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MAKING SENSE