activities are seen to be the basic building blocks of creating business opportunity. Earlier work suggests that entrepreneurship is an iterative process of learning (see Alvarez & Barney 2007) but the social aspects of such learning have not been elaborated upon particularly well. Engeström’s (1987, 2001) application of the social learning theory (i.e. the structure of human activity) proposes a good way to do that.
When the process of creating business opportunity is investigated, two things should be remembered. Firstly, business opportunities always depend on the context and time. For example, Nokia’s business opportunity to acquire Symbian in June 2008 would not have been relevant, or even possible, five or ten years ago. In this paper, Engeström’s (1987) larger triangle – consisting of tools/signs, rules, and division of labour (organising) – shows this conceptually. Secondly, it should be seen that the creation of business opportunities is a process that is linked with the lifestyle of its creators (i.e. the subjects), whose involvement with the community to which they belong make the objects (i.e. the neutral opportunities) possible. Consequently, the process of creating business opportunity is fundamentally rooted in basic human activities (e.g. making a cup of coffee) because in this way, and only in this way, can the neutral opportunities be ignited.

5.4 Directions for future research

Empirical investigations in the field of the entrepreneurial opportunity process are scarce (Companys & McMullen 2007). Because the creation of business opportunity has been seen as an iterative process of learning, it would be worth investigating the phenomenon of the business opportunity process empirically from the perspective of social learning. For example, Engeström’s (1987) approach to the structure of human activity is a potential way of doing that. As mentioned in the previous chapter, neutral opportunities are the personal creations of their creators – Engeströmian (1987) subjects – and therefore the processual activities being carried out are the most relevant units of analyses.

Because of this, I suggest that future researchers carry out narrative interviews in order to understand how the creation of a business opportunity takes place in spatio-temporal contexts. As Hjorth and Steyaert (2004) argue, research that is based on narrative and storytelling methodologically opens up a way to understand entrepreneurial events. According to this paper, the creation of business opportunity takes place within entrepreneurial events. That is why storytelling could show its value in furthering the understanding of the process of creating business opportunities empirically. Furthermore, Gartner (2010) argues that there is a lack of understanding when it comes to uniqueness and variation in research on entrepreneurship. Approaches that employed narrative and storytelling could help here. As long as narrative interviews are conducted in an open-ended manner, they will allow a researcher to discuss the lifestyles of
interviewees, such lifestyles seem to influence the neutral opportunities discussed in this paper. They might also be interesting from the perspective of entrepreneurial events.

Even though the storytelling and narrative approach could be beneficial when studying the creation of business opportunity, there are still some issues that should be considered carefully. For instance, Dawson and Hjorth (2011) state that macro-level analysis of entrepreneurship might be difficult, because the use of storytelling and narrative in this kind of research leads to analytical rather than empirical generalisation. Consequently, such research would most likely become a critical voice, even though the aim is just to conduct a thorough qualitative study. For instance, the aim of Shane and Venkataraman (2000) was to create a conceptual framework for the existence, discovery and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. Even though the systematic body, in the form of a conceptual framework, could be useful in improving the understanding of the creation of business opportunities, for instance, it could also reduce the ideas of variety and multiplicity in relation to entrepreneurship (Gartner 2010). Because of this, storytelling and narrative could be helpful. However, they should be used with caution so that they will not produce results that do not match the existing literature and are therefore categorised as something other than entrepreneurship or as no more than radical whining.

Moreover, there is a possibility of over-interpreting the data gathered in the field when using storytelling and narrative as a method (Dawson & Hjorth 2011). For instance, Smith (2005) writes about biographical analysis addressing three research questions: (1) What do entrepreneurs reveal about themselves? (2) What do researchers reveal about the entrepreneurs who are telling the stories? (3) How do these two things influence the social construct of entrepreneurship? Because storytelling is a powerful way of imparting knowledge about entrepreneurial life and lifestyles, the researcher needs to remember what the results could reveal in terms of ideas about what entrepreneurship is all about (see Smith & Anderson 2004). Even though the heroic story of an acting entrepreneur is not the only one, it should be considered if another story – such as that villainous story that Smith and Anderson (2004) suggest – could overcome the challenge of seeing the ‘other’ side of entrepreneurship (e.g. Hjorth 2005) and if so, how. In addition, from the perspective of research outlines, the storytelling and narrative approach to research requires the researcher to spend a lot of time in the field (Dawson & Hjorth 2011). That is why organising such research requires answers to questions about methodology as well as about practicality.
This essay provided a way to see the business opportunity process from the perspective of Engeström’s (1987) approach, which applies social learning theory. It is based on the activity-theoretical views held by Vygotsky (1978), Leontjev (1977, 1981) and Luria (1979). Therefore, the wider investigations into the business opportunity process, which emphasise the cultural-historical context, should take their perspectives into account as well. This study proposes a starting point for this sort of research, however, this type of approach would be inadequate without a strong activity-theoretical base and processual empirical data. In carrying out that type of research, Engeström’s (1987, 2001) activity-theoretical approach of the structure of human activity offers a contextual framework that is not used very often in the field of creating business opportunity (see Holt 2008, Jones & Holt 2008).

Future investigations could find relevant contributions to research on business opportunities by using the cycle of expansive learning as a theoretical framework, for example. The structure of human activity (i.e. the conceptual framework of this essay) – with the emphasis on shared objects – could represent one level of analysis. In addition, some parts of the structure of human activity (see Figure 1) could be highlighted. For instance, tools and signs – which Engeström (1987) suggests – could be a vehicle for entrepreneurial actions, as I suggested in the methodological section of this doctoral dissertation. In that way, it is not a question of an acting entrepreneur or a firm (i.e. subject) in Engeström’s (1987) idea of the structure of human activity. In contrast, the question is more about how subjects co-create and construct shared objects with other activity systems (e.g. customer). This is crucial when studying entrepreneurship in the creation of business opportunity or as entrepreneurial events. This dissertation gives a conceptual basis for that. This level of analysis could take the features of imagination and creativity more into account when studying entrepreneurship as a socially constructive phenomenon, because the activity system is influenced by the communities (which the subjects belong to), the social rules and the division of labour. In doing so, it is no longer an individual-opportunity nexus that we are interested in. In contrast, it is in fact a contextual and conceptual whole. This is a promising field of research in entrepreneurship and one that the researchers at the European School of Entrepreneurship are trying develop (see Hjorth et al. 2008).
References


Internationalization of SMEs from the perspective of social learning theory

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Abstract

Internationalisation is seen as an important issue for the globalised economy. Therefore, it has been widely investigated among multinational enterprises (MNEs) and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Even though earlier work acknowledges that internationalisation consists of entrepreneurial actions (e.g. discovery and exploitation of an international business opportunity) and learning from the market, detailed understanding of the process of social learning in internationalisation is still lacking. In this essay, I use the cycle of expansive learning as a conceptual framework. It shows that entrepreneurial actions between SMEs construct international business opportunities. More specifically, entrepreneurial actions are about learning that constructs and co-creates knowledge. When assuming that such knowledge is social in nature (as the cycle of expansive learning does) then the very nature of knowledge becomes the basis of claims that explicate what the process of social learning entails. In the context of international entrepreneurship, there is also a by-product of that type of co-created and object-oriented action: the internationalisation of SMEs. The purpose of this study is to explicate the internationalisation of SMEs through the cycle of expansive learning so that we can better understand how such a by-product can be created. In the context of two entrepreneurs collaborating, I found that the start of the cycle is more significant than the later stages. From the perspective of social learning, this suggests that entrepreneurs create rather than exploit international opportunities. This leads to internationalisation of SMEs.

Keywords: international entrepreneurship, shared object, social learning, entrepreneurial actions, interaction, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)
1 Introduction

Today’s global economy is largely discussed in terms of international business affairs carried out by large multinational enterprises (MNEs). However, internationalisation is not only about understanding multinational giants but also about what is going on in – and what creates – the processes of discovering and exploiting business opportunities in the context of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Here, internationalisation theories can be divided into internationalisation process theory, network theory, the resource-based view (RBV) and international entrepreneurship theory (Rialp, Rialp & Knight 2005, Ruzzier, Hisrich & Antoncic 2006). The behavioural approach originated by Cyert and March (1963) covers similar ground and inspires current research on internationalisation (e.g. Björkman & Forsgren 2000, Ruzzier et al. 2006, Solberg & Askeland 2006). From the behavioural point of view, internationalisation is an incremental set of social actions related to business opportunities that drive firms to expand beyond national borders, irrespective of the organisation’s size. Internationalisation is not merely an internal issue for a firm, but something that involves other firms. The major challenge in internationalisation is to discover and exploit business opportunities. Within the literature on entrepreneurship, Gartner (1989) describes that the creation of a new venture is a behavioural process that is the outcome of many influences. Ultimately, however, an entrepreneur’s actions create the contextual events in which the new venture is created.

In the field of international entrepreneurship, internationalisation has been seen as ‘the process of creatively discovering and exploiting opportunities that lie outside a firm’s domestic markets in the pursuit of competitive advantage’ (Zahra & George 2002: 261). Furthermore, the definition of the internationalisation process proposed by McDougall and Oviatt (2000: 903) emphasises the brokering, resource leverage or stretching, and opportunity seeking through ‘a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk seeking behaviour that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organizations’ (see also Fletcher 2004). So far, however, the co-creation of internationalisation through a social learning process (e.g. Engeström 1987, Engeström 2001) has not been widely discussed in the discourse on internationalisation (cf. Holt 2008, Schweizer, Vahlne & Johanson 2010). In contrast, the current discourse on entrepreneurship (e.g. the European School of Entrepreneurship) calls for topics of social creativity as well as context-specific and processual views in
understanding entrepreneurship that ‘belongs to society and not simply to economy’ (Hjorth, Jones & Gartner 2008: 82). Consequently, there are no fundamental differences between the issues of entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship, they intersect with the intention to create value (Fletcher 2004, Hjorth et al. 2008). The literature on international entrepreneurship provides evidence for the argument that internationalisation is a by-product of entrepreneurial action (cf. Schweizer et al. 2010) and not the aim of the action.

In this essay, I use the theory of social learning to understand the phenomenon of internationalisation. It makes it possible to explain the very nature of the internationalisation of SMEs from the perspective of social learning. I approach internationalisation as a co-creative learning process, using a method similar to that used by scholars in the European School of Entrepreneurship (ESE) to discuss the nature of entrepreneurship – in terms of claims of knowledge instead of ‘true knowledge’ per se. The purpose of this study is to explicate the internationalisation of SMEs through the cycle of expansive learning so that we can better understand how such a by-product can be created. I look at how the process of creating an international business opportunity emerges from entrepreneurial social actions and therefore fosters the internationalisation of SMEs. I scrutinise the research problem through the social learning approach, whereby entrepreneurs are embedded in the context and act towards a socially shared object. Thus, the research question of this essay is: How do entrepreneurial actions open up the possibility for SMEs to internationalise their actions related to international opportunities? I take a qualitative approach to collecting empirical data by interviewing two firms, one in Finland and one in Denmark. The data shows that collaboration between SMEs stimulates the process of social learning with seven knowledge claims, and internationalisation of SMEs is a by-product of the process. I contribute to the discourse on internationalisation by arguing that the critical issue in the internationalisation of SMEs is the creation of business opportunities, regardless of the context (be it national or international). The reason is that internationalisation is not the main issue, it is just a by-product.
2 Entrepreneurial social learning in the creation of international business opportunities

In this chapter, I consider four issues. First, I examine research on internationalisation. I take a two-pronged approach: The first is based on the idea of a gradual, stepwise and well-ordered process. The second is based on the dynamic, accelerated and even chaotic assumption of what internationalisation is about. Second, I discuss entrepreneurial actions in creating opportunity. This approach is based on the creation – rather than on the recognition or discovery – of entrepreneurial opportunities. Third, I look at the literature on organisational learning. I emphasise the parts that have been applied in the research on international entrepreneurship. Fourth, I consider the expansive cycle of learning actions. I use a conceptual model to reveal the very nature of the internationalisation of SMEs.

2.1 Internationalisation as a process and an entrepreneurial action

To date, the literature on internationalisation has adopted two approaches (Rialp et al. 2005). The first has longer traditions in the field of international entrepreneurship. It is based on the process theory of internationalisation, with gradual, stepwise and well-ordered internationalisation, such as the Uppsala internationalisation model (Johanson & Vahlne 1977). The second approach, international new ventures, sees internationalisation as a dynamic, accelerated and even chaotic process, in which entrepreneurs have limited knowledge and resources (Oviatt & McDougall 1994, Knight & Cavusgil 1996, Andersson & Wictor 2003, Bell, McNaughton, Young & Crick 2003, McDougall, Oviatt & Shrader 2003). I will examine these in more detail in the two following subsections.

2.1.1 Internationalisation as a gradual, stepwise and well-ordered process

Uppsala model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) emphasises internationalisation as a process. Its assumption is that the lack of routines and knowledge cause problems that need to be addressed because it makes decision-making in relation to foreign
market operations difficult (see Johanson & Vahlne 1977, Ellis 2000). Basically, the assumption behind the model is that there are market barriers that the firm needs to surmount (Johanson & Vahlne 2003). The perceived distance between home and foreign markets creates the market barriers, these aspects can be discovered through experimental learning (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, 2003). In fact, according to Johanson and Vahlne (2003), internationalisation is an outcome of the interplay between experimental learning about relationships and commitment to potential and existing business partners. The importance of networks is highlighted because the relevant business information is delivered through and within business relationships (e.g. Madsen & Servais 1997, Selnes & Sallis 2003). The Uppsala model emphasises networks as a source of learning at the organisational level (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, 2003). In comparison, the importance of social and individual networks to a firm’s internationalisation is emphasised in the literature on international entrepreneurship (Andersson 2000, Kiss & Danis 2008). Furthermore, they are assumed to be sources of learning (e.g. Harris & Wheeler 2005).

2.1.2 Internationalisation as a dynamic, accelerated and even chaotic process

Oviatt and McDougall (1994) open up a new line of discussion on rapidly internationalising firms that does not follow the gradual path of the Uppsala model discussed above. At the same time, they suggest that a link between international entrepreneurship and growth within firms is crucial. The international entrepreneurship literature sees networks and knowledge as powerful tools for developing potential opportunities into internationally exploitable opportunities, which ultimately provide a basis for a firm’s international business operations (e.g. Coviello & Munro 1995, Zahra, Korri & Yu 2005, Oviatt & McDougall 2005, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). Internationalisation is therefore an action-based process in which the entrepreneur is discovering, enacting, evaluating and exploiting opportunities to find a niche in international markets (Oviatt & McDougall 2005, Ellis 2011). As Johanson and Vahlne (2009) suggest, the concept of international business opportunity is crucial when discussing the internationalisation of SMEs. An international opportunity is therefore a process of entrepreneurial actions per se. More precisely, the exploration and exploitation of an opportunity are the most important concepts, which have been clearly explained in earlier works (e.g. Hohenthal, Johanson &
Johanson 2003, Oviatt & McDougall 2005, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). For example, this has been adapted from the perspective of the process of exploring and exploiting knowledge for learning and developing business activities (March 1991, Rae & Carswell 2001).

2.1.3 Summary of the earlier work on internationalisation

According to Juho (2011), learning, knowledge and experiential knowledge have been cited as the key elements in internationalisation (e.g. Madsen & Servais 1997, Shane 2000, Corbett 2005, 2007). She states that internationalisation as a process can be periodic or cyclical in nature, depending on an entrepreneur’s access to the relevant knowledge and networks (Juho 2011). Although such knowledge and networks have been studied, there has been little written on their roles as mediators. A number of researchers (e.g. Shane 2000, Oviatt & McDougall 2005, Lumpkin & Lichtenstein 2005, Corbett 2005, 2007, Weerawardena et al. 2007) have reported the connection between developing an opportunity and learning in the entrepreneur-driven internationalisation of the firm, however, the social nature of internationalisation as a process is still lacking. Even though Saarenketo, Puimalainen, Kuivalainen and Kyläheiko (2004) investigated the internationalisation of SMEs from a knowledge-based perspective, there is an assumption that a certain amount of knowledge is already there, and the actor could learn from this. In this paper, we are willing to acknowledge that this is not always the case. Sometimes there are few resources invested (or little that could be learned) in the processes of internationalisation. That is why this essay concentrates on the social nature of internationalisation of SMEs, I therefore define the internationalisation of SMEs simply as a cross-border action that two or more entrepreneurs work on together. The actions that constitute the work are discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.2 Entrepreneurial opportunity-creative actions

Entrepreneurial actions seem to be at the core of the literature on both entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship (e.g. Fletcher 2004, Schweizer et al. 2010). Research on entrepreneurial actions considers what it is that such actions create within economies, and how it is connected with the discussion of business opportunities. For instance, Schumpeter (1934) writes about creative destruction, meaning an attempt to create a fit between existing
resources so that an entrepreneur can create new products and services through business opportunities. According to Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2003), this can also happen through the development and identification of business opportunities. In this, the ability to recognise an opportunity (entrepreneurial alertness) is crucial (see Kirzner 1997, Park 2005). In contrast, Baron (2006) argues that business opportunities are out there and that entrepreneurs are those who connect the dots in a way that a new means-to-an-end framework (the business opportunity) can be found (see also Shane 2003).

In this essay, I follow the approach of international business opportunity creation. This view maintains that there is nothing to find (see Alvarez and Barney 2007). Instead of assuming that business opportunities are out there – waiting to be recognised or discovered so that a new venture can be created (e.g. Park 2005) – opportunities need to be created. These kinds of opportunities can be interpreted as an outstanding potential to do business in the environment that was not there before the process of entrepreneurship began (see Baker and Nelson 2005, Alvarez and Barney 2010). Therefore, entrepreneurship deals not only with the creation of a new venture (Gartner 1989) or business opportunity (Alvarez and Barney 2007) but with the creation of the business environment as well.

It is suggested that entrepreneurship is a part of society, not just a part of the economy (Hjorth, et al. 2008). In that sense, creating opportunities can sometimes be devoid of an intention to create a business (Kauppinen & Puhakka 2010). In contrast, such an action can be based solely on the process of life and on how people organise their everyday lives. Consequently, the creation of a new venture can be an unintended consequence or serendipity (see Görling & Rehn 2008, Dew 2009). Even though I acknowledge the crucial influence of social networks (such as the Uppsala model) and internationally oriented efforts to expand markets (e.g. Ellis 2000, Hohenthal et al. 2003) as the basic premises of international business opportunity creation, I am willing to acknowledge the processual, expansive and social nature of that creation. That shifts the perception of how information and knowledge contribute to the internationalisation of SMEs. In terms of creating international business opportunity, learning is a social issue that fosters the internationalisation of SMEs through those socially co-created and constructed opportunities. I therefore define an entrepreneur as a creator of opportunity, whose social actions creating entrepreneurial opportunity foster the internationalisation of SMEs. As mentioned above, those kinds of actions are about social learning.
2.3 Earlier work on organisational learning applied in the international entrepreneurship field of research

Organisational learning has been studied by understanding the processes of exploration and exploitation of knowledge within it (see March 1991). That type of research has much to do with the research on international business opportunities, which can be found where the fields of entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship intersect (see McDougall & Oviatt 2000). In that sense, organisational learning is a part of the process of entrepreneurship flowing from the RBV towards knowledge. In the RBV, existing information and knowledge facilitate transformation and become a firm’s resources available for business development (see Huber 1991).

The current literature has approached social learning in the context of MNEs (e.g. Acs, Dana & Jones 2003, Saarenketo et al. 2004). Such studies try to find a way to overcome the basic assumption of the transfer of information and knowledge as a basis of learning. In the context of MNEs, the transfer of technology as a source of organisational learning is natural (see Shane 2000). However, it seems that the importance of SMEs is growing all the time (see Acs et al. 2003). This shows the importance of entrepreneurial actions as the basis of international business opportunities, whether they occur in the context of a born global, late starter, joint international venture (JIV) or even in an MNE. Such an assumption disrupts the ideas of the RBV. More precisely, as long as social learning is seen as a process that makes a firm’s critical actors (the entrepreneur, for example) co-create the learning target (such as an international business opportunity) on the way (see Engeström 2001), the assumptions of resource heterogeneity, resource immobility, and inelastic supply lose their meaning as explanations for why learning in and/or between firms create an opportunity to cross borders and internationalise business activities (cf. Hjorth 2007). For instance, the updated version of the Uppsala model proposed by Johansson and Vahlne (2009) acknowledges that the learning related to international business opportunities is an incremental process that helps an entrepreneur to cross national borders and therefore to internationalise the business activities. This happens because of the networks which the entrepreneurs operate in (see Schweizer et al. 2010). However, those assumptions share the underlying idea of resources as the basic premises of information and knowledge (see Penrose 1959).

The creation view of (international) business opportunities assumes that learning is a cyclical, co-created and constructed process that happens in a social
environment (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataraman 2003). That is why it should be studied purely as a socially constructive matter (see Berger & Luckmann 1966, Gergen 2001). As Juho (2011) suggests, which are the relevant knowledge and networks depends on the business context and related changes, in that the business-related context can influence the value of that knowledge and those networks. This is because knowledge and networks are not stable but change over time. As Engeström (2001) states, knowledge is a moving target. Because that kind of moving target is of the type that should be learned, making sense of such knowledge is complex. In this essay, I follow the ideas of Engeström (1987, 2001), treating the shared object as a learning target. The interpretation implies that knowledge is constructed and co-created in the social process. Consequently, organisational learning is seen as learning that happens at the organisational level between individuals.

2.4 The cycle of social learning in the field of international entrepreneurship

Social learning is always embedded in its context (Engeström 2001). I approach social learning through the object that the actors share. That shared object is a target that the actors are trying to reach in order to reach a mutual understanding of it. In this essay, the empirical illustration of such a shared object is an international business opportunity (cf. Holt 2008). It seems that the business opportunities, whether created in an international or a national context, are social constructions of what the actors construct and co-create in the process of entrepreneurial social learning (cf. Shane 2000). Social constructivists refer to the objectification of reality to the groups of people or the organisation as knowledge claims (see Berger and Luckmann 1966). More precisely, the shared object is something that is worked towards by two or more individuals collaborating.

The difference between the theories of social learning and the ideas of information or knowledge transfer is that ‘there is no competent teacher who knows what is to be learned because people and organisations are all the time learning something that is not stable’ (Engeström 2001: 137). In that sense, there may be no ready-made information or knowledge to transfer, because they are the individuals (the entrepreneurs) who construct and co-create that kind of information and knowledge in their social processes. In this essay, I also follow this line of research. An important element in the approach taken by Engeström (2001) is that learning is seen as a cyclical and social process (see Figure 1), this
is similar to Oviatt and McDougall’s (1994) perception of internationalisation. It constructs itself again over time, and starts from the problematisation of the current state of affairs by finding a contradiction. This is what Forsgren (2002) and Saarenketo et al. (2004) also ask scholars to do in the future, but without investigating the parts of the process of entrepreneurial social learning, they argue that experimental knowledge has already been thoroughly investigated.

1. Questioning
   (what is possible?)

2. Secondary contradictions,
   double bind (where is it possible?)

3. Modeling the new
   solution (how to reach
   what is possible?)

4. Examining the new
   model (bundling ideas of
   an opportunity)

5. Implementing the
   new model (testing
   the opportunity)

6. Reflecting on the process
   (comparing the old practices with
   an opportunity)

7. Consolidating the new practice
   (reproducing the cycle of social
   learning)

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**Fig. 1 Expansive cycle of learning actions (Engeström 2000b: 970, Engeström 2001: 152, published by the permission of Routlege, Taylor & Francis Group)**

Figure 1 describes the expansive cycle of learning actions. The process of social learning begins when a group problematise an issue (phase 1). The social group then creates a “secondary contradiction” by analysing the history and context in which they are embedded (phase 2). Next, the group models a new solution that they jointly determine is better than the old one (phase 3). They then create a new model by bundling their ideas together (phase 4). The next stage is implementation through testing in everyday situations (phase 5). Dynamics
change as group members reflect on earlier processes, comparing them with new opportunities (phase 6). This means that the process of social learning, which targets consolidation of new practices (phase 7), is full of social contradictions that repeatedly reproduce the same process. These social contradictions are therefore the sources of learning that lead to new models in everyday practices (Engeström 2000a, Engeström 2000b, Engeström & Blackler 2005).

Using this model as a conceptual framework for a study that considers internationalisation runs counter to earlier work that starts with the ideas of experimentalism as a source of entrepreneurial learning (see Huber 1991). Rather than being an experimental issue, the cycle of expansive social actions reflects how international business opportunities are created in the process of international entrepreneurship. A by-product of that process is an internationalisation of SMEs (Schweizer et al. 2010). For instance, Saarenketo et al. (2004) list complementary ways to accelerate learning when a firm is trying to internationalise through networking, grafting, imitating and searching. This is based on a knowledge-based view of the firm that assumes an understanding of technological discontinuities and the ability to manage knowledge acquisition in turbulent markets. However, this is related to the dynamic capabilities that are based on the assumption that information and knowledge already exist and that an entrepreneur is using and combining them in order to discover business opportunities (Shane 2000). Although business opportunities can be discovered in that way, there is still a lack of studies that consider the case where an entrepreneur has no or very little information and knowledge to hand when starting to act on business opportunities (Baker & Nelson 2005, Alvarez & Barney 2007). The social learning theory helps to explain the internationalisation of SMEs from the perspective of creating opportunity. In that sense, in this study, entrepreneurial social learning is defined as an expansive cycle of learning actions that the entrepreneurs (more precisely, the creators of opportunity) construct and co-create when collaborating across national boundaries without regard to the nationality of their firms.
3 Methods and research outline

In this essay I look at a collaboration project between Danish and Finnish entrepreneurs, Nicholas and Michael (imagined names). My involvement came about through conducting storytelling-type interviews at two firms (there were two interviews at each). Each interview lasted about two hours. The first subject firm was founded in Oulu, Finland in 2007. The second firm was founded in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2004. The interviews were conducted between autumn 2009 and autumn 2010. Both firms operate in the information technology sector. One of their products is online software used by doctors when investigating academically and treating brain stroke. In the interviews, both entrepreneurs recounted the history of their firms, particularly in relation to the brain stroke software, they talked about how the software program came about and developed, and how it could develop in the future. The themes that were talked on interviews can be found as appendixes of this essay. I analysed the social actions that fostered the internationalisation of their firms through their collaborative project on what I refer to here as the brain stroke software.

In the first round of interviews, the entrepreneurs at both firms told how their firms came about. The second round of interviews focused on the brain stroke software and its phases of development. The software was developed using open source technology. This meant that the employees did not usually meet each other, but worked on the project at different locations around the world. The aim of the collaborative project was to build an online tool that would make it easier for doctors to handle information on patients.

The storytelling method helped researchers to analyse what Steyaert and Katz (2004), Gartner (2010) and Dawson and Hjorth (2011) highlight: the uniqueness, rather than the empirically generalisable form, of entrepreneurship. The collaborative effort between the Danish and Finnish entrepreneurs is based on social actions as part of their lives. This kind of social action is not only about business, it is based on their desire to become something other than what they were at the beginning of the story (i.e. entrepreneurs). This type of business area is interdisciplinary: computing, medicine and community building. Consequently, there is a need for the co-created learning process that makes it possible to both step up to the next level in business and to co-create value that is not measurable in economic terms – saving lives. The firms cannot develop the brain stroke software without understanding the needs of those involved (doctors working for
hospitals). Therefore, three kinds of actors – the Finnish firm, the Danish firm and the doctors – influence this collaborative project (see Table 1).

Table 1. The actors in the collaborative project between the Finnish and Danish firms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Principal issue of interest</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Skills required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finnish firm</td>
<td>Interesting work and making money</td>
<td>Creating a firm</td>
<td>Open source technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish firm</td>
<td>Actualising talents</td>
<td>Finding a partner</td>
<td>Programming software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>Treating patients well &amp; publishing</td>
<td>Knowing patients</td>
<td>Treating and writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 shows the collaboration between the Finnish and Danish firms was a success in the sense that Michael, the Finnish entrepreneur wanted to work on interesting projects and make money at the same time, and Nicholas, the Dane wanted to actualise his talents through his current and previous work experience. Although the Nicholas did not have enough technical skills like the programming skills needed to create the software, Michael was a technical engineer from Oulu University in northern Finland, he was an expert in open source technology. The doctors wished to understand their patients better so that they could improve the treatment of those with a brain stroke in hospitals and then publish articles on the subject. Through social interaction and combining their skills and interests – namely social learning – they were able to create a new cross-border business opportunity.

All the stories related by the entrepreneurs were transcribed, and summarised so they might be analysed. I used the summary to highlight the important parts of the interview transcriptions – that is, the excerpts that reflected how the brain stroke software was created and developed as a new international business opportunity and as a result of which social actions. While highlighting the important parts of the transcriptions, it seemed that the crucial citations did not chronologically match the summary of the story of the birth and development of the brain stroke software. This was because my summary was a retrospective description of what had happened as the two entrepreneurs were creating and developing that software, but the stories were a verbal recounting of remembered feelings and events surrounding that period of development. Consequently, I extracted the parts that showed critical social actions from the summary. I then rearranged those pieces of the story in accordance with the critical excerpts that we had highlighted in the transcripts.

After the summary of the birth and development of the brain stroke software had been rearranged, the story no longer made any sense as a retrospective
illustration. The reason was that now it was organised according to how the entrepreneurs highlighted the critical parts as parts of their personal stories about their work. This is natural, because both entrepreneurs were talking about their part in developing the software in a free way (as a story). At that point, the expansive cycle of learning actions came into play. I reanalysed the highlighted parts of the summary in terms of the expansive cycle of learning actions proposed by Engeström (2000b, 2001). Before that, the rearranged summary told the story of the development of the software but the timeline made little sense. After reanalysing the story in terms of the expansive cycle of learning actions (see Figure 1), it seemed that the critical events that the entrepreneurs were willing to highlight in interviews matched our summary of the development of the brain stroke software. This is because the expansive cycle of learning actions works according to linear time. Therefore, the critical events highlighted in interviews in a non-linear manner opened up the possibility of discussing what social learning is about in terms of the international collaboration project in the linear process of entrepreneurial social learning. My analysis reflects how the entrepreneurs described their knowledge claims.

This is in line with the narrative style of interviews and it ‘opens a window to the diverse worlds that key actors in an organisation construct, and often act upon as if they were real’ (Søderberg 2006: 413). In this way, the reality is constructed and co-created through claims of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann 1966). According to the research of Czarniawska (1997) on logo-scientific knowledge, scientific knowledge does not differ from any other types of claims of knowledge in a society. In contrast, she writes that all claims of knowledge are actually based on stories, just as the production of logo-scientific knowledge is. In addition, Pentland (1999: 722) writes: ‘Our literature is filled with statements about relationships between constructs that claim to offer an explanation (e.g. “this regression model explains 30 percent of the variance in Y”). But the explanation lies in the story that connects X and Y – not the regression model itself.’ Dawson and Hjorth (2011) also write about rhetorical strategies that they consider to be part of the production of academic knowledge. This reflects how socially-constructed reality is created within social interaction. In the next section, I look at the creation of international business opportunity. This is based on claims of knowledge made by the Nicholas and Michael, the Danish and Finnish entrepreneurs as well as by doctors treating brain stroke in hospitals around the world.
4 An international business opportunity: a story of the process of entrepreneurial social learning

In this chapter, I examine the interaction between Finnish and Danish firms that developed brain stroke software. The story shows that the interactive elements (the phases of the expansive cycle of learning actions) are not only the basis of business, but also the mediators that would allow the two would-be entrepreneurs to become something other than what they were when the process began.

4.1 Phase 1: Questioning – what is possible?

Their story starts with their desire to do something relevant with their lives. Their intentions were not only business-related, they included personal life issues that made them think about themselves in a way that encouraged them to eventually found their firms. Michael was living in Finland, and studying at the Faculty of Technology at the University of Oulu. He was close to graduating and found the Finnish entrepreneurship environment uninspiring, and felt that Finnish business organisations would not be able to offer him the opportunity to do something that really mattered to him. He spoke about his career in the following terms:

“It was kind of like an issue that if I worked for somebody else, then it could be Google or Yahoo or someone. But a traditional, small, software company from Oulu is like, hmm, it is more kind of like an end point rather than the apex of your career.”

As he approached the end of his studies, Michael asked his friends to join him in establishing a firm. He was very ambitious and wanted to do things differently. Just before he started mandatory military service, he was working for another firm, but encountered many problems there. He was exhausted, because it turned out that nothing was happening in the firm. He said:

“There was nothing productive going on in that firm. People were just playing with funky computers.”

Having completed his military service, he found the firm that he had been working for had been sold. Shortly afterwards, it went bankrupt. He told that:
“I had a strong vision about how things could be done differently. So, right now, the open source and social communities are going to be about everyday stuff, but at the time I was founding my firm they were strange concepts for many people.”

Michael was knowledgeable about open source and other web-based tools, and this made it possible for him to create and develop many different types of software and mobile phone products. After recognising this, he decided to start a firm with friends who were also studying at the University of Oulu.

At this time, the other entrepreneur, Nicholas, was living in Copenhagen. Having obtained a law degree, he later returned to University to study economics. He worked for some time in the Danish civil service, during which he endured long periods at home on sick leave due to a back injury. He then decided to start a firm. Nicholas said:

“Of course I tried to look at options of what I should do. Should I search for a new job or should I try to do something on my own? And I thought why not. I had held lots of positions over the years, so why not try to do something on my own?”

The problem with his back was the impetus to start something new and unrelated to what he had done before and that could be more meaningful than any work he had done up to that point. Like his Finnish counterpart, Nicholas decided to start a firm based on open source technology. Nicholas was not as good as Michael with open source technology, but he found that it could provide the relevant foundation for a firm that could make a difference to current business life, and, in his words, ‘in order to reach the next level’. He found his life boring, because he was on sick leave and wanted to do some form of work that mattered to him. That was his primary contradiction. Both individuals wanted to create a work environment in which they could fulfil their potential to be better people.

For Michael, the question was how to communicate his talents as a professional open source expert. Meanwhile, Nicholas wanted to find somebody who could help him to develop an environment in which he could do interesting things, he did not like staying at home, waiting for his back to get better. Basically, they were both asking themselves how they might escape the circumstances they found themselves in. In this story, the following knowledge claim explains what was going on in the first phase of social learning:
**Knowledge claim 1:** Two individuals started to act because that was the only possible thing they could imagine doing in order to get away from the uncomfortable circumstances of their lives.

### 4.2 Phase 2: Secondary contradictions, double bind – where is it possible?

Every person has a personal history. To create a better life on that basis, it seems that people go through their histories and the current state of social affairs. This is the second phase of the process of social learning that we found in the Finnish and Danish firms. Although open source and other web-based systems made it possible to work on-line and therefore to be easily international (people anywhere in the world may interact at any time), this was not one of Nicholas’s ambitions. When speaking about the initial phase of setting up the firm, he said:

“I’m not the kind of guy who does a lot of, I mean, exact strategic planning.”

Later (when talking about his international ambitions) he said:

“We don’t really care, because we do not have an organisation that is a split between countries.”

In contrast, the way he worked was based on his idea of creating something relevant to help people achieve their aim of doing things in a better way and trying to reach the next level in business. He knew someone who was working on software that made it easier for doctors to investigate and treat brain stroke. He found that the challenge in that software was that it was an off-line system. He described it as ‘one-user’ software: doctors could add the details of their patients, such as arrival time at the hospital, delay before treatment and outcome of the treatment. Because of this, it would be difficult for an academic researcher to use this software, the data would always be hospital-dependent in nature. A researcher would be unable to easily compare different hospitals and treatment practices. Instead, a researcher would have to gather different pieces of data from several hospitals. Michael said:

“We have the deep technical knowledge. It was serendipity that our Danish partner used the same technical system. And, of course, the doctors have an interest in treating patients well. It is about aiming in a certain direction rather than shooting in every direction.”
The second part of the story considers the how the two subjects found ways to set up their own companies. Simultaneously, but not in a planned way, they each had the same desire to do something relevant with their lives. They had the required technology and desire to do things in a way they preferred: an opportunity-creating way, where the plan is not the most important thing. The most important thing is to have imagination, which then drives the desire to become something other than what they were at the beginning of the process. They met in an online conference and started to talk about whether they could do something together, what they could do was not that clear in the beginning. In this way, they had already started to act. At that point, participating in an online conference was the only option they could think of that might lead to improving their less desirable circumstances:

Knowledge claim 2: The online conference gave these two individuals the space needed to overcome the boring and unproductive parts of their lives.

4.3 Phase 3: Modelling the new solution – how to reach what is possible?

The next part of the story describes the early interaction between the two subjects. Their first meeting was online because they had been using similar web-based resources in their earlier work. Nicholas realised that he could offer a task to Michael. This was only a small task, because Nicholas wanted to build trust first, knowing that the possible collapse of this collaborative task would have meant only a small economic loss to his recently founded firm. Immediately after this, they began to work together to develop software – to share an object – that could contribute to research on and treatment of brain stroke. This research and treatment was carried out by doctors. They met in Stockholm in order to discuss the project and the resultant software. It was about modelling their solution to the problems to make their lives more interesting. Some of their future clients from the medical profession also attended the meeting in Stockholm. The aim of this two-day meeting was to figure out the details of the project. Nicholas said:

“We had a long discussion about how to organise the knowledge that they (the doctors) wanted to put into this registration and reporting. I mean, a lot of discussion about the medical part, not so much about the technical.”
In order to develop the brain stroke software, Michael and Nicholas had to share their visions of a collaboration. This allowed them to see the fundamental problems that existed in the offline version of the current software, which had been developed by another firm. The following part of the story shows this. It turned out that the meeting in Stockholm was critical. Nicholas said:

“Some knowledge (patient details that the doctors added into the offline software), something is there and something is there. They saw many individual things that together formed a protocol for doing research.”

The project evolved in a different direction than its more traditional counterparts. The idea was to put information technology resources to the test (how to gather information from the brain stroke patients) rather than to consult doctors first and then to look at how information technology could help in the challenges they faced when treating and investigating brain stroke. It appears that the online interaction between Michael and Nicholas led to the development of the brain stroke software. Nicholas found the contradictory nature of the current version of the offline-based software, and suggested to Michael that they could collaborate to improve things. That is the shared object they were targeting: an object that eventually emerged as an international business opportunity – but that outcome was not obvious at the beginning of the process. Rather, it was co-created and constructed along the way. It became apparent that the way to get the more interesting lives they desired was to carry out social actions together. The following knowledge claim shows this:

Knowledge claim 3: Seemingly unproductive characteristics of two individuals (boredom and anxiety) opened up a contradiction in life that then inspired them to collaborate and share ideas about a better way of acting and behaving through businesses.

4.4 Phase 4: Examining the new model – bundling ideas about an opportunity

It was obvious that the project would be about developing the existing software, taking it from the one-user version to an online multi-user tool that would help doctors to analyse the brain stroke treatment details in a more efficient way. Furthermore, they could compare their own treatments to those of other hospitals using this system and benchmark advances in treatment. A crucial goal is that the
patients receive the correct treatment. When discussing how the software works in practice, Nicholas said:

“If the logistics work well then nearly all the patients will recover fully, or almost recover fully. However, if, say, an elderly patient with a brain stroke is treated as if she has a bleed, as is often the case, she may not recover and could die.”

There is a critical difference between a bleed and a stroke, and so the software helps doctors to treat patients in the correct way. Consequently, one function of the software is to gather relevant information on patients. This will enable doctors to better understand the consequences of certain kinds of treatments. When talking about the features of the software created, Michael said:

“For doctors, it leads to best practice, which is needed to allow a patient to be treated in the correct timescale. As a result, the outcome of the treatment will be much better.”

In such a way, they deconstructed their idea of the shared object (the ambiguous idea of collaboration made in the third phase) into the practical product that they could offer. It was the next phase of social learning that finally became the process of creating an international business opportunity. Current theories on learning have analysed the transfer of information and knowledge (see Teece 1977, Huber 1991, March 1991). However, in this context, it is more about interpreting imagination. That is, two individuals agreeing to meet in an online seminar was not based on the rational idea of transferring knowledge or information in terms of internationalisation. In fact, there was nothing to transfer. Their expertise was a model for doing something that had not been planned when the process started. In order to make it clearer and more understandable, they bundled together ideas about a possible opportunity.

To summarise, we deduce that the major change brought about by Finn (Michael) and Dane (Nicholas) was the idea of developing the software from a single-user version to a multi-user version. The social action behind this part of the social learning process can therefore be expressed as the following knowledge claim (phase 4 in the process of social learning):
Knowledge claim 4: Life saving was an action that could be actualised when two persons bundled their ideas together and shared the idea of collaborating.

4.5 Phase 5: Implementing the new model – testing the opportunity

The process of social learning requires a shared object. The story of the collaborative effort (the project around the brain stroke software) is about constructing this type of shared object. Because the doctors actually hold two positions simultaneously – medical practitioners and academic researchers – I found that the two-fold nature of the software was crucial. When discussing the benefits of the software, Nicholas said:

“And then, of course, for the research, it’s, I mean, doctors have this special thing, talking with patients and researchers. They hold both positions at the same time and for their entire career. It’s very important that they have a research career. Otherwise, they cannot be promoted to a better position at the hospital. And this system is, of course, a part of all this very highly rated research. “

By using an online multi-user version of the software, the doctors are able to gather academically rigorous information about how the different types of treatments and/or length of delay influence the outcome of specific treatments. In that sense, the software is not that complicated. It just makes it possible for doctors to gather relevant information on their patients so that they can create best practices, making it easier to understand how the brain stroke should be treated. The most outstanding issue is that the software should enhance the two sides of the same phenomenon: treatment and research. However, when talking about this, Michael said:

“At that phase, I would say that it is more to do with serendipity than planning. I mean that even though we have gathered those opportunities, they could not be known beforehand. For example, we couldn’t know that we would be a part of this kind of network. It couldn’t have been forecast at the beginning.”

The above quote fosters the idea of serendipity and lucky accidents in entrepreneurship. Even though the product itself (the software) is supposed to be a tool that allows doctors to treat and investigate brain stroke systematically, the
creation of the software was not particularly systematic. That is why the meaning of the exact planning in terms of networks – as a source of information or knowledge – is not so important in the case of SMEs that are developing in a social way. As the earlier phases of the social learning indicate, the development of this kind of software was based on discussions with the doctors (the users of software) so Michael and Nicholas could find a way to actualise their entrepreneurial potential in a social way. However, the issue of becoming a part of this kind of network (consisting of doctors as the users of their software) had not been planned. It was serendipitous. However, responding to this serendipity led them to co-create and construct the shared object (a possible business opportunity). They tested this by holding discussions with the doctors so that they could create an international business opportunity on that basis. From the perspective of the entrepreneurs, this can be expressed as the following knowledge claim:

Knowledge claim 5: The shared idea of collaboration between two persons was tested as a possible business opportunity in the network of clients that was based on serendipity.

4.6 Phase 6: Reflecting on the process – comparing the old practices with an opportunity

It was important to understand the issues involved from different perspectives when developing the brain stroke software. The collaboration between Michael and Nicholas made this possible. The next part of the story describes the major benefits that arose from their set of interdisciplinary skills making the product possible. The challenging part in the development of that type of software is that the developers need to have an overlapping set of skills. They need to understand the client side (the brain stroke) but they also need to know how open source and other web-based online technologies help a client (the doctors) to use information when treating patients as well as when doing academic research. Michael said:

“They (the doctors) have a need. If they want to benefit from the research on brain stroke, they need to get statistically big populations. But nobody in the hospital world is big enough for that, even whole nations are quite small in this regard.”
After the meeting in Stockholm, Michael and Nicholas started to work on the software. Because of the number of requirements of the brain stroke software, it was extremely important that they collaborated on their creation. In doing so, it was possible to overlap the different types of knowledge that were required to get the software to work properly. Nicholas said:

“Sometimes Dyke (one of his employees) has a problem that he cannot solve, and so he calls Michael. I mean, this is outside of this project (on the research on and treatment of brain stroke). It is kind of partners working together.”

On the same issue, he later said:

“We learn a lot from him (Michael). Often we are simply asking him how something should be done and so we can get things done very fast. Otherwise, it would take a long time to do it. This is how we learn things and sit in the other context also. That’s very important for us (for Nicholas). I mean, you can see my own background, it’s not in software. So this is a good way of learning. And he (Michael) is very capable of teaching us.”

The doctors involved with the project treat the brain stroke as a disease, but they are also serious academic researchers. In terms of software, this means that the Finnish and Danish firms have to consider both functions when developing their program. Then, the collaborative effort (the research project and treatment of brain stroke) is based on an interdisciplinary set of skills. Those skills not only run counter to each other because of the different objectives of the brain stroke software, but also complement each other. In that sense, the phase that social learning theory considers the sixth phase seems to be weaker than the first five. The reason is that the entrepreneurial story of the creation of the software only considers what those two individuals were doing, it was not about comparing the new practice in the form of the software with the old offline version that existed before their collaboration. This could have happened through the entrepreneurs checking the earlier version of the offline software (existing practice) and making a new version of it (the opportunity). They did not do that. Instead, they recreated the software in line with its new meaning.

It seems that phase 6 plays a weaker role in the process of entrepreneurial social learning, compared with that of the first five. This fosters the idea that there is a tendency to focus on the actions of the entrepreneurs in the creation of new international business opportunities. In terms of social learning theory, this is
somewhat contradictory, because the basic idea is that existing and new versions are compared. However (and just because of that), this finding suggests that the entrepreneurs in this story are good at creating things that they find useful in their businesses and lives. As the Michael and Nicholas both state, there was no intention to internationalise at the beginning of the story. It just happened because of their social actions and the serendipity that they highlight when talking about the current status of their software. This can be expressed as the following knowledge claim:

\textit{Knowledge claim 6: Acting on an international business opportunity involves an overlapping set of skills, in which existing practices could be compared ... but not really in practice.}

\textbf{4.7 Phase 7: Consolidating the new practice – reproducing the cycle of social learning}

The nature of the cycle of expansive learning is to reproduce itself again and again. In the collaborative effort between the Finnish and Danish firms, this means that they are actually everyday practices that the entrepreneurs at the Finnish and Danish firms reproduce as a form of international business opportunity. It is about social learning over time. This is how the collaboration project between the Danish and Finnish firms is built and its boundaries set. It starts from a personal desire to do something relevant. It is actualised as a new collaborative project in this case. Learning makes the collaboration possible. The set of overlapping skills is the most important issue in this context. The project is ongoing and is based on open source and other web-based technologies – the “everyday stuff” that was mentioned by Michael. Even though the organisation of the project itself (the collaborative effort to develop the software) is flexible, the organisation behind their work works within a strict framework. Nicholas said:

\textit{“It’s simply a way of doing things, it’s always very organised. But the organisation itself, it’s not like a traditional company. Open source developers ...it’s more of an open process itself, but it’s very controlled, managers, workshops and everything. [We have] very strict rules about how you can put stuff into the software.”}

As the development of the software involves learning an overlapping set of skills, organising how to enhance the software is about continuous learning, construction
and co-creation to make things together and to make software that better meets the needs of their clients. Nicholas and Michael are developing the software within a social interaction that crosses national borders. However, internationalisation seems to be a hindrance in the economic sense. That also provides more evidence for the emphasis of actions rather than planning as a basis of the process of creating international business opportunities. In addition, there is no information and/or knowledge that can be acquired. Knowing about the needs of the doctors, for example, is based on interactions with them so that the entrepreneurs can better understand what they should do. Michael characterised his firm:

“We are a small firm, but our network is international. The international focus does not mean that we are necessarily more successful. Actually, it may be the opposite. Maybe our attempt to be international requires us to waste too many resources.”

Through this kind of action, it is possible to be employed by a firm and to work for themselves. Focusing in a certain direction (see phase 2) can be interpreted as a desire to do things that are not about everything, but about something special that they find interesting and an important part of their lives – even though it might also involve wasting resources. During discussions about the early phases of developing the software, Nicholas said:

“I suggested getting this access database online instead. That is actually how it happened, six months ago I got this task. We went online, then first of all plunged into these systems we provide – my first online solution.”

It is noteworthy that in the excerpt above Nicholas talks about ‘my first online solution’ rather than about “our product” or “the production of our firms”. This was repeated many times in interviews and it shows that the software is important to him. In terms of the research on international entrepreneurship, this opens up a question about the desires of the entrepreneurs and the consequences of actualising those desires. When it comes to the seventh phase of social learning theory, it seems to us that the desires behind the collaboration between the two firms investigated in this study reflect the reproductive nature of the expansive cycle of learning actions. Like the sixth phase, the seventh phase also plays a weaker role when compared to the first five. The entrepreneurs highlighted how they are doing things that are relevant for them, even if it wastes resources. They did not problematise their own work that much because it was so important for
them to do things in the way they do. We therefore express the following claim of knowledge in terms of that kind of desirable action:

\textit{Knowledge claim 7: Actions taken in response to possibilities are important at the beginning of an entrepreneurial social learning and they stay important over time, reproducing them is about doing the same things again and again.}

The reproductive nature of entrepreneurial social learning is connected with existing networks and possible information/knowledge, but that is not the main point of this account. In this context, the crucial issue is to carry out the actions in a process in which the outcome or target is unclear. Consequently, the solution found by the Michael and Nicholas is not only a solution for the doctors who treat and academically investigate brain stroke patients, it is also a solution to their desire to become who they want to be (individuals doing relevant things in their lives). One side effect is that they met and found a beneficial shared object in the form of the brain stroke software that they could work on together. The international business opportunity emerged out of everyday life, and was not the outcome of a specific intention to internationalise. In contrast, the process of social learning seems to create many types of issues, internationalisation being just one.
5 Implications and contributions to research on internationalisation, business opportunities and organisational learning

The purpose of this study was to explicate the internationalisation of SMEs through a cycle of expansive learning so that we might better understand how internationalisation as a by-product of entrepreneurial actions can be created. I analysed the story of a collaborative project between a Finnish and a Danish firm. I found that the actions taken to create opportunities opened up the possibility of internationalising their online software product, which helps doctors to treat and investigate brain stroke. These actions shown in phases one to five of the expansive cycle of learning actions were highlighted in the story, but the reflections and problematisation of their actions shown in phases six and seven of the expansive cycle of learning actions were not emphasised very strongly. The story of the two entrepreneurs revealed the following:

1. Internationalisation: The internationalisation of SMEs is not always intentional. Even if internationalisation is gradual, stepwise and well ordered (such as in the Uppsala model proposed by Johanson & Vahlne 1977, 2009, Ellis 2000) or dynamic, accelerated and even chaotic (as proposed by, for example, Oviatt & McDougall 1994, Knight & Cavusgil 1996, Bell et al. 2003, Andersson & Wictor 2003, Ellis 2011), the issue of social learning remains. More precisely, the expansive cycle of learning actions as a conceptual framework provides evidence for the argument put forward by Schweizer et al. (2010): the internationalisation of SMEs can be a by-product of entrepreneurial actions.

The core issue is to understand that social learning does not happen only inside a firm, it happens between firms. It is also important to understand that internationalisation occurs through the entrepreneur’s actions, which are socially embedded into the context. In this study, I found that the entrepreneurial actions of the two entrepreneurs could stir a process of social learning, in which the outcome is not always clear. The desired outcome might merely be a better life, rather than the development of an international business. When working towards this kind of target, the phases of social learning actions are expansive in their very nature. However, how the expansive social learning process starts is crucial, because it influences the actions of the entrepreneurs at the outset, even though the end of the process is not clear.
2. Business opportunities: business opportunities are not always located ‘out there’, existing without the imaginative capabilities of entrepreneurs, as some perspectives on the recognition and discovery of opportunity suggest (see Schumpeter 1934, Kirzner 1997, Baron 2006, Ellis 2011). In contrast, the story of the two entrepreneurs above provides evidence for the argument that a business opportunity can be the outcome of social actions, because people just find something interesting and start to work on it, not because of the ambition to create a new venture (cf. Ardichvili et al. 2003, Park 2005).

Venture creation through social actions happens as a part of society, not only as a part of the economy, because there is a desire to become something other than what a person is (see Hjorth et al. 2008). Consequently, a business opportunity is created and so the assumption of existing business opportunities – as an objective phenomena – is problematised in this study. More precisely, the story of the collaboration between the Finnish and Danish entrepreneurs shows that when resources are scarce, there is no such a thing as an existing means-ends framework. In contrast, the initial stages of entrepreneurial social learning lead to the process of creating a new business opportunity. In order to construct and co-create this kind of business opportunity, the creator of the business opportunity should be aware of serendipity because that is how it can emerge (cf. Görling & Rehn 2008, Dew 2009).

3. Organisational learning: an entrepreneurial version of organisational learning is about creating new knowledge rather than transferring existing knowledge. In fact, the assumption about resources (e.g. Penrose 1959) and experimental learning starts from the idea that something is already there at the beginning of the entrepreneurial process. However, the story of our two entrepreneurs shows that sometimes there is nothing to learn in the beginning, there is only a desire to become something other than what you are right now in the process of entrepreneurship (cf. Teece 1977, Huber 1991).

As Saarenketo et al. (2004) suggest, the knowledge-based view can problematise the stable resource-based view in the rapidly changing and turbulent business context, but still does not offer a tool for analysing the expansive processes of social actions that I discovered from the story above. It shows that social learning is a process in which the object of learning changes all the time. Therefore, the expansive cycle of learning makes it possible to explore the process of creating opportunity because the basic assumption of the approach is that there are no ready-made means to an end or known outcomes at the beginning of the process. As a learning process, entrepreneurial learning seems to be of a special kind, in the sense that the later part of the expansive cycle of
learning actions – reflecting on the process and consolidating the new practice – does not matter as much as the early part – the primary contradiction, historicity, modelling a new solution, bundling the ideas together, and testing the functionality of the new model. It means that the entrepreneurial process of organisational learning is a good example of knowledge creation, but perhaps not the best possible example of the exploitation of that knowledge (cf. March 1991).

This essay suggests that entrepreneurial actions can make it possible for SMEs to internationalise their actions in response to international opportunities. In that way, the behavioural approach proposed by Cyert and March (1963) can be viewed afresh from the perspective of social learning theory. In this essay, I found that social learning theory provides a way to understand how the processes of entrepreneurial learning take place in a context in which existing resources and knowledge are limited. In such circumstances, there is not that much to learn at the beginning, the object of such learning needs to be co-created and constructed on the way. Then, the shared object, such as an international business opportunity, can be created (see Figure 1). One by-product can be the internationalisation of a SME.
6 Discussion and directions for future research

As an approach, entrepreneurial social learning seems to provide a relevant basis for understanding the phenomenon of the internationalisation of SMEs. The reason is that the entrepreneurial actions that led to the creation of opportunity are based on learning (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, Hohenthal et al. 2003, Johanson & Vahlne 2009). However, earlier studies on the internationalisation of SMEs are based on the assumptions that information and knowledge, as issues to learn, are stable matters that can be transferred so that internationalisation can take place. In addition, the researchers approaching social learning in the studies of the internationalisation of firms (e.g. Saarenketo et al. 2004, Becker-Ritterspach, Saka-Helmhout & Hothen 2010) start from the idea that there is usually an intention to establish a firm in international markets. This essay suggests that this is not always the case. The underlying reason for the internationalisation of a SME might be the desire to have a better life. I studied this element of entrepreneurial social learning using the expansive cycle of learning actions in this essay (Engeström 1987, 2001).

The novelty of Engeström’s (2000b, 2001) cycle of expansive learning as a conceptual framework is that learning and development take place as a ‘horizontal sideways’ rather than as a vertical top-down process, in which the teacher can drop knowledge onto the shoulders of those who intend to learn. As Figure 1 illustrates, the phases of social learning are co-created in a social process. It is a socially constructive phenomenon by nature (see Berger and Luckmann 1966). In that way, the knowledge claims are social creations by those who interact with each other (see Gergen 2001). This happens in a specific context. In this study, the empirical context was the collaborative project that the Danish and Finnish entrepreneurs created and developed together with doctors who were treating and investigating brain stroke in hospitals. Consequently, the project was based on social interaction – none of the participants could have done it alone. An analysis of this essay shows that it is a set of social interactions (entrepreneurial social learning). The ideas of social learning theory (see Engeström 1987, 2001) support that.

The story of the two entrepreneurs working on their collaborative project shows that the role played by later parts of the process of entrepreneurial social learning – comparing earlier versions of the shared object, such as the software they are working on, and transferring ongoing actions into the next expansive
cycle of learning actions is weaker than the role played by the earlier parts – questioning, primary contradiction, modelling a new solution, bundling the ideas together and testing the functionality of the new model. The finding contributes to the prior research on the internationalisation of SMEs, I found that entrepreneurial actions are at the core of discussion on the creation of international business organisations. Therefore, internationalisation is a by-product of entrepreneurial actions that are related to the creation of an international business opportunity. This also shows that the description of whether a firm is a born global, a late starter, a joint international venture or even a multinational giant illustrates the very nature of the internationalisation of firms less than entrepreneurial actions do in cases where firms have few or no resources to hand at the beginning. The reason is that the idea of the transfer of information and/or knowledge is not a primary interest of SMEs where we suspect the number of entrepreneurial actions would be higher than in firms where something already exists. Accordingly, I suggest that future research could explicate what the other by-products, in addition to the internationalisation of SMEs, could be. Then, contextuality and processuality should be taken seriously. The European School of Entrepreneurship approach could help in this (see Hjorth et al. 2008). It is an approach that invites the use of storytelling, for example, as a method of investigating entrepreneurship. In doing so, the areas of interest within entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship come closer to each other. In fact, they share the same interest: entrepreneurial action.
7 Conclusions

When combining research on entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship, social learning theory indicates that the internationalisation of SMEs is located between the studies of international entrepreneurship and organisations as research framed by the theory and sociology of business opportunity creation. In this essay, I found that the major difference between the brokering, resource leverage or stretching and the opportunity-seeking behaviour of internationally-oriented entrepreneurs and the actions of those who are just willing to work together to create a better life, is that there is not always an intention to internationalise in the latter case. However, internationalisation may still happen and, empirically, it may be the starting point of a business, even if unintentionally. In contrast, an influential issue might be the cyclical process of opportunity-creating actions, in which entrepreneurial social learning takes place. Such a process is based on the desire of entrepreneurial learners to become something other than what they are. Those kinds of learners are organizational entrepreneurs that create new social spaces for play and innovation, as this essay suggests.

In that way, the internationalisation of an SME can occur as a by-product of social learning. That is a form of organizational entrepreneurship as a part of societies through business. In this essay, I found that the process of entrepreneurship is also a process of social learning. Here, the emphasis should be put on the start of the process, in which the imaginative power of becoming something other than a person among others creates international business opportunities. Further research on international entrepreneurship could gain interesting insights from examining the context and processes related to that in a more elaborated way. In those kinds of entrepreneurial events, the creative processes of social learning can come to be.

Even thought the analysis of this essay was based on four interviews only, I believe it reflects how the expansive cycle of learning actions took place in the case of collaboration effort of two firms. The reason is that the interviews were done in the storytelling manner. In accordingly with the European School Entrepreneurship (cf. Hjorth & Steyaert 2004) provides a basis for doing that so that we are able to analyse entrepreneurial events. Empirically, this was the aim of this essay. When doing such an analysis, there is a danger that I overanalysed too small pieces of empirical data in order to show how such a process took place (see Dawson & Hjorth 2011). However, it seems that there is a lack of seeing the nature of internationalisation of SMEs as a by-product of entrepreneurial actions.
Therefore, I believe that the storytelling kinds of interviews show the eventuality from the perspective of uniqueness and variety of such an entrepreneurial event better than macro-analyses that try to generalise the findings statistically. That is why the findings of this essay cannot be generalised in terms of the population that covers all the SMEs that are producing web-based tools (such as brain stroke softwares) in an international context. In contrast, the target was to generalize the findings in terms of the existing literature that does not discuss the processes of social learning concerning international business opportunity creation widely enough so far.
References


Appendix 1 – The themes the first interviews

The concept of entrepreneurship and becoming an entrepreneur
The meaning of other people (people outside of the company) in entrepreneurship
Freedom versus responsibilities in entrepreneurship
Analytics versus creativity in entrepreneurship, analytics versus creativity as an employee in the company the other person(s) owns
Agreements in business
Decision making in business
Risk taking in business
Planning in business
Money and richness
The meaning of success in business
Leadership of a company
Personality of yourselves (history, background)
Active versus theoretical men in business
The role models in business making
The idea for business and its development
Customer and the meaning of it in business
Competition
Business plan
Resources in entrepreneurship
Markets
Knowledge and competence in business
The earning logic of the company
The moment of making a positive net result in entrepreneurship
Strategy and the creation of it in business
Working
Customer service and the relationships with customers
Collaborative relationships in business and entrepreneurship
The moment when a company becomes a company
The moment when an entrepreneur becomes an entrepreneur
The role of technology in business and entrepreneurship
Development and learning as an entrepreneur
“The rules” of business
Thinking versus action in entrepreneurship
Loneliness versus collaboration from the perspective of entrepreneurship
Adaptation versus change in entrepreneurship
Change and the attitude towards it
Market position and image in business
Core competence in entrepreneurship
The product in the creation of successful business and the link between the customer and the product
Problems in business
Personality of an entrepreneur
Failure versus success in entrepreneurship
A short memoir, childhood, younghness, adults, siblings, friends, play when you were a child, school, your temper, hobbies, military service, moving into your own house
Growing old
Relationships and having children
Finding one’s own path in life, pondering life
Evaluation of one’s own life, change/different phases of one’s own life
Getting old
Dying

Appendix 2 – the themes in the second interviews

The history of the project
The most important actors in the business
Types of collaboration with the business partners
Possible benefits of those collaborative relationships
Problems of those collaborative relationships
The roles in the different collaborative relationships
Development of software
The future ideas of software
Tools that you are using (open source technology etc.)
The basic (practical) idea of the brain stroke software
The roles between the firm Y (the Danish firm) and the firm X (the Finnish firm) in producing the brain stroke software
The roles of customers/hospitals in producing the brain stroke software
Development phases of the brain stroke software
The birth of the brain stroke software
The collaboration with the hospitals when producing the brain stroke software
Visionary entrepreneurial actions: platforms for (new) businesses in the process of entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Profit-seeking activities, such as the discovery and exploitation of business opportunities, are seen as actions that make it possible to create (new) businesses in a processual way. From this perspective, an individual entrepreneur – a person who learns from the market and thus discovers/exploits a business opportunity – is a focal actor (a unit of analysis). In order to reflect the contextual nature of such a process, I contribute to the discourse on entrepreneuring. I suggest that visionary entrepreneurial actions encourage the development of (new) businesses. I will elaborate upon that by analysing the movie From Dusk Till Dawn in this essay. That image is juxtaposed with an image of an organisational entrepreneur. The movie shows that the shared vision that inspires entrepreneurial actions changes over time, as it does in the case of an organisational entrepreneur working on shared visions. In this way, the entrepreneurial context becomes a social space for play and innovation. The (new) businesses emerge out from that kind of context through a process. To study this, juxtapositions show what kinds of new questions we could ask about entrepreneurship, transformations happen because of changing circumstances.

Keywords: business opportunity, shared vision, social learning, entrepreneurial context, organisational entrepreneur
1 Introduction

There are several reasons why entrepreneurship has been seen as a process that takes place over time. Such a process starts from the individual level: a person is willing to do something on his or her own instead of being hired by somebody else. For example, business opportunities are based on learning actions that could lead to the emergence of a new venture. Collective learning occurs between individuals who are willing to actualise new ideas, understand the market better and then exploit a business opportunity. This happens through the process of social learning. This process consists of learning what other players in the market, such rivals, customers and venture capital investors, do and how they resonate with an individual’s abilities to become part of the process of entrepreneurship. Does this frame the life of an entrepreneur completely? Is there anything else in an entrepreneur’s life? Yes, there is a shared vision that a group of people (e.g. entrepreneurs) is striving for. This creates a context for (new) businesses.

To date, an entrepreneur has been regarded as one who is capable of discovering and exploiting a business opportunity, this can be defined as a situation “in which new goods, services, raw materials, and organizing methods can be introduced and sold at greater than their cost of production” (Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 220). This is an iterative process of entrepreneurial (profit-seeking) actions that disrupt the equilibrium of the market (Schumpeter 1934, Kirzner 1997, Eckhardt & Shane 2003). However, an entrepreneur is not just someone who creates a business opportunity in that way. In contrast, entrepreneurs are currently seen as having many roles to play, such as inspiring social movement and change in a social way (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). Because of this, in this paper, an entrepreneur is considered to be an individual who can influence social movement and change as a part of society. This happens through entrepreneurial visions that change over time.

As Alvarez and Barney (2007) suggest, creation theory and discovery theory are different approaches to investigating entrepreneurial actions in certain types of contexts – where entrepreneurship comes to be (compare with Sarasvathy 1997, 2001). Current studies have responded to this by transcending the context itself in order to better understand the nature of business opportunities (see Companys & McMullen 2007). However, Hjorth, Jones and Gartner (2008: 81) argue that those types of general rules of what a business opportunity is (or is not) have, for example, “been tempted by accounts of entrepreneurship that are removed from context and are thus decontextualized”. This problematises the very nature of
entrepreneuring (Steyeart 2007, Mainela & Puhakka 2009). Consequently, the issue is whether entrepreneurial context affects entrepreneurial actions or vice versa (Gartner 1985, Bird 1988, Steyaert & Katz 2004, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). This inspires the following research question: What types of entrepreneurial actions are needed when creating a context for the process of entrepreneurship – entrepreneuring – through a shared vision? In this essay, I try to answer that.

In this conceptual essay, I argue that entrepreneurial context as a factor that affects entrepreneuring has been well investigated so far. However, there is a lack of understanding about how such a context emerges from the mass of human activities. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the contextual nature of the process of entrepreneurship (entrepreneuring) as entrepreneurial actions are related to the shared vision rather than to a factor (e.g. a nexus between individual and opportunity) that creates entrepreneuring. This essay provides evidence for earlier work, which shows that entrepreneurship is an iterative process of social learning. However, I found that entrepreneurs act first and then think. This disrupts the prevailing idea that sees the discovery and exploitation of business opportunities as social learning.

More precisely, when examining the literature on entrepreneuring, the processes seem to be the ends rather than the means of entrepreneurship. I develop this idea by analysing the movie From Dusk Till Dawn and juxtaposing this with the idea of a hardworking individual. An organisational entrepreneur can be such a person. Therefore, an organisational entrepreneur is a person who co-creates and constructs an entrepreneurial context. The social groups of these kinds of persons are capable of disrupting the reigning order in a society and thus creating social spaces for play and innovation. This shows that the context of (new) businesses is an outcome of what entrepreneurs do. In fact, they actualise a shared vision through their social actions. What happens is that certain kinds of transformations can take place, such as a person who has just been bitten by a vampire transforming into a vampire. This improved understanding could help future scholars to study entrepreneurship in a novel light and help practitioners to build up a platform for (new) businesses, for example. Studying these kinds of platforms responds to a need to analyse images of entrepreneurship – like the representations of what uniqueness and variation are about in entrepreneurship (Gartner 2010).
2 Entrepreneuring

The need to understand the process of entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneuring) better seems to be based on the nature of the work carried out by a post-industrial human. An industrial idea of the processes related to work is stable in nature (Morgan 2006, compare with Steyaert 2007). In the word of Van de Ven and Poole (2005: 1380), “an organisation is always something in some particular state or phase of a process, there is always something there”. This means that an acting subject is a part of the apparatus of production, which is driven by a managerial entrepreneur (i.e. the agent of production). An organisation can thus be characterised as an industrial factory. In the industrial age, such an assumption was obvious, because there was a need to increase productivity (by humans). However, it seems to be that such an apparatus of industrial production no longer works in this way. It is the apparatus of innovation that works nowadays (see Hjorth 2005).

Currently, there is a demand for fostering innovation through people, as the urban lifestyle is increasing. By fostering innovations, new things and aesthetic artefacts construct the world and urban life around us (Hjorth, Johannisson & Steyaert 2003, Rindova, Barry & Ketchen Jr 2009). That is why it is also necessary to update research practices in relation to entrepreneurship (Hjorth et al. 2008, Steyaert 2007). Instead of analysing the individual qualities of an entrepreneur, understanding the context of novelty, movement and change in entrepreneurship could open up discussions about what entrepreneurship is in the post-industrial economy (see Hjorth 2007, Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataraman 2003). This requires scholars of entrepreneurship to investigate the processual and organisational nature of entrepreneuring (Steyaert 2007, Hjorth et al. 2008).

Organisational studies of the process of entrepreneurship are currently emerging, because it seems there is a need for innovation in the post-industrial economy. The work ‘innovation’ derives from the Latin word innovare, which means ‘to renew or change’. This builds up a concept of renewal and change: from in- (into) + novus- (new). Therefore, it is important to understand how the creation – not only the (re)production – of contexts for novelty, movement and change takes place in entrepreneurship. Hjorth (2007: 713) writes: “For some time, focus has shifted from individuals to processes or, more generally, from what something is to how it becomes”. Earlier researchers have responded to this by analysing the very nature of the processes of movement and change in
organisations (e.g. Tsoukas & Chia 2002, Van de Ven & Poole 1995, 2005). For example, Tsoukas and Chia (2002: 570, italics in original) argue that change is:

*The reviewing of actors’ webs of beliefs and habits of action as a result of new experiences obtained through interactions. Insofar as this is an ongoing process, that is, to the extent actors try to make sense of and act coherently in the world, change is inherent in human action. Organisation is an attempt to order the intrinsic flux of human action, to channel it towards certain ends, to give it a particular shape, through generalizing and institutionalizing particular meanings and rules. At the same time, organisation is a pattern that is constituted, shaped, emerging from change.*

The critical issue in the argument of Tsoukas and Chia (2002) is that organisation emerges from change resulting from human actions to try to channel things towards certain ends. I agree with this. However, the post-industrial process of entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneuring) is special in terms of its context, it happens in a certain space (Hjorth 2005). As Rindova *et al.* (2009: 490) state, entrepreneuring “is all around us”. The emergence of an organisation (e.g. firm) is thus a side effect of the actions that entrepreneurs take. The core issue is the set of actions that create the context for novelty, movement and change (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). A critical part of this is the vision that drives entrepreneurial actions.

In this sense, the emergence of entrepreneuring is similar to a copy machine breaking down, in both cases, the critical context of the event takes place because of certain actions. As Tsoukas and Chia (2002: 573) write later in their paper:

*The repair manuals issued to technicians typically contain definitions of what a broken machine is and how it may be repaired. Such definitions, however, though undoubtedly helpful, are limited use: machines break down in particular contexts, and as a result of the particular uses they are put to.*

This means that a broken copy machine is similar to the phenomenon of entrepreneuring, change that takes place in a certain context. More precisely, change that occurs through certain actions creates contexts, but not vice versa. Because of this, it is important to better understand situations where a copy machine can be broken or where the process of entrepreneurship is located. In doing so, we can better understand which kinds of actions create the context of the broken copy machine. In addition, and as Mainela and Puhakka (2009: 131)
suggest: “we wish to encourage researchers to look for entrepreneurial phenomena outside the most common small/independent business context”.

By investigating issues inside social spaces for play and innovation, in which a certain phenomenon is not typically located, is it possible to foster actions that could definitely lead to improved use of a copy machine, for example. In terms of entrepreneurship, this could mean better use of the entrepreneurial potential that is all around (Rindova et al. 2009). One way of understanding it is to consider organisational entrepreneurship that opens up a discussion of what *organising*, rather than organisation, is about. It means that certain changes are happening in the life of the acting entrepreneur. In this essay, they are called transformations, in *From Dusk Till Dawn* transformation refers to becoming a vampire. A shared vision seems to be important when doing so at the practical level at which the entrepreneurs are working, for instance (see Allen 2001). Criminals are examples of acting visionaries who take context into account. When they commit a crime, they need to have a vision, adapt it in changing circumstances and do what they are able to do in a changing context. This is similar to entrepreneurship in the post-industrial economy. However, earlier work has pretty much been framed around individuals, opportunities and business organisations (see Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Sarasvathy et al. 2003). This makes it difficult to see where the entrepreneurial context takes place and what kinds of transformations take place there (compare with Mainela & Puhakka 2009).

It seems to be that research on an individual/acting entrepreneur and on the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is important, but this does not contribute to the understanding of the post-industrial context of entrepreneuring. Entrepreneurship as an economic and/or business phenomenon shows only one view of the full potential of organisational entrepreneurship (Hjorth et al. 2008), namely that the current post-industrial human is a part of multiple processes (Webb, Tihanyi, Ireland & Sirmon 2009). The assumption of multiplicity changes what we register as entrepreneurship and/or entrepreneurial action (Steyaert & Katz 2004, Fletcher 2006). Entrepreneurship as creative actions in an organisational context (rather than in a business-related context only) opens up a discussion in which it is possible to analyse the organisational processes that the post-industrial human is a part of (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Webb et al. 2009).

In this way, it seems that some everyday actions can also foster business-based intentions (Görling & Rehn 2008). More precisely, it is essential to see how the context for those actions (a social platform for businesses) is created. As a
result, transformations suggest what happens to those who are inside the change at the practical level. It seems that those who can manage with that are disrupting the reigning order and creating new social spaces for play and innovation. In that sense, a social space for play and innovation is not only related to businesses. In contrast, it is a transformational feature of human life. Sometimes those kinds of transformation do not occur in a predefined way, but as a part of change that is out of sequence.

In this paper, I use the movie *From Dusk Till Dawn* to explain how the entrepreneurial context is created around the shared vision of criminals. This type of vision is a construct of visionary actions. *From Dusk Till Dawn* tells a story of criminal brothers. It shows how the vision (i.e. to become rich) fosters those actions that are related to creating a desirable future. Without this vision, there would have been no crime in the movie. This is similar to the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship. There is no agent of production (e.g. a managerial entrepreneur) who could direct the process of production in a factory. In contrast, a person or a group of people is responsible for creating novelty, movement and change (compare with Görling & Rehn 2008, Rindova et al. 2009).

As Steyaert (2007: 471) states, we could understand entrepreneurship as a more powerful (and maybe more fruitful) way of “breaking with a dualistic world where object and subject are disconnected and by situating process in the lived world and experience”. Table 1 summarises my argument that entrepreneuring could be situated in society, not simply in the economy (see Hjorth et al. 2008, Webb et al. 2009). The interesting issues to be considered include how visionary entrepreneurial actions foster the contexts of entrepreneuring. *From Dusk Till Dawn* shows the actualised vision of two criminals: how to commit a crime, escape the country and become rich. It also shows how social issues influence the process of trying to become rich and how these social issues finally foster a crime-committing context. Such a context is entrepreneurial in the sense that the criminals need to share a vision first, then they must try to exploit it and update it in response to changing circumstances.
Table 1. Contrasting industrial and post-industrial organisations in entrepreneurship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of differentiation</th>
<th>Industrial organization</th>
<th>Post-industrial organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the world</td>
<td>Stable (a factory)</td>
<td>Movement (the visions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power that drive work-</td>
<td>Apparatus of production</td>
<td>Apparatus of innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting subject (an entrepreneur)</td>
<td>An independent person</td>
<td>A dependent whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason to make entrepreneurial</td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>efforts</td>
<td>Organization creation</td>
<td>Entrepreneuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontology of the research</td>
<td>Functionalist</td>
<td>Processual ontology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates that the contrast between an industrial and a post-industrial organisation not only characterises the historical development of organisational life and work, but also reflects the change in mindset that should be taken into account when discussing entrepreneurship (see Hjorth et al. 2008). Because earlier studies have defined entrepreneuring as a process that induces social change and movement, I assume that the discourse on creating an organisation can inadequately help us to understand the contextual nature of the process of entrepreneurship (compare with Gartner 1985). In this sense, understanding the emergence of an organisation (similar to how a broken copy machine can be defined, but not understood) does not help to see the context of novelty, movement and change.

Rindova et al. (2009: 477) argue that entrepreneuring involves “efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments through the actions”. Moreover, Steyaert (2007: 453) defines entrepreneuring simply as “a process theory of entrepreneurship”. This supports the argument for the use of processual ontology behind the studies on entrepreneuring (see also Hjorth 2004b). This raises questions about what those actions are, how they are fostered and why. Earlier work on entrepreneurship suggests that context is a factor that fosters or hinders the process of entrepreneurship (e.g. Gartner 1985, Bird 1988). However, there is always a vision behind human-made actions. For example, Deleuze, and other process philosophers, state that there is no pure desire, desire (more precisely a vision in the context of entrepreneurship) is always related to something (e.g. to become rich) (Colebrook, 2002). Even though earlier work on effectuation has provided a way to understand such processes in a way the future does not need not to be forecast as long as it is controlled, it seems that the images of how to understand this as a part of the
everyday lives of entrepreneurs, for instance, is still lacking. In this essay, I will use imagery from the movie *From Dusk Till Dawn* and show how it reflects post-industrial working life generally.
3 Methodological underpinnings in relation to juxtapositions

In this essay, I will juxtapose the key visionary elements in *From Dusk Till Dawn* and entrepreneurial shared vision. More precisely, I will analyse the plot of the movie and show what kinds of vision-updating elements could help an organisational entrepreneur to manage the constantly changing circumstances, and not to struggle with them. The current literature on entrepreneurship repeats the same message of change, as described above, but the ways of handling it are pretty much unknown so far. That is why the conceptual work on change and its very nature is needed. Such work could help the practitioners to see how different kinds of images (such as in *From Dusk Till Dawn* in this essay) approach similar kinds of issues. In that sense, stories and storytelling – what movies partially are, for instance – are closer to the ‘real’ life of human beings (Czarniawska 1997).

Juxtaposition allows us to see what is not visible in images *per se*. For example, Sørensen (forthcoming 2012) states that when working with juxtapositions, you need to start with what you have, then find an empirical illustration of whatever you want to explore and challenge. He goes on to state that you then need to elaborate upon the same motive, theme or structural resemblance from another source (e.g. from the empirical illustration) so that you can show similarities and differences piece by piece. In this essay, I am looking for a similar theme in the context of entrepreneurial visions. *From Dusk Till Dawn* was chosen for analysis because the motive of its characters and those of the actors in managerial entrepreneurship is exactly the same: to become rich. I therefore did not analyse the motive through juxtaposition, as there would not be that much to investigate. Structural resemblance was not used, because the contexts are too dissimilar: criminality and post-industrial (business) organisations. In this sense, *From Dusk Till Dawn* shows what it is supposed to elaborate upon – i.e. types of entrepreneurial actions are needed when creating a context for the process of entrepreneurship – entrepreneuring – through the shared vision (the research question of this essay).

Other genres – comedy, romance, etc – could show different kinds of images but I do not consider that they could provide the wealth of visionary features found in *From Dusk Till Dawn*. A completely different kind of image, such as art that Sørensen (2010) is working on, for instance, may reveal interesting insights, but the feature of moving pictures and action would be lost. As described above, in this essay entrepreneurship is seen as a set of actions. That is why the movie is
regarded as the best possible illustration of the purpose of this essay. More precisely, the purpose is to discuss the contextual nature of the process of entrepreneurship (entrepreneuring) as entrepreneurial actions are related to the shared vision rather than to a factor (e.g. a nexus between individual and opportunity) creating entrepreneuring. Consequently, the fictitious actions of the two criminals in *From Dusk Till Dawn* show that an action can be the starting point of the context of those actions rather than vice versa.

Earlier work by Sørensen (forthcoming 2012) on juxtaposition shows that images can be understood as creators and productions in organisational life. In that sense, the phenomenon of organisational entrepreneurship – as a force that can foster the creation of social spaces for play and innovation as a part of societies – can play the roles of both organisational creation and entrepreneuring (see Table 1). However, the performative nature of juxtaposition is used in order to show the novel light on the ‘other’ side of business-related entrepreneurship in this essay. This makes it possible to reply to the need to elaborate upon entrepreneurial visions in a way that we do not get stuck with the managerial idea of exploiting the vision, as the enterprise discourse often assumes and reproduces (Hjorth 2003). In contrast, the performative role of juxtaposition can exemplify organisational life and therefore it “becomes a producer of characteristic images of the appropriate modern, entrepreneurial self and a producer of certain regimes of both management and of organisation” (Sørensen 2010: 309). In that way, I believe, we could be able to show how closely the stories (such as in movies) actually match the everyday human life of an acting entrepreneur, and especially what we can learn from them.

The idea of creating juxtaposition is not an easy task, as Sørensen (forthcoming 2012) states. The first challenge is its role of showing what is not visible. Therefore, it is an individual interpretation of what is juxtaposed. However, juxtapositions are always open to criticism, because they are something that everybody can see and evaluate, a movie or a work of art, for example. That is not usually the case when talking about empirical studies of entrepreneurship. The empirical material usually stays in the researcher’s computer. The next is that juxtaposition attaches new meanings to already existing pieces of material. For instance, *From Dusk Till Dawn* does not have anything to do with entrepreneurship as such. Entrepreneurship is never mentioned in the movie. In this way, the challenge is that a researcher is working on a juxtaposition that exaggerates things that would otherwise be outside the discussion. However, the performative nature of juxtapositions is still strong. In fact, the meaning behind
juxtaposing is to stir up new ways of thinking. This is highlighted and emphasised in the context of post-industrial (business) organisations. That is why I believe that creating a juxtaposition is a way of showing how social spaces for play and innovation can contribute to post-industrial entrepreneurship nowadays rather than analysing something that is already part of the discussion on entrepreneurship.
4 From dusk till dawn

*From Dusk Till Dawn* (directed by Robert Rodriguez) starts with a vision. The brothers – Seth (George Clooney) and Richie Gecko (Quentin Tarantino) – envisage becoming rich. They commit a robbery in Texas and then head to Mexico. While escaping, Richie’s psychopathic behaviour results in two people in a store being shot dead while the store is burning down. Richie breaks his hand, and it begins to bleed. They head to Mexico to meet a friend, Carlos, who has promised to arrange a safe house for them. However, they encounter a couple of problems in doing so. The FBI and the Texas police try to catch them. They take a bank teller hostage in order to escape the country. They stop at a motel. Here, Richie rapes and kills the hostage (the bank teller) while Seth is gone for a while. This results in a quarrel between Seth and Richie.

After the rape and murder of the hostage, the brothers take a family (a father, Jacob, his daughter, Kate, and his adopted son, Scott) hostage. Jacob is a pastor who is having a crisis of faith. Kate is a young lady who is about to become an adult. Scott is younger and dependent on Jacob and Kate. He is therefore more vulnerable. The family is told that they will not be harmed while the brothers are en route to Mexico. The journey begins, with Jacob driving his campervan. Eventually, the brothers and the family arrive at Mexico. They end up at a strip bar, where they stop for a while. The brothers intend to meet Carlos at dawn at that bar, which is located in the middle of a desolate part of Mexico. The strip bar is a good meeting point, as it is open from dusk till dawn.

Seth and Richie have a fight with the doorman as they try to enter the bar. This creates tension between them and the employees of the bar. However, they finally enter the bar that is only for truck drivers and bikers. They are allowed to enter because Jacob shows his driving licence, which has a trucker rating. Seth and Richie start to drink heavily. They encourage the hostage family and a couple of other people (a biker named Sex Machine and a Vietnam veteran/truck driver named Frost) to join them at their table. Richie takes special notice of the solo performer (Santánico Pandemonium) who dances for him. After the dance show, the doorman and some other employees of the bar approach them, they are still angry. A fight starts. Santánico notices Richie’s bleeding hand and this triggers her transformation into a vampire. She bites Richie, who bleeds to death. Seth, Jacob, Kate, Scott, Sex Machine and Frost survive the attack.

After the attack, the other employees of the bar transform too. Richie is lying on the floor (apparently dead) but suddenly he too transforms into a vampire (one
of the walking dead). Sex Machine and Frost want to kill him, but Seth does not agree. Instead, Seth asks Sex Machine and Frost to hold Richie. After that, Seth wants to kill Richie himself. Seth says, “Richie, here is the peace, in death, that I could not give in your life”. Then Seth stabs Richie with a wooden stake. Seth feels bad about this and starts to drink whiskey. Kate asks him if he is OK. Seth replies ironically that he is fine. Kate’s concern reflects her feelings for Seth. She says, “I’m really really sorry”. Seth’s angry reply of “Bullshit” sounds like a caring husband’s angry retort to his wife’s complaint.

The group (Seth, Jacob, Kate, Scott, Sex Machine and Frost) then form an alliance to fight the vampires. It seems that Jacob is their best weapon, but only if he gets his faith back. They believe that they need a cross (an artefact of his faith) – Kate thinks this while she is fighting – and holy water to kill the vampires. Vampires can also be killed by being impaled on a wooden stake or by being exposed to sunlight. However, using sticks or sunlight is more difficult than using a cross or holy water to fight, because it is the middle of the night and impalement requires effort. To build a cross to use as a weapon, they have to find two objects to cross. This symbolises faith in God/Jesus.

One of the vampires bites Sex Machine’s hand and he transforms soon after. In vampire form, Sex Machine bites Frost and Jacob. Kate and Seth kill Sex Machine. Jacob kills Frost. Even though Jacob has already been bitten, he does not become a vampire immediately. Jacob, Seth, Scott and Kate use the storeroom of the bar and find tools they can use to fight the vampires, this saves their lives. Jacob uses a gun and a stick to form a cross to kill the vampires. Scott’s weapon is a gun loaded with holy water (water that Jacob had blessed). Jacob becomes involved in the fight and he too transforms. Scott kills his adoptive father too late (because of his guilt at having to do so). As a result, Jacob bites Scott but Scott does not transform at once. Frost’s transformation is an image of how the cause (the bite) affects his body and causes him to transform. It shows that the transformation can be caused by an external force. In this case, the bite of the vampire is the cause. This can be compared to events in the everyday life of an organisational entrepreneur, things can just happen, leading to transformation.

The transforming Frost shows that there are bats behind of him. They indicate that something bad is happening. Evil is coming into the room in the form of more vampires, more killers are coming into the space where living people still are. Even though Frost’s transformation is not intentional, he opens his arms wide and seems to feel the transformation in his body, just as post-industrial entrepreneurs might do when feeling the intensive transformation flowing from a
new business, for instance. He also seems to feel the power that he could use to
take over other people by biting them and making them the same as he is: a
vampire.

During the final part of the fight, Scott becomes a vampire. Kate follows her
brother’s wish and kills Scott and a couple of other vampires (she even feels bad
about that). As the sun rises, only Kate and Seth remain alive, but vampires still
surround them. They notice that those vampires draw away as sunlight enters the
bar. Kate and Seth shoot holes into the walls to let more sunlight into the bar. The
sunlight causes the vampires to explode. Kate and Seth escape and survive until
Carlos meets them. Kate asks Seth if she can join him as they escape from the bar.
Seth is unwilling. He is afraid for Kate’s safety and gives her money instead. The
movie ends with Kate and Seth leaving the strip bar and driving away in different
directions.

The crucial points in this movie are Richie’s broken hand, Jacob’s crisis of
faith, and Kate and Seth’s self-body-connection. In terms of entrepreneuring, it
seems that Richie’s injured hand is the unlucky accident that allows them to
actualise their vision. Richie and Seth’s vision is to become rich. Without that
vision, the crime (the effort to become rich) could not have happened. Jacob’s
crisis of faith reflects an unsure actualisation of the vision, he is not sure whether
he still believes in God/Jesus. In this sense, Jacob finds his vision too late,
becomes a vampire, and finally dies because of that. Kate finds her (updated)
vision earlier. She follows Scott’s request to kill him after Scott becomes a
vampire. Consequently, Kate and Seth remain alive. Furthermore, both, Seth and
Kate get money and so their visions have been actualised/updated.

As the juxtaposition between becoming a vampire and organisational
entrepreneur explicates, the transformational act of getting bitten by a vampire
creates a side effect of becoming something other than what a person is right now.
*From Dusk Till Dawn* shows some of the transformations that can occur because
of changing circumstances. Organisational entrepreneurs are those who can
update their visions in response to such changes. In *From Dusk Till Dawn* these
are the people who survive and escape from the strip bar.
5 A way out from the strip bar

*From Dusk Till Dawn* shows what is important in terms of the process of entrepreneurship – a contextually created platform for novelty, movement and change. There should be a vision that an entrepreneur or a group of entrepreneurs must follow. It is not only about discussing whether an opportunity is there or not (to recognise, discover or create an opportunity) but also about better understanding the context of entrepreneurship (i.e. a space where entrepreneurial actions happen) (Hjorth et al. 2008). The actions related to that type of vision frame what the context means in entrepreneurship – a desire that is linked to a shared vision. Social learning in entrepreneurship is therefore not only an iterative process of striving for opportunities, because there is not always an opportunity. In contrast, entrepreneurial actions related to the shared vision create a platform for novelty, movement and change. In *From Dusk Till Dawn* Richie and Seth Gecko’s original vision changed from becoming rich to remaining alive. They also had an agent of that movement: Kate.

Sarasvathy’s (2001) concept of effectuation (i.e. the extent that we can control the future, we do not need to predict it) works along similar lines, an entrepreneurial context is based on the vision that a person or a group of people strives for through taking action. In this way, the life of an entrepreneur is pretty much like the lives of Seth Gecko and Kate, who are now acting in response to an updated vision of a better future, the vision of becoming rich was updated to a desire to remain alive. This shows what entrepreneurial context is about. Actions related to visions that change over time. Earlier work suggests that conducting these visions or opportunities can open up new businesses, but there is a lack of understanding about how such a context is created (compare with Bird 1988, Shane and Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). The entrepreneurial context is not only a factor leading to action, the context is also about action itself. We therefore need images that show how visionaries update their visions and also how transformations in response to the changing circumstances take place. Let me elaborate upon the critical issues in *From Dusk Till Dawn*.

5.1 Richie’s broken hand

In *From Dusk Till Dawn* Richie Gecko is a psychopathic criminal. At the beginning of the story he breaks his hand after committing a crime (a robbery) with his brother (Seth Gecko). Richie is insecure and afraid of getting caught by
the police. He actualises his fear by killing people around him. The brothers need directions to find their way around Texas (where the robbery takes place) and so they stop at a shop for a while to buy a map. Richie’s insecurity forces him to kill an employee and a customer at the shop. He breaks his hand in doing so. This leads to a problem at the strip bar. The solo dancer (Santánico Pandemónium) notices that Richie’s hand is bleeding, and this triggers her transformation into a vampire. While looking for a map of Texas (and simultaneously keeping a bank teller hostage), Richie shoots an employee of the store. The following hot-tempered discussion between Seth and Richie then takes place:

Seth: Hey! Will you stop it! What the *** is your problem, goddam it?
Richie: Seth, he did it! You were by the beer cooler, with your back turned. I was by the magazines. I could see his face! And I saw him mouth the words, “Help us”.
Seth: Start the car.
Richie: You believe me, don’t you?
Seth: Yes. Shut up. And start the car, alright?
Richie: You believe me, don’t you?
Seth: Shut the *** up and start the car. Yes, I believe you!
Richie: You should, because I’m right.

After that exchange, Seth and Richie steal a map of Texas, burn down the store and drive away. The employee and a customer die. Earlier, Richie had been shot in his hand by the employee. Richie is dependent on his brother, Seth, who takes care of him throughout the story. When they stop at a motel, Seth fixes Richie’s dressing. From time to time, Seth also reminds Richie to look after his teeth, this reflects that Seth cares about his brother.

Richie’s dependence on Seth can also be seen in the discussion between them and Kate in the campervan (driven by Jacob) when they cross the border between Mexico and Texas. Jacob and Scott sit in the front seats. In order to cross the border, Richie, Seth and Kate have to be quiet and remain out of sight, so they hide in the toilet. However, Richie is unwilling to cooperate, because he is psychopathic and afraid. Richie is angry with Seth and starts an argument.

Richie: They’re gonna search the van.
Seth: As long as you don’t act like a ***in’ nut, we’re gonna be just fine.
Richie: What the hell’s that supposed to mean?
Seth: What?
Richie: You called me a ***in’ nut.
Seth: No, I didn’t.
Richie: Yes, you did. You said as long as I don’t act like a ***in’ nut. implying that I’ve been acting like a ***in’ nut.
Seth: Take a pill, all right? I just meant be cool.
Richie: Yeah, you meant that. But you meant the other too.
Seth: This is not the time, Richie.
Richie: Hey, *** those spic pigs, man! You called me a *** nut!
Seth: Would you just…
Richie: Now, where I come from, that stops the train in its tracks.
Seth: Keep your ***in’ voice down.
Richie: What was the nuttiest thing I did, Seth? I’m curious. Tell me. What? What was it?
Seth: This is not the time, Richie.
Richie: I know. Was it possibly when your *** was rotting in jail and I broke you out?

After that, Seth hits Richie, knocking him out. Kate responds by saying “Thanks”. Richie had been holding Kate and so she had heard the angry debate. Just after that, a policeman enters the van to check it. Seth asks Kate to sit on the toilet if the policeman comes to check the bathroom. Seth hides in the shower (taking Richie with him). The policeman does not see Seth and Richie because he is not willing to intrude on Kate. Now the group can cross the border. A moment later, Seth helps Richie to wake up and tells him that things are fine now. Richie does not remember what happened (that Seth had hit him) and they finally end up at Mexico.

5.2 Jacob’s crisis with his faith

When Jacob first appears in From Dusk Till Dawn, it can be seen that he misses his dead wife (Jenny). The family are eating together before going to the motel where Richie and Seth Gecko will take them hostage. It seems to be that he has lost his faith in God/Jesus because of Jenny’s death in a car accident. According to him, a priest evaluates faith all the time, but in the beginning of the story he does not feel love for Jesus and God anymore. He is an idealist who wants to be
totally committed to his religion in order to be a priest. Kate and Jacob talk while Scott is in the restroom:

Kate: Oh! Guess what. When I called the machine to check the messages, one of them was from Bethel Baptist. And Mr Franklin said that he wouldn’t permanently replace you until we came back. And he said that…
Jacob: That’s very nice of Ted, but I’ll call him tomorrow and tell him not to bother waiting.
Kate: Daddy, I didn’t wanna talk about this in front of Scott because he gets upset, but I’d just wanna know. Do you believe in God anymore?
Jacob: Not enough to be a pastor. Look, I know this is hard on you kids. After Jenny’s death, this is probably the last thing you need, but my congregation needs spiritual leadership. To answer to your question, yes, I do believe in Jesus. Yes, I do believe in God. But do I love Them? No.
Kate: Well, it’s just that all our lives you’ve been a pastor. And then, one day, you’re just gonna wake up and say, “*** Him”?
Jacob: I didn’t say “*** Him”. Every person who chooses the service of God as his life’s work has something in common. I don’t care if you’re a preacher, a nun, a rabbi or a Buddhist monk. Many, many times during your life, you’ll look at your reflection in the mirror and ask yourself, “Am I a fool?” I’m not going through a lapse. What I’ve experienced is closer to awakening.
Kate: Daddy? What do you think Mom would say?
Jacob: Mama’s got nothing to say. She’s dead.

In this discussion, Kate’s concern is to keep her father (Jacob) on the track of getting better and to go on living his life normally. Jenny’s death seems to be why Jacob has lost his faith, even though he has been a pastor all his life. The strong feelings that Jacob experienced made him re-evaluate his love for and faith in Jesus and God. From the perspective of his vision, he seems to be uncertain. He questions whether he loves them. His answer is “No”. However, in the end of the story, he regains his faith. Just before the group (Jacob, Seth, Kate and Scott) starts the final fight against the vampires, Jacob blesses water, because holy water is a weapon against vampires.

Seth: I’ve always said that God can kiss my *** but I just changed my lifetime tune about 30 minutes ago, ‘cause I know that whatever is out there tryin’ to get
in is pure evil straight from hell. And if there is a hell, and those sons of *** are from it then there has got to be a heaven, Jacob, there’s gotta be.

Jacob: [Shakes his head.]
Seth: So, which are you? Are you a faithless preacher, or are you a mean monster***in’ servant of God?

Jacob: I’m a mean…servant of God.

Seth’s provocative question makes Jacob see his faith in a new light. He realises that it is better to be a servant of God in order to actualise the vision of remaining alive. His original vision was to be an idealist (i.e. totally committed to religion) but his updated (shared) vision was to remain alive. In his own words, he is now a “mean servant of God” – this means that he sees himself as an evil person trying to save the lives of Seth, Kate and Scott rather than believing in God/Jesus (even though he is not totally committed). Jacob already knows that he will become one of the walking dead – a vampire – because he was bitten by a vampire. This is what entrepreneurship is about: believing strongly in something without being completely sure it will work. Nonetheless, the vision is there. Jacob turns back to his faith, makes a cross from a gun and a stick and blesses water so that Scott will have a loaded weapon. Just before they go back into the hall (where the vampires and a possible way out are), he talks with Scott, Kate and Seth. (He has a gun, which he threatens to use to kill himself.)

Jacob: Before we go any further, I need you three to promise me something. I’ll fight with you to the bitter end, but when I turn into one of them, I won’t be Jacob anymore. I’ll be a lapdog of Satan. I want you three to promise you’ll take me down, no different from the rest.

Seth: I promise, Jacob.

Jacob: Kate? Scott?

Kate: I promise.

Jacob: Scott?

Scott: Yeah, I promise.

Jacob: Why don’t I believe you? I’m gonna ask you two again. Then you have to swear to God that you’ll kill me. If you don’t, I’m gonna just kill myself right now. Now, since you need me, I think you’d better swear. Kate, do you swear to God that when I become one of the undead, you’ll kill me? Kate! We don’t have much time so I’m only giving you to the count of five. One, two, three, four…

Kate: OK! All right! I promise I’ll do it.
Jacob: Good girl. Now, Scott, we have even less time, so I’m giving you to the count of three. One.
Scott: You don’t...you don’t believe in suicide.
Jacob: It’s not a suicide if you’re already dead. Two!
Scott: OK! OK I’ll kill you when you change. I swear to God in Jesus Christ’s name.

Jacob has got his faith back. He is still not totally committed, but enough for it to work in the context of the shared vision of remaining alive (or keeping other members of the group alive). The shared vision gives him strength. The last part of the fight begins, and Jacob dies soon after. Sex Machine and Frost are also there, now in vampire form. Because Scott finds it difficult to kill Jacob in time, Jacob (in vampire form) bites him. Kate follows her brother’s wish, and kills Scott. Then only Kate and Seth remain alive. The reason for this is Kate’s strong belief in her own (updated) vision: to remain alive. Moreover, Kate and Seth seem to have a special type of relationship. They could be a couple.

In the next chapter, I will illustrate how Kate’s role alongside Seth keeps them alive. It is about actualising the shared (updated) vision to remain alive. It is updated because Seth’s original vision was to become rich and Kate’s vision was to become an adult. Kate’s original vision can be seen in the scene in which she tries to overcome her father’s idealistic vision of being a totally committed priest. Perhaps Kate interprets her father’s idealistic idea of being fully committed to religion as a hallucination. Instead, she tries to convince her father to be less idealistic but to actualise his life in a way that could work and make his life better.

5.3 Kate and Seth’s self-body connection

There is a strong connection between Kate and Seth in *From Dusk Till Dawn*. Kate easily finds Richie’s weakness and psychopathic tendencies. When Seth and Richie enter Jacob’s home, Kate is taking a shower. When she comes out of the bathroom to ask what is going on, Richie says, “We’re havin’ a bikini contest and you just won”. Later, Kate says to Richie, “Richie, would you do me a favour and eat my *** for me? Please?” This upsets Richie, who merely replies, “Uh, sure”. Kate’s action seems to be a strategic one to get power over Richie.

Richie’s insecure behaviour in the campervan (which Jacob drives) irritates Kate in the same way as it irritates Seth. The power that both Kate and Seth have over Richie is similar. Kate uses her power in the discussion that takes place
between them during the trip in the campervan, just before they reach the border with Mexico. Richie starts questioning Kate about her (strategic) retort:

Richie: Did you mean what you said back there in the room?
Kate: What?
Richie: In the room. Did you mean what you said back there, or where you just foolin’ around? Because if…if you really want me to do that for you, I will. I’d be happy to.
Kate: Do what?
Richie: What you said back there in the room.
Kate: What did I say?
Richie: You asked me if I would eat out…
Seth: Richie!
Richie: What?
Seth: I told you to watch those kids, not to talk to them.
Richie: We’ll talk later, OK?

Seth’s interruption irritates Richie. Richie wants to talk with Kate again, because he is willing to actualise his (imagined) power over her. However, it is Kate who has power over Richie. Kate is stronger and rejects Richie’s question with just a shake of her head. In this way, Kate has power over Richie through her sexuality. It seems that Kate and Seth have a social alliance (even though their visions are different at that point). This is actualised in the end of the story, Kate and Seth are the only ones who remain alive after the fight at the strip bar.

It is not surprising that Seth and Kate support each other while they are fighting the vampires at the strip bar. At the end of the story, Carlos waits for Richie (now dead) and Seth outside the strip bar. Seth and Kate discover that they can get rid of the vampires if they shoot holes in the walls to let the sunlight in, sunlight makes the vampires explode and die. Seth and Kate shoot more holes in the walls and manage to escape. In the final scene, Kate and Seth are having a friendly, and caring, talk but Carlos interrupts:

Seth: I’m sorry!
Kate: Yeah, I’m sorry too!
Seth: I’ll see you.
Kate: Seth. You need some company?
Seth: Kate, do you know where I’m going? Do you know what El Rey is?

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Kate: No.
Carlos: Hey, Seth. It’s time to go.
Seth: Go home, Kate. I may be a ***, but I’m not a ***in’ ***.

Kate smiles, but then seems sad. She kicks the sand angrily and gazes after Seth as he drives away, following Carlos. This can be compared to the story of Romeo and Juliet, two people who can never be together. However, the positive tension between Seth and Kate is what saved their lives. It was based on the desire to actualise their shared vision: to save themselves and to become rich (Seth’s original vision). Even though their actions pulled in different directions, the social tension between them is obvious. Seth’s criminal actions reflect his vision to become rich. Kate’s vision is to become an adult. For example, when Seth and Richie started to drink heavily in the strip bar, Kate refuses the offer of a drink at first but later accepts (even though her father argues against it). At the end of the story, Kate and Seth’s shared vision is to remain alive and they succeed.

The relationship between Kate and Seth illustrates the very nature of the creation of entrepreneurial context. It is about living within the changing environment, making use of what is available (i.e. the logic of effectuation) and following the moving target (i.e. a shared vision of a better life). In other words, it is controlling a future that is pretty much unpredictable, i.e. the logic of effectuation proposed by Sarasvathy (2001). In this way, a satisfying result can be actually better than reaching the ideal outcome, which could be seen as predictable (see McGrath & MacMillan 2000).

In From Dusk Till Dawn a satisfying result was to remain alive, Kate and Seth achieved this together. The ideal solution for Seth could have been to kill Kate at the end, as she knows too much about the crime committed by Seth and Richie, but he does not do that. Instead of killing Kate, Seth says, “I may be a ***, but I’m not a ***in’ ***”. Kate’s ideal outcome may have been to marry the man she had fallen in love with (Seth). Jacob’s idealistic vision being totally committed in order to be a priest led to his death. This is similar with entrepreneurship: ideal outcomes are sometimes impossible (McGrath & MacMillan 2000).
6 A contextualised version of entrepreneurship

Hjorth et al. (2008: 81) suggest that “entrepreneurship always emerges from a particular context”. It seems that the earlier work on entrepreneurship tried to explain how entrepreneurial issues (such as a set of individual characteristics, cultural differences and context as a factor) affect the processes of entrepreneurship inside or outside business organisations. For example, studies of entrepreneurial business opportunities try to build up a nexus between an individual (an entrepreneur or would-be-entrepreneur) and an opportunity in the market (e.g. Venkataraman 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). From the perspective of this study, this is problematic, as the assumption of the nexus between things (person and opportunity) takes context into consideration as a factor (see Bird 1988).

When context is assumed to be a fact or in entrepreneurial actions, market learning becomes crucial, that is, gathering knowledge of what entrepreneurs do not know before taking action (Sarasvathy 2001). This happens when a person (or people) can use existing means or tools to build up a space for (new) businesses (see Hohenthal, Johanson & Johanson 2003, Sarasvathy & Dew 2005). The creation of that type of knowledge is also based on the (business) context in which it is embedded (Mainela & Puhakka 2009). However, it seems that understanding that type of learning requires a scholar to move towards where the context of action is a core issue. In doing so, the process of entrepreneurship (entrepreneuring) is not an independent issue (see Table 1). In contrast, the process of entrepreneurship is a part of (and dependent upon) the everyday life of humans (see Hjorth et al. 2003).

Assuming everyday life is behind entrepreneuring opens up an approach that fits quite well with the idea of post-industrial (business) organisations. For example, Görling and Rehn (2008) write how the website www.hotornot.com emerged from the (entrepreneurial) actions of men sitting in a bar evaluating women. They wanted to develop a more comfortable way of rating. Görling and Rehn (2008: 99) write about that: “The venture was started and developed with no venture capital, and without any previous business experience. It was, on the whole, started as a prank by two engineering students having an argument about whether a girl was hot or not”.

Here, entrepreneurial context does not seem to be a factor influencing the process of entrepreneurship. Instead, the context is created when things happen around a conscious or unconscious vision, as a part of human life. As From Dusk...
Till Dawn shows, the vision related to the (entrepreneurial) criminal actions fosters the context. Without those actions, there would not have been any context. For example, Richie’s broken hand, which had been injured while actualising his desire to become rich, is an unlucky accident, based on Richie’s insecurity and psychopathic behaviour. This reflects the opposite issue that Görling and Rehn (2008) write about. The website hotornot.com is a context that was built up without any vision of business. An entrepreneur cited by Görling and Rehn (2008: 99) stated: “We never intended or even tried to have the company make money, says Hong, who has a master’s degree in business administration. We are accidental businessmen who almost shut down the site because it cost too much”.

This shows that the vision itself (in whatever form) is always there. Sometimes it is not based on business as such. However, the vision that Görling and Rehn (2008) write about involved rating women in terms of their physical appearance (i.e. the vision of everyday life). This resulted in a business opportunity. This does not seem to be a business-based matter at all, but they exploited it as an updated vision of business anyway. In From Dusk Till Dawn Richie and Seth envisioned becoming rich. Kate’s vision was to become an adult. Richie’s injured hand, and the tension between the brothers and the store employees in front of the bar, initiated Jacob’s visions, although too late to help him stay alive. Kate, however, succeeded in actualising her vision of surviving. Therefore the vision is a part of human life (and therefore a part of the process of entrepreneurship). A shared vision fosters actions that are actualised in an entrepreneurial context in the end. It is the same in the post-industrial version of entrepreneurship (entrepreneuring). There is no agent of production (i.e. a managerial entrepreneur), merely a person with the desire and ability to ignite the context of novelty, movement and change. In order to create such as (new) entrepreneurial context, there must be some kind of transformation.

In From Dusk Till Dawn vampires foster transformation. When a person is bitten, that person becomes a vampire. Something similar happens in post-industrial entrepreneurship. As Table 1 shows, there is movement from being a managerial entrepreneur in a factory (i.e. an agent of production) and an entrepreneurial entrepreneur in the post-industrial age. In fact, the difference is that those who manage to do things well (staying alive in From Dusk Till Dawn, for example) are those who are able to update their visions. This is an organisational phenomenon, as it seems that the reasons behind entrepreneurial efforts in post-industrial work-organisations are social. This has been studied by a couple of scholars (Görling & Rehn 2008, Dew 2009). However, earlier work
does not tell that much about transformations as side effects of entrepreneurship. Usually, the core interest has been an entrepreneur or a firm. These kinds of questions open up questions about what should be studied under the umbrella of organisational entrepreneurship.

The juxtaposition between a transforming vampire and a hardworking individual (i.e. a possible organisational entrepreneur) shows that there is an element of becoming other than what a person is right now. In fact, updating the visions that support them should foster the required kinds of transformations. In *From Dusk Till Dawn* the transformation from human being to vampire was an unintentional transformation. In the context of business-related entrepreneurship, the transformation could be to bankruptcy. To better understand this, let us have a closer look at the similarities between those two scenarios. Sørensen (forthcoming 2012) writes about similar themes.

As Sørensen (forthcoming 2012) writes, one way to create juxtaposition is to find similarities between two pictures located next to each other. There is some similarity in the changing circumstances in the two images; of becoming a vampire and doctor of science, for instance. The hardworking individual (i.e. a potential organisational entrepreneur) in this scenario is a Ph.D. student who is aiming to achieve a doctoral degree (to transform). Frost is also transforming: becoming a vampire because another vampire has bitten him.

Post-industrial curiosity can be compared to the vampires that have bitten Frost. They are agents of change. They want to make Frost (and indeed other human beings) the same as they are. This is akin to hardworking knowledge workers in post-industrial societies (i.e. organisational entrepreneurs). There is usually some kind of attractor (e.g. a professor who suggests working on a doctoral project) that kick-starts curiosity and leads to the concrete actions resulting from such a transformation (e.g. writing conference papers and defending the doctoral dissertation at the end of the process). Such curiosity can be seen in the images mentioned above (the process of becoming a vampire and doctor of science). Bats are flying from the open hole in the wall into the room, where Frost and the others are, the hole in the wall represents the path from the previous space to the new one (i.e. other-space discussed as heterotopias by Hjorth 2005).

I argue that the post-industrial version of entrepreneurship is pretty much based on the context in which entrepreneuring takes place, there is no apparatus of production in the post-industrial age. In contrast, there is an apparatus (and a requirement) of innovation that makes the principles of post-industrial
organisations and life different. In *From Dusk Till Dawn* there is a social way to behave to allow shared visions to be updated. For instance, Jacob started to actualise his vision (i.e. to update his feelings about his faith) too late and therefore he died. He found what he wanted (i.e. to be “a mean servant of God”) but, unfortunately, he had already become a vampire. He should have found his desire to become ‘other’ (i.e. a person surviving and getting out of the strip bar) before. In that way, he could have updated his ideas of being a “mean servant of God” early enough and this could have saved his life. That would have been entrepreneurial in the sense of organisational entrepreneurship.

The crucial thing in understanding the post-industrial version of entrepreneurship as a process (entrepreneuring) is that the individual capabilities to recognise and/or discover opportunities are limited. In a similar vein, it is not that important to register the shared vision of remaining alive in *From Dusk Till Dawn*, Richie and Seth’s vision was to become rich. In contrast, the more important thing for them was to update their vision in accordance with the changing circumstances. Then, the shared vision became a desire to stay alive. Consequently, we should consider how people act in response to opportunities rather than analysing the more or less stable characteristics of individuals in the field of entrepreneurship research.

In doing so, it seems possible to see how entrepreneurs create new things under changing circumstances rather than reproducing things that are already there (such as products in a factory). For example, Bird (1988) refers to the entrepreneurial context as a bundle of factors. She suggests that “contexts help to determine whether or not a given individual will start a venture and how successful that venture or type of venture is likely to be” (Bird 1988: 167).

The difference between the approach taken by Bird (1988) and post-industrial contexts of entrepreneurship (e.g. the creation of business opportunity that resulted in hotornot.com) is that the entrepreneurial context in the twenty-first century is a part of human life per se, not a set of variables – e.g. social and economic climate, technical resources, incubator organisations, start-up teams, quality of life, business infrastructure and climate, business success, entrepreneurial behaviour, and the individual and group characteristics that were proposed by Bird (1988) – that affect the process of entrepreneurship. In contrast, a context is an outcome of human actions, such as what happened to the men sitting in a bar and evaluating the women or what happened to Kate when she concurred with her brother’s desire to be killed when he became a vampire.
The above-mentioned difference is crucial in the context of discourses on creating an organisation and entrepreneuring (see Gartner 1985). Tsoukas and Chia (2002) suggest that an organisation emerges from change, but such an organisation (e.g. the group fighting the vampires or the men evaluating the women) or personality characteristics of the people working in that organisation are not the most important issues in terms of entrepreneuring per se. The critical thing is to register a shared vision of the human life, a vision that can be updated along the way. It seems that the entrepreneurs (i.e. those willing to create novelty, movement and change in economic terms) are also part of the process of becoming something other than what they are right now – like visionary criminals trying to become rich (see Hjorth 2004b, compare with Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

Gartner (1985) suggests that the elements of creating an organisation are individuals (characteristics and motivations), organisation (and its outcomes), environment (context) and process (behaviours and relationships) (see also Bird 1988). It seems that the reason for assuming that context is a factor and element building up a comprehensible whole is that entrepreneurship is traditionally seen as being about the creation of organisations (Gartner 1985, Bird 1988). This sounds fairly similar to what Bird (1988: 3) refers to as “a simple definition of entrepreneurship”. She states that “entrepreneurship is the creation of value through the creation of organisation” (Bird 1988: 3).

In a later work, Gartner (1989: 64) concludes by arguing that “the entrepreneur is not a fixed state of existence, rather entrepreneurship is a role that individuals undertake to create organisations”. In this sense, the context of entrepreneurship can be compared to an antecedent factor of creating new (business) organisations (Gartner 1985, Bird 1988). However, it seems that not all such entrepreneurial contexts offer better opportunities to start new ventures owing to the element of serendipity, a new venture can be created because of luck (Dew 2009). Görling and Rehn (2008: 94) even write about “dumb luck and surprising fortune” that might be a characterising feature of the creation of new (business) organisations in the post-industrial era.

An understanding of how to create a context of entrepreneurship could also help a person to create a nexus between that person and opportunity. In this way, it seems that a loss of faith might lead to collapse (e.g. Jacob dying in the movie). However, strong commitment to what matters in order to achieve visions can push an individual or a group to success (e.g. Kate surviving in the movie). Furthermore, there is an element of (bad) luck in an entrepreneurial context (e.g. Richie’s death resulting from his broken hand). Therefore, what occurs happens
because of a vision – such as the imagined marriage between Kate and Seth. Without vision, there is no (entrepreneurial) context as a factor.
7 Discussion and directions for the future research

Entrepreneuring means making the effort to establish new contexts of social movement, and change is a process that is embedded in its context. Therefore, entrepreneurial actions related to post-industrial work are the most important issues when talking about social movement and change. In this conceptual study, I investigated how entrepreneurial actions foster the contexts necessary for novelty, movement and change. Some of those contexts can also be actualised as platforms to create new businesses. I analysed the movie *From Dusk Till Dawn* in order to elaborate this. An analysis of an image (e.g. a movie) is a personal interpretation that opens up a way to articulate uniqueness and variation, which are fundamental parts of entrepreneurship (Gartner 2010).

I argue that the challenges faced in trying to understand the nature of an individual entrepreneur, possible differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, or the creation and development of business organisations (e.g. start-ups) are reduced to the question of entrepreneurial actions. Those actions drive entrepreneurs to foster the context for novelty, movement and change (i.e. platforms for new businesses). This frames what the process of entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneuring) is about. In the post-industrial era, it is not so much about linearity (such as work in a factory). In contrast, the basic assumption can be found behind the current approaches that highlight the process nature of entrepreneurship (see Hjorth 2004a, Hjorth & Steyaert 2010).

Based on the discussion above, I argue that an entrepreneurial context could be understood as a platform of (new) businesses that are ignited by shared visions. In terms of academic research, this means that we should focus on the processual nature of entrepreneuring rather than following a person who tries to recognise, discover or create an opportunity because of certain personality qualities (e.g. need for achievement, locus of control, self-efficacy or entrepreneurial alertness). Sometimes an action related to an opportunity happens before the opportunity is registered (Görling & Rehn 2008). Thus, the context – not only a possible (business) organisation – of this is a part of human life and emerges from visionary actions. Developing a new understanding of entrepreneuring is not only about proposing new ideas of what entrepreneurship is or what its outcomes are, it is about showing what entrepreneurship could become (see Hjorth 2004a, Steyaert & Katz 2004, Gartner 2010, Hjorth 2012 forthcoming).
The neoclassical idea of an entrepreneur (i.e. a broker between market demand and supply) holds that the market is already there (see Marshall 1920). Sometimes, the market is there, but there is also a need to understand how entrepreneuring emerges in post-industrial settings per se, there might be little or no resource at the beginning of the process of entrepreneurship (see Sarasvathy 2001, Baker & Nelson 2005). Without this, it is possible to register an alert (or thinking) entrepreneur (cogito), but then the force that drives a subject to become entrepreneurial is missing (Jones & Spicer 2005). The reason is that an individual subject (i.e. an entrepreneur) is then assumed to exist because of his or her ability to think (cogito ergo sum) (see Hjorth 2004b).

I suggest that future scholars investigate how those contexts (platforms for new businesses, for instance) come to result from entrepreneurial actions and efforts. As the analysis of From Dusk Till Dawn shows, there is a desire to become something other than what a person is (or a group of people are) right now. This opens the way to understanding how human actions (whatever they are) foster the shared vision of a better life. In this way, it is a possible to actualise that vision, which changes over time. What could be helpful here is that we could apparently learn new ways to foster entrepreneurial contexts. In doing so, the researcher should start from the assumption that the human desire as a driver of entrepreneurship is a social and creative force.

In these kinds of circumstances, transformations take place. Such transformations are movements that result from entrepreneurial actions by organisational entrepreneurs. In order to study transformations, a more detailed examination of the processes is needed, because all transformations are about becoming something other than what exists right now, such as Frost’s transformation from human to vampire, or a doctoral student’s transformation from Master to Doctor. In both cases, the desire for such a transformation is crucial. This should be studied alongside ideas about entrepreneurial passion. To date, studies on entrepreneurial passion refer to overcoming obstacles, but details about reasons and consequences are still lacking (see Cardon, Zietsma, Saporito, Matherne & Davis 2005).

Of course, the fictional example of acting visionaries (the criminals in From Dusk Till Dawn) cannot be generalised as a part of business-related entrepreneurship. However, the point of using such an example is that the very nature of entrepreneurship is itself a fiction. In fact, many studies look closely at the lives of entrepreneurs (e.g. Hjorth & Steyaert 2004) but such cases are still underdeveloped in the analytical sense, because readers are generally not very
familiar with the entrepreneurs in question. This drives the empirical crisis that Gartner (2010) writes about, for instance. A reader needs to believe that the selected cases are representative of the process of entrepreneurship. I suggest that science fiction is a useful way to show how entrepreneurship, especially organisational entrepreneurship, works as a part of post-industrial societies, and a useful way to shed light on the phenomena that we call entrepreneurship.
8 Conclusions

The entrepreneurial context is a fundamental part of the space for play and innovation, the space in which entrepreneurship takes place. To better understand this, the context should be seen not only as a factor (compare with Gartner 1985, Bird 1988) but also as a platform for actualising a shared vision that changes all the time – one outcome of that type of actualisation could be a new business (organisation). This type of space is dependent on the group of people that co-create what I call entrepreneuring (i.e. the process of entrepreneurship).

In this essay, I have tried to address the research question: “What types of entrepreneurial actions are needed when creating a context for the process of entrepreneuring – through a shared vision?” In doing so, I analysed the actions of two criminals (Seth and Richie Gecko) in the movie From Dusk Till Dawn. Earlier literature defines entrepreneuring “as efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or group of individuals” (Rindova et al. 2009: 477). I therefore investigated what such environments can be and from where they might emerge.

Earlier work suggests that an organisation emerges from change and social processes, but an actor (i.e. entrepreneur) inside this seems to remain the same, a figure (i.e. an agent of production) with certain personality qualities (e.g. a need for achievement, a locus of control, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial alertness). This assumption is pretty much based on the idea of an industrial organisation. In this essay, I have tried to open up the post-industrial version of entrepreneurial contexts. I analysed From Dusk Till Dawn, which depicts the visionary actions of criminals. Entrepreneurs and visionary criminals are similar in the sense that both strive for something in an enthusiastic way. Criminals have to find ways to overcome the challenge of being creative and innovative, qualities that are also critical in post-industrial economies. More precisely, an organisational entrepreneur is a person who is becoming something other than what he or she is right now. This shows what the post-industrial hardworking individual is about: actualising desires so that a better life might be attained.

In this sense, it seems that a vision related to a certain environment is about the affairs of life, which is based on the idea of innovation. This can lead to the emergence of novelty, movement and change. This is a post-industrial version of entrepreneurial context. It can also be a platform for new (business) organisations. The critical issue in creating those platforms is the need to have a vision: an
image of what a person or a group of people is willing to become. It seems that this matters in the post-industrial economy, because there is no agent of production (i.e. a managerial entrepreneur). Therefore, we can learn new ways to create entrepreneurial contexts when analysing visionary people (such as the criminals in *From Dusk Till Dawn*).

In terms of direction for the future research, I would say that research into entrepreneurship could definitely find interesting empirical insights via ethnographical fieldwork. There is an outstanding potential to see, at the practical level, what is going on in the real-life actions and processes of creating a context, which has been discussed in this essay. It seems that the process of organisational entrepreneurship is based on the visionary actions that are updated and actualised as part of human desire. This reflects the very nature of events of organisational entrepreneurship. The personal lives and stories of those who are part of that type of process should be elaborated upon in a way that allows the researcher to make sense of why the creation of those contexts happens. Even though the logic of effectuation provides the same kind of image, effectuating acting strategies in the business world do not elaborate upon what other images entrepreneurship could offer, because effectuation generally refers to business-related entrepreneurship. Because of this, a fictional example of visionaries (i.e. the criminals in *From Dusk Till Dawn*) shows what entrepreneurship could do within societies. More precisely, it seems that there is a desire to become something other than what a person is right now is (e.g. to become rich) but the reasons for that seem to be unknown as yet. An empirical elaboration – based on ethnographical reasoning – of what the concept of becoming has to do with post-industrial (business) organisations could help.
References


IV
The process of falling in love with what you do: the entrepreneurial passion as creative becoming in post-industrial (business) organisations

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Abstract

Purpose – Scholars of entrepreneurship have long been considering the nature of entrepreneurial passion and how it works. Earlier work suggests that entrepreneurial passion is an entrepreneur’s positive feeling about venture-related opportunities, tasks and activities. However, descriptions of why this happens are lacking. This paper fills that gap.

Design/methodology/approach – In this qualitative study, the ethnographically framed interview of the process of becoming a stand-up comedian and the thought experiment of a tango dancer are used to open up the possibility of analysing why entrepreneurial passion occurs. Such analysis uses juxtaposition.

Findings – This paper shows that entrepreneurial passion fosters the process of entrepreneurship. In this way, entrepreneurial passion is a processual desire to become something other than what a person is right now. This kind of desire is what tango dancing is about: doing something for the sake of it, and falling in love with the process. Thus, the desire to become-Other leads to entrepreneurial passion.

Research limitations – The in-depth interview conducted in this study is based on ethnographical fieldwork. The empirical analysis of that interview highlights the juxtaposition between entrepreneurial passion and tango dancing. This shows the performative value of the empirical findings. This study does not discuss entrepreneurial passion philosophically, even though passion is a philosophical concept.

Originality/value – Using the process of becoming as a theoretical framework of this study opens up a novel way to understand what post-industrial entrepreneurship is about. In addition, the ethnographically framed interview shows methodologically that the context of entrepreneurship should be taken into consideration when studying entrepreneurial passion.

Keywords – Becoming Other, entrepreneurial passion, desire

Paper type – Research paper
1 Introduction

An appropriate analogy for comparing organisational emergence to the new organisation is to consider the difference between establishing a relationship (e.g. dating) versus being in a relationship (e.g. marriage). Individuals in a relationship often forget how difficult it is to find a person to be in a relationship with. The skills of ending a person and establishing the context for developing an ongoing relationship (e.g. generating trust, cooperation, and understanding) are different than maintaining the new relationship itself. It would seem to me that the reasons for failing to establish a relationship are different from the reasons for why new relationships fail. (Gartner 1993: 235)

The industrial version of entrepreneurship (and entrepreneurial work) starts from the idea of control. The big firms have seen to characterise the very nature of economies. In the industrial age, it was assumed that an agent of production, a managerial entrepreneur, was able to control and drive forward entrepreneurial work within an organisation, passions would be tamed in order to increase the efficiency. However, modern working life is very different. Consequently, there is no longer much room for the traditional control-oriented manager, who is typically male. The entrepreneurial processes of creating and maintaining post-industrial (business) organisations seem to be unstable in the twenty-first century. In contrast, there is a need for spaces for play and innovation. This opens up the possibility of handling, but not controlling the process of flux encapsulated by entrepreneurship as becoming. It is a process that is fostered by entrepreneurial passion.

As a researcher of organisational entrepreneurship, I find it easy to agree with Gartner (1993). It seems that falling in love is an example of the passionate process of becoming, a creation of value in its wider meaning (see Colebrook 2002). Falling in love is therefore a human desire to be the One – the Other than what he or she is right now (Cardon, Zietsma, Saparito, Matherne & Davis 2005). This analogy reflects the very nature of entrepreneurship. Investigations into entrepreneurship have approached entrepreneurship as a social movement and change that is embedded in history, context, culture and gender. These passionate actions, which are based on the effects related to them, are parts of the processes of human entrepreneurial life (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006, Calás, Smircich & Bourne 2009, Rindova, Barry & Ketchen Jr. 2009).
Earlier work suggests that future scholars of entrepreneurial passion should “ask what passion is or what it does must begin by addressing passion for what” (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, Drnovsek 2009: 525). The reason is that entrepreneurial passion is seen as driving entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles in order to achieve goals in terms of businesses, for instance (Cardon et al. 2005). Thus, the process of “falling in love might offer an appropriate model for organisation emergence” (Cardon et al. 2005: 26, see also Gartner 1993). The emergence of an organisation does not seem to be the only outcome of entrepreneurial passion, but the emergence of a new venture still reflects how entrepreneurial passion happens (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006).

On this basis, passion related to the process of falling in love shows us the social efforts in the process of becoming (a couple in this case). This can also be found behind the process that helps new (business) organisations to emerge (Gartner 1993). More precisely, an issue relates to how the firms come to be (Sarasvathy 1997). However, the current research does not elaborate upon why entrepreneurial passion, as a driver of the entrepreneurial process, fosters such a process, for example the emergence of some (business) organisation (compare with Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). It seems that the very nature of the outcome of entrepreneurial passion is a better life, that is, a social feeling leading a person to become-Other. That is why I pose the following research question: “Why does entrepreneurial passion, as a vision related to a better life, foster the context-related process of entrepreneurship?” In this essay, I elaborate upon this empirically by analysing the process of becoming a Finnish stand-up comedian (an individual entrepreneur).

In the post-industrial economy, the issue does not seem to be how to maintain existing organisations or businesses (akin to maintaining an ongoing relationship) but about how to establish a context for novelty in the same way as a single person acts when trying to establish a new relationship. This reflects the post-industrial economy (and life) because human life is becoming increasingly urban-oriented. Therefore, the context in which the today’s life and work take place is linked with the accelerated need for innovation but not to the (re)production of something that already exists.

The purpose of this essay is to discuss how entrepreneurial passion as a driver of the process of entrepreneurship fosters such a process. I use an interview with an up-and-coming stand-up comedian and a thought experiment with tango dancing in order to outline this issue. The narrative type of open interview has developed from my ethnographical fieldwork in Finland. Tango dancing is a
conceptual example of passion. It could also be seen in the process of becoming a stand-up comedian. In both cases, one has to commit fully, just as an (organisational) entrepreneur would do when striving for novelty and thus a better life. The thought experiment shows that the passionate processes of becoming (lovers, for example) or of doing something that matters (provides value) in life succeed in the post-industrial economy. This opens up a discussion about how to overcome the challenge of being innovative and creative in the post-industrial economy. In this essay, I suggest that entrepreneurial passion results from the desire to become-Other (i.e. one that you are not right now). This illustrates the urban and culture-related context in the research on entrepreneurship.
2 Becoming as a conceptual basis of entrepreneurial passion

When approaching entrepreneurship from the perspective of becoming, similar social efforts can be found behind the process of entrepreneurship and attempts to establish a new relationship. In creating a new organisation, social efforts are needed in order to generate trust, cooperation and understanding, these might include creating businesses, building up partnerships and attracting new customers (compare with Gartner 1993). As Gartner, Bird and Starr (1992) argue, a reasonable explanation for such entrepreneurial behaviour might be making more money, but the more relevant explanation may turn out to be becoming one’s own boss or developing a product that helps mankind. Therefore, the subjects and objects within the social process become something encountered along the way (see Jones & Spicer 2005). This is based on entrepreneurial passion that intensifies the life of an emotional and playful entrepreneur (Hjorth 2007). Therefore, entrepreneurship could be seen as becoming, whether or not this is actualised as a new venture or initiative inside an existing (business) organisation.

What is often problematic in research on entrepreneurship is that the studies have been framed around the subject of the entrepreneurial process – i.e. an acting entrepreneur, such as the man spending money to buy a gift for the woman. It seems obvious that the creation of wealth and novelty in the post-industrial economy is based on human efforts to effect change (Rindova et al. 2009). This is why it is important to discuss entrepreneurial passion as a driver of the process of entrepreneurship (compare with Calás et al. 2009). In doing so, the process of entrepreneurship needs to be related to organisations in general (emerging and existing), in which urban human life occurs as something else that is traditionally not related to entrepreneurship (Hjorth, Johannisson & Steyaert 2003, Hjorth, Jones & Gartner 2008). Understanding what drives the process of entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneurial passion) makes it possible to use organisational-creative potential when a person or group of people tries to innovate in a certain context.

As Rindova et al. (2009) state, it is obvious that entrepreneurial social efforts are required when starting and maintaining the process of entrepreneurship. In terms of falling in love, nobody forces anyone to date, or nor is it likely that there is someone just waiting for a specific person to date them without that person making any of the social efforts that surround the dating process. However, the
Efforts required for these types of processes make it possible to create organisations, whatever their form, and value. With entrepreneurship, such value has been investigated in economic terms (see Lumpkin & Dess 1996, Ireland, Hitt & Sirmon 2003, Ketchen Jr., Ireland & Snow 2007). Within the current discourses on entrepreneurship, there is increasing demand to see entrepreneurship in a new light, not as the outcome of the actions carried out by a mythical hero (usually male), who is known as the entrepreneur (Ogbor 2000, Hjorth 2004, Steyaert and Katz 2004, Calás et al. 2009, Rindova et al. 2009, Sørensen in press). In contrast, entrepreneurship could be seen as something that is becoming rather than something that simply exists (see Gartner 1989, Gartner et al. 1992, Sørensen in press). This feature can be understood by studying the processes of falling in love, because the underlying force behind the phenomena of falling in love and entrepreneurship is the same: the desire to become-Other.

Therefore the core interest of entrepreneurship is not to manage big corporations, resources or capital. Instead, the critical issue is to build up networks, be a part of the entrepreneurial context (such as Silicon Valley) and to create flexible things that can be changed quickly. Flexibility is particularly important because post-industrial workplaces have been emerging and fading fast, people change jobs more often than they did before and working methods and interventions are different from what they were in the industrial economy. In an industrial economy, there is an agent of production (a managerial entrepreneur), who is capable of controlling the process of production. In a post-industrial economy, there is an agent of innovation (an entrepreneurial entrepreneur) instead (Hjorth 2003, 2004). This kind of dichotomy shows the differences between industrial and post-industrial economies and organisations.

The difference between industrial and post-industrial economies relates to the number of changes in the economy. Industrial economies are based on stability and reproduction (such as the efficiency of a factory). In contrast, movement and rapid change characterise post-industrial economies. Because of this, the research on entrepreneurship should also consider how this type of variation, in terms of (business) organisations, influences work-related interventions and processes. For example, Penrose (1959) writes about the resource-based view (RBV) that starts from the idea that something is already there at the beginning of the process of entrepreneurship. However, when analysing post-industrial life and (business) organisations, it seems such resources are not always there at the beginning. Sometimes the processes of entrepreneurship start from nothing (Baker & Nelson 2005). When trying to make sense of that, the features of cultural-related actions
and urban life enter into the discussion. In addition, processuality and contextuality should be discussed in terms of the current (business) organisations as part of post-industrial societies.

Van de Ven and Poole (2005: 1380) state that “an organisation is always something in some particular state or phase of a process, there is always something there”. In that way, a post-industrial (business) organisation is like a jigsaw puzzle, pieces have to be inserted into the correct place (Mainela & Puhakka 2009). However, it seems that current (business) organisations are not like jigsaw puzzles. Mainela and Puhakka (2009: 130) state:

\[\text{based on your own creativity, you have to conceive what the situation is about, work out how the pieces are linked, conceive a solution, conceive in what way the pieces bring about a solution, and understand the puzzle as a whole.}\]

In order to develop a new understanding of this type of economy, Steyaert (2004) and Hjorth (2007) suggest using a processual approach to elaborate upon entrepreneurship as something that becomes rather than exists.

It is now crucial to embrace the idea of becoming because it seems that there is a need to be creative and innovative both within and outside (business) organisations in a post-industrial economy. Colebrook (2002: 145) suggests that the difference between being and becoming is that becoming is about “creation and exploration of new styles of perception”. When comparing being and becoming, being is more akin to a unit of analysis when somebody is trying to make sense of a process that is “directed towards some end or goal” (Colebrook 2002: 145). When it comes to moving from the industrial age to the post-industrial age, it is the same. There is a critical movement from being a part of a stable system of production, where some end point or goal can be found (e.g. a product produced in a factory) to the less stable principles of organising creative things entrepreneurially and processually, in other words the methods and work-life interventions in a post-industrial economy. That is why entrepreneurial passion has been investigated through the idea of becoming in this essay. It is a critique of the managerial approach to entrepreneurship, based on the idea of industrial organisations. According to Hjorth (2007), the problem is that the (business) organisation is seen as an entity in research on entrepreneurship. In doing so, there is an underlying assumption of order that is pretty much applied in the field entrepreneurship.
If it is assumed that order is there, the (business) organisation can be driven in a controllable manner – the answer to the (managerial) problem of such order is always managerial (Hjorth 2007). In addition, the assumption of order behind entrepreneurship is also why the resource-based view (RBV) works in these types of approaches. Penrose (1959) states that the firms differ from each other in terms of resource heterogeneity (i.e. firms hold different levels of resources), resource immobility (i.e. resources are too costly to be copied) and inelastic supply (i.e. the total level of supplies that firms produce do not vary much in response to demand from the economy). However, it seems that post-industrial (business) organisations do not follow these types of supply and demand rules. In fact, sometimes there are few resources in the beginning, resources (e.g. technology) are no longer difficult copy and supply and demand come closer to each to other when it comes to innovation. Consequently, the idea of passion behind entrepreneurship suggests that stable entities (e.g. a business organisation or entrepreneur) could be understood processually (see Katz & Steyaert 2004 Hjorth 2007). Such processes are not so much based on resources but on the entrepreneurial passion that drives those processes.

The reason for investigating entrepreneurial passion behind post-industrial entrepreneurship is that sometimes a business opportunity is not registered before it is created (Görling & Rehn 2008). When investigating entrepreneurship in this way, a (business) organisation or entrepreneur are not important as units of analysis per se, the focus should be on the process of how those entities become what they are over time. Therefore, an entrepreneur is not seen as a “fixed state of existence” (Gartner 1989: 64) but as an organisational ‘becomer’ – a person who is becoming something other than what he or she is right now. Organisational entrepreneurship is a way to study this phenomenon (Hjorth 2005).

In terms of the concept of becoming, the main point is not to focus on the subject but on what happens to the actors who are reviewing their “webs of beliefs and habits of action as a result of new experiences obtained through interactions” (Tsoukas & Chia 2002: 570). Thus, it is not the man or the woman that is interesting in terms of relationships, what is interesting is the process they go through together to become something else (from two single people to a couple). As mentioned above, the analogy of falling in love can be applied to entrepreneurship, the process of becoming is crucial in both (compare with Sørensen, in press).

Another similarity is that both require human effort to influence others and to be influenced by them. In other words, a person who is becoming is not only
becoming from inside to outside. This is what the current management literature suggests (i.e. internal becoming). For example, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) write about the “appropriate individual” – a person who fits into an existing (business) organisation and influences others. From the perspective of becoming, this reflects the managerial dream to find a suitable person with a certain type of personality for a specific type of work (compare with Morgan 2006, Taylor 1911). However, it seems that post-industrial (business) organisations do not work in that way. Instead, there is an ongoing need to be innovative and creative. In other words, demand is not production, but the entrepreneurial passion that is conducted through post-industrial (business) organisations. As a result, becoming from outside to inside (e.g. external becoming) must be taken into account as well (see Sørensen, in press).

The above indicates that becoming is a twofold issue. Firstly, there is becoming from inside to outside, this relates to a person fitting in well and having an effect on an organisation. Secondly, there is becoming from outside to inside, here, outside forces influence what a person is becoming and how an organisation and that person relate. This is pretty much how the post-industrial economy works (see Sørensen, in press). However, there is a demand to be a certain type of person, one who fits into an existing (business) organisation. In addition, there is still increasing pressure to create a new identity, to be a person who is not like an existing (business) organisation. As Sørensen (in press) writes:

Folding does not, in other words, take place in a vacuum. Any notion of a decontextualized ‘free will’ is primary and ideological exercise, much like ‘the free market’ is. The ‘strata’ are closing in on the fold, which is to say that the stratified archive of available material (images, ideologies, organisational cultures, language games, mediatized imagery, Human Resource technologies, Facebooks of various kinds, et cetera) from which the employee draws the material with which to produce ‘myself as a subject’.

In this way, an employee as an organisational becomer becomes both from inside and from outside the environmental context (compare with Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

The idea of becoming Other is also pretty much the same as what Hjorth (2007) writes about entrepreneurial events being fire and energy. This is not only about examining the post-industrial version of entrepreneurship but also discussing how the image of an entrepreneur is changing as we move further into the twenty-first century (see Ogbor 2000, Hjorth et al. 2008). Hjorth (2007: 713)
states that entrepreneurial events – as the collective fire and release of creative social energy – are “associated with the desiring, playful, creative person rather than the economic and modular composition of humans that has dominated modernist management theory”. This could happen by approaching the issue of entrepreneurship from the perspective of becoming.

At a practical level, becoming means that there is kind of order to being successful (as an organisational entrepreneur/becomer). There might not be any (business) opportunities ‘out there’ as such, waiting for the recogniser or discoverer (compare with Alvarez & Barney 2007). In contrast, “the guiding logic can be that of dumb luck and surprising fortune” (Görling & Rehn 2008: 94). In this way, the important issue is becoming. This problematises any research into the personality traits of an individual entrepreneur, who may be seen as a lonely hero (see Ogbor 2000). Let me elaborate upon this with a couple of examples.

Let us think about Columbus’s efforts in the fifteenth century, efforts that finally reshaped ideas about the world and especially its geopolitical structures. Columbus was looking for India but found America. One can definitely interpret such a result as either dumb luck (he found something outstanding, even though he did not manage to get to India) or an unsuccessful discovery (he did not find India, as had been expected). However, his efforts have influenced the understanding of the world and its geopolitical structures in a dramatic way. According to Rindova et al. (2009: 489), Columbus’s “efforts create enormous wealth for individuals and societies”. We may also remember how penicillin, a drug now widely used to combat bacterial infections, was discovered when Fleming was cleaning his laboratory in 1928. That discovery was made because of prior knowledge of a mould that could be used to create a drug to treat certain types of diseases (Dew 2009). Therefore, discoveries can be made accidently and without (managerial) planned strategies and set of personality traits, characteristics and qualities, even though the outcome can contribute to society in an economic sense as well. As Dew (2009) writes about unintended discoveries, it seems that we should open up a passionate space for play and innovation in order to better understand how to overcome a challenge creatively and innovatively in the post-industrial economy.

Dew (2009) provides a couple of examples on how serendipity (in terms of unintended discoveries) can happen, but here I would like to his thoughts on Picasso’s style of art and method of work-related intervention. He writes: “Picasso had only blue paint to work with one day, but when he started to toy with the effects of painting with this one color, he found that interesting art could
be made of it” (Dew 2009: 735). Here is the same issue: Picasso had to have enough knowledge of art in order to understand that he had actually created an initiative that could be actualised as a masterpiece. This does not differ from entrepreneurship, because existing knowledge is also needed there. More precisely, in entrepreneurship, the necessary condition is an entrepreneur’s readiness and awareness of the (business) initiatives around him or her. What is this type of initiative? I argue that it could be almost anything that can be actualised as a novelty and/or value (see Steyaert & Katz 2004, Hjorth et al. 2008). One cannot predict how the process might continue. It is similar to the establishment of a relationship, if one is open to that type of process (i.e. a readiness for and awareness of initiatives), dumb luck or serendipity (but not an exact piece of knowledge in the traditional sense) may start the process of becoming Other. It is the same kind of becoming, regardless of its context (e.g. becoming a couple or becoming an entrepreneur).

In another example, Görling and Rehn (2008) write about men sitting in a bar discussing beautiful women. They concluded that maybe they could create a webpage where everybody could do the same. The website, hotornot.com, allows anyone to evaluate women (or indeed anybody who uploads a photo) in terms of physical appearance. This is an example of an accidental venture. This idea was exploited and they finally made money from it (Görling & Rehn 2008). The creation of an accidental venture of this type is based on prior knowledge: in this case, subjective perception of beauty. What is fundamentally different here is that ‘knowledge’ like that is not closely connected to knowledge in the natural ‘scientific’ sense – as it is a few facts that could be more true than other claims of the truth or not (see Czarniawska 1997). In contrast, such evaluation criteria are definitely based on a one man’s subjective opinion of what is beautiful in a lady. This, in other words, is a way to create new (business) organisations, even though such knowledge’ has nothing to do with the ‘scientific knowledge’ that Czarniawska (1997) writes about. This contradicts the idea of discovery and evaluation of an entrepreneurial opportunity by an alert entrepreneur, for instance (compare with Kirzner 1997, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2003). Instead of registering an entrepreneurial opportunity (in the sense of recognising, discovering or creating it), such an action is just about actualising (making something happen). This is based on the context of where the action takes place.

What does this tell us about the post-industrial process of entrepreneurship, and how it should be studied? It tells us that the process of entrepreneurship is not only about being efficient in the traditional, managerial, sense. It is also about
creating social value, this means doing something just for the sake of it (Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). The nature of work organisations has changed and thus breaking the industrial rule/demand of being/becoming efficient – the basic starting point of management studies – as a (business) organisation becomes crucial in the economic sense as well.

There is therefore no apparatus of production (like a factory) behind affairs that might finally create new and valuable, and hopefully profitable, things at the level of society and post-industrial organisations. In contrast, it is about influencing others and being influenced by them. For example, the initiative to set up hotornot.com was based on the fact that those men had nothing to do but sit in a bar. In this case, their actions drove the process of becoming (entrepreneurs). To investigate this academically, a researcher needs to be close to the context in which becoming takes place, to examine the actions related to becoming, and to be a part of this process in terms of narrative, storytelling and ethnographies (see Hjorth 2004, Gartner 2010). Ethnographical work in particular starts from the idea of being close to the culture that is influencing the events in question. Using ethnography in research on entrepreneurship means that ideas about cultural and urban entrepreneurship become core issues.
3 An ethnographically framed interview about entrepreneurial passion, research outline and analysis of the empirical material

So far, the current scholars in the field of research into entrepreneurship have used the ethnographic methodology in their attempts to investigate entrepreneurial identities (e.g. Kondo 1990, Down & Reveley 2004), managerial legitimacy in small firms (e.g. Taylor, Thorpe & Down 2002), and entrepreneurship in family and community settings (e.g. Ram & Holliday 1993, Boon & Ram 1998, Ram 1999, 2000, 2001, Perren & Ram 2004). However, the ethnographic approach has remained in the background, as the mainstream literature on entrepreneurship emphasises non-qualitative work. Because of this, studies that take an ethnographic approach seem to contribute to general discourses on work-life, such as employment relationships in small firms (see Ram & Holliday 1993, Holliday 1995), rather than to the core discourses of entrepreneurship (except Dana 1995). Therefore, those interested in using the ethnographic approach are also interested in seeing entrepreneurship as an issue within society (see Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). Such issues cannot be easily investigated in an explainable way, which is typical in quantitative studies (Johnstone 2007). When taking an ethnographic approach, it is important to provide thick descriptions of the contexts in which the informants live and which they influence (Geertz 1973, 1988). More precisely, such descriptions aim to describe rather than explain ongoing events in their real-life context from the perspective of informants (i.e. the emic-perspective).

In this essay, I decided to take an ethnographic approach to examining the process of becoming a stand-up comedian. More precisely, the ethnographical fieldwork shows the context in which I analyse the interview conducted with a fledgling stand-up comedian. This allowed me to interpret how the life of an actor (the up-and-coming stand-up comedian in this context) is constructed in a social way and how it thus creates an understanding of meanings that are socially shared (see Hjorth 2004, Steyaert & Katz 2004). The reason is that the context of stand-up comedy (i.e. the business sector of Finnish stand-up comedy) is built around certain types of socially constructed beliefs, symbols and values. They seem to influence those who work in this particular field. This is not only to be found in the fieldwork conducted in this study, articles on this subject are available to anyone on the Internet. I elaborate upon the context of the business area of the
Finnish stand-up comedy through these things in the following chapter of this essay.

In making sense of symbols and values, the methodological ideas behind the ethnographic approach show their worth. Ethnography is based on the holistic standing point of ethnography, or as Malinowski (1922) puts it: it is about stressing to deal with the totality of all social, cultural, and psychological aspects of community (see Johnstone 2007). Moreover, the ethnographic approach to research makes it possible to analyse how a person becomes – in the sense described by Tsoukas and Chia (2002) – because an ethnographer is a part of the phenomenon that he or she is investigating (see Geertz 1988). In this way, an ethnographer is able to approach everyday life from the perspective of people who live in a social reality that is different from the ethnographer’s. According to Geertz (1973: 144 – 145), an important issue in an ethnographic study is to understand that:

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On the one level there is a framework of beliefs, expressive symbols, and values in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings, and make their judgments, on the other level there is the ongoing process of interactive behavior, whose persistent form we call social structure.

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Therefore, an ethnographic study satisfies the need “to place entrepreneurship in a broader context of social and management research, and at the same time to communicate something of the conflict that is presently at play in entrepreneurship research” (Hjorth et al. 2008: 83). A study of organisational entrepreneurship can thus show, for instance, that entrepreneurial passion is what fosters entrepreneurial processes, not only as a part of businesses but also as a part of societies (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

Interactive behaviour (the persistent form of which Geertz (1988) describes as social structure) was something that I discovered when working in this field. In this study, I explain social structure by carrying out an interview in order to better understand the underlying beliefs, expressive symbols and values that I found in this field. These underlying beliefs and expressive symbols seemed to influence the decision to try to become a stand-up comedian. According to Geertz (1973), the centre of an ethnographical study is to understand the human behaviour in a certain context (that an ethnographer is usually not a part of). In this way, behaviour of any type can make sense to an outsider. This is the how Geertz (1973) discusses the thick description. In this study, I tried to fully describe the person who was becoming a stand-up comedian. Moreover, I express how the
process of becoming a stand-up comedian is similar to the process of becoming dancing partners (the thought experiment in this study). In both cases, passion is a crucial issue that also reflects the way it could be applied in studies related to entrepreneurship.

The ethnographical approach I take is in line with Hjorth’s (2004) study of creative Other spaces (heterotopia) in organisational entrepreneurship. This also provides evidence for the notion put forward by Steyaert and Katz (2004): entrepreneurship could be seen as something that is located in the daily lives of people. It can, for example, be the situation where “the wife who negotiates a better price, the child who begins to trade collectible cards with friends, the homeless man who begins selling cheap umbrellas during a rainstorm or freshly dug worms to fishermen by a city lake” (Steyaert & Katz 2004: 190). The main reason for carrying out ethnographic research was for the way it took contextual matters into account (an interest in the daily interactions that reflect underlying beliefs, expressive symbols and values). This is also important in terms of dating (mentioned above), generating trust, cooperating and understanding require someone who is interested in being part of a couple to hold onto those issues in order to better connect within the context of becoming Other. It is also possible to analyse creativity (see by Hjorth et al. 2008) in this way. To do that in a study of entrepreneurship, it is necessary to use many methods of gathering data (such as observation, interviews and discussions via e-mail), descriptions of interactions, illustrations of cultural-specific habits, norms and experiences that open up the possibility of going deep inside a phenomenon (see Hammersley 1990, Johnstone 2007).

When working on this essay, I both analysed the open interview I conducted with the up-and-coming stand-up comedian and the empirical material that I gathered in the field. The analysis of the interview shows that there is a desire to become something other than what the person is right now. Storytelling as an empirical method works here, because the use of narrative offers a “capacity to make what we study knowable to a more general audience lies in the narrative’s power to connect the singular, the specific and the individual to the broader landscape of storied experiences and the productive resonance that emerge from this contact” (Hjorth 2009: vi). My ethnographical field notes helped to create a contextual understanding of what was happening to the person who was willing to become a stand-up comedian and therefore an entrepreneur in Finland.

In practical terms, I followed Czarniawska’s (2008) suggestions of following an object, shadowing a person and using a diary in an ethnographical study. The
object I followed was in the process of becoming a stand-up comedian, so I did this by conducting an interview and reading his public blog posts during the research process. I also had many discussions with him online. These took place through Windows Messenger because we were not able to meet face-to-face. This is linked with the shadowing as well. A more detailed description of the process I followed can be found in chapter 4.

I also kept a diary during the 10 months I spent in the field. I was observing two entrepreneurs who were aiming to nurture the career of the stand-up comedian I interviewed. The field notes were summarised at the end of the process of working on this essay. The summary consisted of eight pages. Analysing the summary again gave me a better understanding of the context of the Finnish stand-up comedy business sector. The ethnographical fieldwork was based on the emic-perspective that Geertz (1973) describes. This means that beliefs, symbols and values are interpreted from the perspective of the Other. In this case, the Other was a socially accepted image of a stand-up comedian. I will elaborate on this in the next chapter.
4 Elaboration of the context of Finnish stand-up comedy

In this study, I followed an up-and-coming stand-up comedian, whose biography appears as an Appendix to this paper. His ambition to be funny was what inspired him to try stand-up comedy. He had no other ambition, he just wanted to become what he was not at the beginning of the process. He got his break at an open mic event put on by Ookko Nää Nauranu (a firm that organises comedy shows). This company operates in Oulu, in the northern part of Finland. In this chapter, I look at the business sector of Finnish stand-up comedy in order to elaborate upon the beliefs, symbols and values that drive this type of business. The remarkable thing is that business-based ambition is usually quite low in the field of stand-up comedy in Finland. The main ambition is to make stand-up comedy accessible, rather than to make money. However, it seems that the entrepreneurs behind Ookko Nää Nauranu do make good money, even without the ambition to become rich.

In this study, my fieldwork focuses on the person who wants to become a stand-up comedian, this fieldwork includes observations, interviews and online discussions. This process of becoming a stand-up comedian is illustrated below. Such a process is based on the desire to become something other than what a person is right now. I open up the discussion to look at the role entrepreneurial passion could play in terms of tango dancing (the thought experiment below). Tango dancing shows how the meaning of embrace (i.e. an actor’s physical desire to become part of the embrace) creates an organisation: dance partners. This is based on my personal experience as a tango dancer. I also use literature to provide evidence for the argument that the process of becoming a tango dancer reflects the role passion could play in entrepreneurship.

It seems that passion, which has no pure form but always has an intention towards something, shows how the stand-up comedy business functions in Finland. As mentioned above, there is an enhanced need to be innovative and creative in (business) organisations in the twenty-first century. The Finnish stand-up comedy industry shows this. Therefore, it should be understood how entrepreneurial passion in relation to this works and how it is supported as a form of becoming. Rytilahti (2011) writes on his blog:

And in answer to the question that how far you can get in the stand-up comedy in a year: to Kuopio (a small town in the middle of Finland). The
work trip of 28 hours consisted of a couple of aberrations, free alcohol, irregular eating, and well disturbed sleeping. Do I want to spend my weekends in that way? No, definitely not, but in this way I am ready to spend all of my working days.

This demonstrates that stand-up comedians perform comedy for its own sake.

In addition, Rytilahti (2011) highlights that stand-up comedy is a field where you have to convince not only the audience but also your networks that you are a talented comedian. Otherwise, you will not get offers to perform and thus will not become famous and make money from our craft. In other words, without social acceptance in the field of stand-up comedy, one will not become a stand-up comedian. It takes time and money to become a stand-up comedian, get bookings. Usually, it is not typical for a club to pay travel and accommodation expenses for untried stand-up comedians. The comedian has to cover those costs and try to build up social networks that way.

The ethnographical fieldwork of this study provides evidence for Rytilahti’s (2011) argument that breaking into stand-up comedy requires a huge amount of personal commitment. As described above, Ookko Nää Nauranu runs stand-up comedy clubs. Even though one of the entrepreneurs is also a stand-up comedian, this is not linked with their business, as that person always hosts the shows they organise. He does no more than introduce the acts. During my fieldwork, I often went to those clubs. I was often invited to after-show events. I became familiar with the stand-up comedians and their other partners (such as the staff running the clubs or working in the cloakrooms).

What is different about Ookko Nää Nauranu, compared with other organisers (usually independent stand-up comedians who are also entrepreneurs) is that Ookko Nää Nauranu also encourages those who are interested in becoming stand-up comedians. In this way, they believe that they can influence the Finnish comedy circuit in a positive way. I was able to access both the empirical material of the stand-up comedy business (ethnographical fieldwork) and the account of how a person could become something other than what he or she is right now (through open interviews).

The reason it is so important to foster the becoming processes of up-and-coming stand-up comedians in Finland is that the early stage of a career in stand-up comedy is tough. The fledgling comedian needs to put a considerable amount of energy into creating his or her career, as there is nothing to rely on except jokes and the desire to become a stand-up comedian. This is similar to what happened
with Ookko Nää Nauranu. Two friends just thought that they could organise stand-up comedy clubs in Oulu, Finland. The idea came to mind while they were driving. At that time, they were producing something completely different together: television shows.

In that sense, to opportunity to get into the Finnish stand-up comedy business was something of a coincidence, there was no formal planning, market forecasts or business plans. They stated: “It always feels so ridiculous to speak about these things, because it was just about normal interactions between two friends”. When discussing this, they highlighted that they had been working on the idea of setting up a comedy club for about and year and a half before their first club was established. This is a vulnerable business, and clubs have to be well organised. To avoid the pitfalls faced by others, one must have a thorough understanding of what it takes to run a successful club. According to those two entrepreneurs, understanding the real meaning of a stand-up comedy club is about creating the proper atmosphere, for the audience and the performers. They believe that the success in terms of stand-up comedy is a cultural issue.

The fieldwork carried out on Ookko Nää Nauranu showed how a long-term business can be created in a post-industrial economy. It is based on the interactions between people, the creation of social networks and the generation of trust, not only between customers and the firm but also (and especially) between them and the stand-up comedians, who are individual entrepreneurs as long as they are popular enough to earn money from it. That way, a business opportunity can be actualised as a by-product of the cultural-related actions around doing relevant things in terms of Finnish stand-up comedy. A fledgling stand-up comedian needs to have the passion to become a stand-up comedian for its own sake, not because of the money, because he or she will usually have to cover all the related costs at the beginning. However, those two issues (the business-related issue of making money and the desire to become a stand-up comedian) are linked. As the example of Ookko Nää Nauranu illustrates, the passion to build up an outstanding stand-up comedy club, rather than the desire to make money, is the force that makes it possible to create a business based on Finnish stand-up comedy. It is about doing things for their own sake.

Stand-up comedy originated in the United States. It is now seen all over the world. In that sense, stand-up comedy is not a novel issue. The novelty issue in relation to Ookko Nää Nauranu is that they have set up a real club, rather than just providing a space for a couple of stand-up comedians to perform. This company produces an event that has actually become a brand in Finland. That brand is a
characterising feature of their work as the forerunners of the Finnish stand-up comedy industry. Therefore, they have a reputation as a stable stand-up comedy club, which current stand-up comedians trust. From the perspective of business-related entrepreneurship, they have created a business opportunity that has the potential to be a space for stand-up comedians, and can be an entrepreneurial event that fosters the cultural phenomenon around it. Furthermore, they are willing to support aspiring stand-up comedians in becoming what they want to be. In a business context, this is about actualising a business opportunity.

As mentioned above, Finnish stand-up comedy is not a fixed area of business. It is most likely that stand-up comedians are individual entrepreneurs who earn money by performing in stand-up comedy clubs. Usually, however, only a few stand-up comedy clubs are established clubs, most are no more than venues where stand-up comedians can perform. Therefore, Ookko Nää Nauranu is a forerunner in this sense. The entrepreneurs of Ookko Nää Nauranu have built up a club that is a recognised brand. That is why stand-up comedy clubs in Finland are so popular, especially in the north. Moreover, they are willing to support those who are interested in becoming stand-up comedians. For example, they organise open-mic events, where new talents can perform for the first time. If a performer seems promising, they will organise other events where the comedian can perform and develop a network. Ookko Nää Nauranu already has a number of contacts, as they have a reputation for being trustworthy and good organisers. This is not typical in Finland. The reason their firm is so popular is that there are only around 25 stand-up comedians in Finland who can really make a living. Stand-up comedy is an art form, the creative action behind developing a set of jokes.
5 Becoming vis-à-vis post-industrial (business) organisations

There are two parts in this chapter. First I will discuss the becoming process in relation to an up-and-coming stand-up comedian. This is based on an interview I conducted as part of ethnographical fieldwork in Finland. I will then present a thought experiment based on tango dancing. It seems that both reflect passion. In both cases, there is a desire to become something other that the subject is right now: passionate, emotional and playful. In other words, Other. Such juxtaposition shows how entrepreneurship works and why the apparatus of innovation seems to neglect its productive counterpart (in the industrial sense) in post-industrial economies. In addition, juxtaposition between the process of becoming a stand-up comedian and tango partners expresses how closely organisational entrepreneurship and building up relationships are to each other. In fact, both processes are based on passion. That is why this juxtaposition illustrates the elements of why entrepreneurial passion flows from the desire to become-Other.

5.1 An ethnographically framed interview about becoming a stand-up comedian “There is an image that you would like to have, it is different from what you are now”

In this chapter, I will give an account of an up-and-coming Finnish stand-up comedian whom I followed in my ethnographical fieldwork in Finland. This account is based on a storytelling kind of interview that was conducted in January 2011. Usually, being a stand-up comedian necessitates being part of a social group of other stand-up comedians in order to get offers to perform, and thus earn money. This naturally means that if one is not a part of a social network of other stand-up comedians (individual entrepreneurs), offers will not be forthcoming, and the fledgling performer will not become famous and earn money. Success with such socialising means that an up-and-coming Finnish stand-up comedian can ‘become’ in a social way. He was driven by his desire to become a stand-up comedian. He said: “There are two things in stand-up comedy: the jokes and the person’s image”. To be famous, a stand-up comedian must have a socially acceptable reputation in addition to the work of creating and telling jokes on stage. His material was the only thing he had at the beginning.

From the perspective of entrepreneurship, this shows how the process of becoming takes place. An up-and-coming stand-up comedian said: “As a result of
being on stage, people now regard me as a funny person”. He talked a lot about the start of his career. This was quite difficult, as he did not have a place to perform at first, and so it was difficult to learn how to present his show convincingly. In stand-up comedy, it is important to be one hundred percent behind the jokes, this can happen only by practising. Then, by coincidence, Ookko Nää Nauranu began to organise open mic events in Oulu (a city in the north of Finland). This inspired the up-and-coming stand-up comedian and so he decided to try out his show to see if it would work on the stage.

After his first performance and getting to know Zaani (one of the owners of Ookko Nää Nauranu and a famous stand-up comedian in Finland), he was given the opportunity to perform at shows throughout Finland. He accepted the offer. After those events, he gained greater access to the network of other Finnish stand-up comedians. This is crucial in stand-up comedy, because it is important to have an image that people remember, this is the only way to become known and get offers to perform, and to earn money. When speaking about becoming a stand-up (image), he said: “In terms of me, there were some jokes at the beginning. But when the issue [his career as a stand-up comedian] is developed further, there will be my reputation to consider. Then, everything I talk about will be interpreted as funny by the audience.”

When it comes to characterising the desire to become a stand-up comedian at a practical level, it seems that there is a gap between the person and what he or she is willing to be (his or her image). When speaking about this, he mentioned that “there is an image that you would like to be, it is different to what you actually are now”. This is an important point in terms of becoming a stand-up comedian. Being a stand-up comedian involves a host of actions. Those actions can be related to knowledge of society and recent events that the comedian reconstructs into anecdotes, which then becomes jokes told on stage. The critical issue is that the (up-and-coming) stand-up comedian should tell those stories (jokes) in a humorous way.

I regularly check the headlines in the newspapers. If I find something interesting there, I read it. Then I might find an alternative view on that issue, change the whole issue and turn it upside down. That can take just a couple of seconds. Then I chat about it online to somebody. If that works, I can move forward and keep working on the topic.

This reflects actions related to creating the set of jokes. To do this, an up-and-coming stand-up comedian needs to be aware of what is happening in society.
Creating jokes is therefore not so much a question of the personality traits, characteristics or qualities. It is more about being aware of what is going on in society.

As an example of the creative process behind his set of jokes, the comedian related the joke about a species of Amazon fish. In the joke, he says that male Amazon fish would actually be keen on having sex with female Amazon fish. The joke is that there are no longer any male Amazon fish alive. Thus, “sex” between male and female Amazon fish is impossible. Instead of mating (having sex in a joke) with the male Amazon fish, the female Amazon fish have intercourse with other fish. This is based on a piece of news which mentioned that male Amazon fish died out 70,000 years ago. This is an example of how a real issue can be twisted upside down to become a joke.

As mentioned above, a new stand-up comedian ‘becomes’ through a social process. The process starts from developing his act (the jokes). The next phase involves presenting that act. If the stand-up performs well, with audience and other comedians recognising the stand-up’s talent, the process of becoming can happen. An up-and-coming stand-up comedian said: “It is not the real me on the stage, it is a representation of me”. It seems to be that the process of becoming was tough for him. He was offered two important shows in his hometown, such events are unusual in Finland. He said: “The week before the shows was awful. I had a stomach ache all week, and my pulse was over 100 beats a minute when I was working”. This shows that the process of becoming has a physical side. His performance went well, though. “As the first show went so well, I was eagerly looking forward to doing the next one. I was thinking that, oh great, I have another opportunity to be on stage again tonight. I no longer felt frustrated.”

He talked a lot about his feelings after the two shows. He now saw himself as a stand-up comedian, as others saw him that way. People responded to him as if he were a celebrity, responding enthusiastically when seeing him, or asking him about his show. This had a positive effect on him. Becoming a stand-up comedian resulted from the effort he put in before his first show. He had been gathering ideas for many years. In the process of becoming, he was influenced by his environment (internal becoming) and he influenced others, through preparing his set and performing (external becoming).

It was not all positive, however. A couple of weeks later, he performed again in his hometown, and this time he had invited a couple of his friends along. It was a disaster. For some reason, his set just did not work. “It was a total flop, nobody laughed. But then I thought I’d come back. I was willing to come back to show
that I could be funnier than that. I won’t give up. I’ll come back in a month and show everyone what I’m about”. It seems that his less successful show ignited a desire to become funnier. This demonstrates that the process of becoming a stand-up comedian consists of successful and less successful phases. He likened it to being on a rollercoaster.

5.2 Thought experiment: tango – the pure passion of (the dancers’) life

In tango, there is a passion that can be understood as a sexual expression of human life. McGarrey (2006) writes: “When you dance tango you must give everything. Wait for the right music, and then give EVERYTHING! If you can’t do that, do not dance”. This means that you should follow your instincts and dance passionately. This type of passion is similar to that experienced by the stand-up: a passion to become something other than what he was (a funnier person). This is not only about becoming a stand-up comedian in the sense of self-actualisation, expressing that he is becoming funnier (internal becoming), it is also about gaining insights from the outside world (external becoming).

The tango can be interpreted as a passionate act. For example, Abadi (2003: 11) writes about why people want to dance the tango: I asked many foreigners who came to Buenos Aires to dance, why they had become impassioned with our tango in this way. The answer was always the same: ‘because of the embrace’”. The embrace means the dancing position between the two partners (typically, but not always, a man and a woman). In this way, two individuals become a dancing couple in the process of becoming – nobody can dance the tango alone. The rhythm of the music conjures up a particular story. Dancing is about movement, and a dancing couple moves in a way that physically interprets the story. This reflects both the internal and the external in the process of becoming. From the internal perspective, it is about becoming a tango-dancing couple (expressed through movement). From the external perspective, it is about gathering impressions from the environment in which the tango is danced (the place where the embrace is possible and socially acceptable and where the dancers can become part of a social group).

Tango dancing is a physical interpretation of a song. The social tension between the dancers fosters the process of becoming a dancing couple. A song is a productive rather than a representative force behind the process of becoming dancers. Usually, tango songs are love stories, with the themes of drama, passion,
jealousy and eternal desire, for example. Therefore, the physical analogies of kissing and love are part of the process of becoming a tango couple. The lyrics of *La Cumparsita* tell about what happens at a party. A man is looking for a woman he used to know. However, all the guests are masked and so he cannot find her. A couple dancing passionately should be able to express the story through their movements.

As mentioned above, kisses and love (as metaphorical expressions) are part of tango dancing. For example, in the tango there is a move called the line. This usually comes at the end of a verse. The woman stretches her body and the man follows suit. It is a kind of metaphorical expression of a kiss and it reflects the passionate desire between the man and the woman to become lovers. The passion in a song provides the power behind the process of becoming a dancing couple. Every sequence can end with a kiss (the line). This is how the process of becoming can be seen in tango dancing. It is similar to the process of becoming entrepreneurial. There is also a desire to become-Other (than what one is right now) in entrepreneurship. Becoming entrepreneurial is about creating novelty through innovation. This can also be found in the analogy of establishing a relationship, so many love stories talk about finding the One (eternal love). Tango dancing represents the process of becoming a couple, it is the physical expression of what happens when two people fall in love. In terms of entrepreneurship, such love can be seen as doing things for their own sake. This is what entrepreneurial passion is about.

As McGarrey (2006) writes, when you dance the tango, you have to give everything. When it comes to entrepreneurship, you must also give everything. You give something to the project you are working on (e.g. a firm) and you wait for a similar (or higher) level of value to come back (e.g. money). Entrepreneurship is a desire to give everything you have, and the same applies to the tango dancing. Understanding what the very nature of passion in tango dancing is about can teach us about methods of intervention in the post-industrial age (human life within and outside organisations). Tango dancing reflects a set of social efforts to become-Other (such as the dancing couple), which we should understand in the context of organisational entrepreneurship nowadays.

Cardon et al. (2009: 517) define entrepreneurial passion as “consciously accessible, intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur”. This is precisely what happens when a person becomes Other in a tango. The initiatives and social efforts here are not
especially based on personality qualities or traits. In contrast, they are based on the process of becoming between two people, in this context the roles of leader and follower are crucial to make the dance possible. Even though Cardon et al. (2009) define entrepreneurial passion along similar lines, as it is assumed, in terms organisational entrepreneurship, there is little passion expressed.

The juxtaposition between an up-and-coming stand-up comedian and tango dancing shows that the feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities are important, but the reason why such feelings appear is that the roles are not meaningful and salient only to the self-identity of the entrepreneur. In contrast, the juxtaposition shows that in both cases there is a desire to become-Other, which drives people to take action in their lives.
6 Entrepreneurial passion to create novelty through becoming

The post-industrial version of entrepreneurship is more like dating than being in a relationship. The social effort needed to establish a relationship differs from that needed to maintain the relationship (see Gartner 1993). This social effort is based on the passion to become-Other, as the empirical analysis and thought experiment above show. It is the same with entrepreneurship. The basic building blocks of dating (generating trust, cooperating and understanding) are also fundamental in post-industrial entrepreneurship (creating businesses, building up partnerships and making new customers). Whatever the nature of entrepreneurship – whether it is a family business, a growth-oriented start-up firm or a lifestyle venture – there is a need to generate trust, to cooperate and to understand.

Post-industrial entrepreneurship reflects movement and change. For example, the fledgling stand-up comedian said that “there is an image that you would like to be, it is different from what you actually are now”. Then, becoming becomes crucial. More precisely, the key question is what a person should do in order to become-Other, which could lead to social movement and change in the post-industrial economy. The up-and-coming stand-up comedian actualised this by developing jokes. His jokes helped him to become from the outside (i.e. what is happening in a society around him) and from the inside (i.e. what he is as a person, where he is willing to go and what he is willing to become). This is similar to what Sørensen (in press) writes about the post-bureaucratic man.

The post-industrial economy creates a new feature on entrepreneurship: a need to create novelty and innovation. In the industrial age, there was an apparatus of production that an agent of production (i.e. a managerial entrepreneur) could control and manage in order to get productive output from the apparatus. This does not happen in the post-industrial economy. In contrast, almost everybody – an individual entrepreneur or an employee in an existing (business) organisation – is asked to be innovative (Hjorth, 2005). This implies that everybody has the ability to be creative. Rather than possessing the individual personality traits or cognitive attributes of a special person, such as a suitable employee (compare with Alvesson & Willmott 2002), the point of organisational creativity in terms of post-industrial entrepreneurship is to become-Other (see Sørensen, in press). Organisational creativity is thus based on entrepreneurial passion. The critical issue is to release that social and collective energy, much like a tango dancer who is becoming part of a dancing couple. In doing so, one needs
to give everything. This is part of the process of becoming Other, involving an activity or other individuals.

This essay contributes to the emerging discourse of entrepreneurial passion by elaborating upon the meaning of becoming in the research of entrepreneurship. The first example—the process of becoming a stand-up comedian—reflects a subject’s relationship to the process of collective/social becoming in post-industrial entrepreneurship. In that sense, the process of becoming is based on socially constructive ways of creating new organisational creative space for new deals, creating opportunities for the stand-up comedian to make money, for example. In terms of entrepreneurship, this means that an individual (registered as an individual entrepreneur) can be understood in terms of becoming, as it is in the post-industrial age (see Hjorth et al. 2008).

The competencies we require to become-Other are the directions in which passion and creativity can take us in the course of the process of creating novelty and value. In terms of entrepreneurship, such competencies are about actions rather than more or less fixed personality traits, characteristics or qualities (compare with Busenitz & Barney 1997, Kirzner 1997). The thought experiment presented in this paper shows the same. There is a passion that is actualised between two people (the tango-dancing couple). There is a desire to ‘embrace’ (dance) that drives them to release their desire to become-Other Other in this way. Such actions should be understood in the context of organisational entrepreneurship in order to show the very nature of social spaces for play and innovation (compare with Hjorth 2005).

When explaining social spaces for play and innovation through juxtaposition between an up-and-coming stand-up comedian and tango dancing, it seems that the idea of entrepreneurship as a business-related issue could be updated. Cultural issues around entrepreneurial life as well as around urban life and lifestyles open up new approaches to what entrepreneurship is all about and how it could be studied. It seems that even though entrepreneurial passion has been studied within certain cultural sectors (Finnish stand-up comedy and tango dancing generally), its role as a driver of the process of entrepreneurship can be the same in other areas also. The reason is that entrepreneurial actions are key to understanding entrepreneurial passion. As Cardon et al. (2009) suggest, entrepreneurial passion is about positive feelings engendered by engagement in entrepreneurial activities. That—and the finding that entrepreneurial passion results from the desire to become something other than what a person is right now—is why entrepreneurial actions should be analysed and explicated.
7 Discussion and directions for future research

I would now like to summarise this essay. There is a human desire to be something other than what one is right now. I think this is a very natural thing, which almost everybody feels, but the ability to actualise this differs from one person to another (see Hjorth 2007). While doing research on entrepreneurship, I found that organisational entrepreneurs (such as my examples of the up-and-coming stand-up comedian and the tango dancers) are good at becoming Other(s). I suggest that we could learn new things from the creative, emotional and playful parts of human life when creating things that matter and contribute to life per se. It seems that such initiatives can create novelty and social value. That is why we should reconsider where the phenomenon of entrepreneurship actually takes place. In line with the findings in this essay, it seems that the cultural and urban sides of entrepreneurship are the most promising contexts, and ones that should be studied carefully.

Because the individual traits and qualities of acting entrepreneurs have already been well investigated, future research of entrepreneurship could study cultural and urban entrepreneurship from the perspective of the social mechanisms that drive the process of becoming Other. In this essay, the purpose was to discuss how entrepreneurial passion as a driver of the development of entrepreneurship fosters such a process. The purpose was achieved through juxtaposition, which showed that entrepreneurial passion could manifest itself as a desire to become something other than what one is right now.

Although desire is a feeling, my findings do not suggest that entrepreneurial passion happens for its own sake, it is the result of transformation. One outcome of such transformation is becoming Other. I would like future research to further elaborate upon the concept of entrepreneurial becoming and desire. It seems that such conceptualisation requires further investigation into becoming and desire philosophically, because both are philosophical concepts that need to be explained in more detail within the context of cultural and urban entrepreneurship. For instance, process philosophers like Deleuze and Guattari (1984) and Deleuze (1998) could help researchers to achieve this aim.
8 Conclusions

This study suggests that entrepreneurial passion is based on the desire to become something other than what one is right now. The desire to become-Other is one reason for the existence of entrepreneurial passion and why it finally fosters the processes of entrepreneurship. Earlier work relates entrepreneurial passion to feelings that occur because of engagement in entrepreneurial activities that are linked with roles that are important for an entrepreneur. Many definitions of entrepreneurial passion have already been proposed Cardon et al. (2009) have carried out an extensive review of the literature. However, detailed investigations into such passion are still lacking. Consequently, entrepreneurial passion remains an unknown “just for its own sake” expression that would lead to a better life as a contextually embedded phenomenon (see Dew 2009, Rindova et al. 2009). This essay fills that gap using the juxtaposition between an up-and-coming stand-up comedian and tango dancing. Empirically, the study is based on an open interview with the comedian, which was framed ethnographically. Tango dancing was investigated through my personal experience as a tango dancer and through literature on the subject.

My research was based on the following question: “Why does entrepreneurial passion as a social feeling related to a better life foster the context-related process of entrepreneurship?” The juxtaposition between an up-and-coming stand-up comedian and tango dancing illustrates that entrepreneurial passion is about becoming something other than what a person is right now, and the reason for doing that is desire itself. This is precisely what happens when one tries to build up a new relationship, there is a need to generate trust, understanding and cooperation. This is about generating ways to convince people that you are an interesting person (in a social sense, but not so much as a host of separate personality qualities or traits) and working on outstanding things. Irrespective of what those things are, the main point is to convince people that you are the One (much like a single person trying to establish a new relationship). As a conceptual process, it is about falling in love with what you do. In doing so (an empirical process), you must have an idea of what you are willing to become. This image of yourself will be different from what you are right now. Aiming for that is what becoming is all about.
References


Appendix 1

Ari-Matti Rytilahti is an upcoming stand-up comedian, trying to make a breakthrough in the comedy scene in Finland. Currently living his plan B as a talented commercial copywriter, he doesn't know where to draw the line between conventional and unconventional – only because professional writers don’t draw any friggin’ lines. The dreams of this upcoming comedian demand take-no-prisoners entrepreneurial attitude in the highly competitive entertainment business. His daunting task is to chase those few available gigs to earn name and reputation before he actually can get paid for his witty lines.
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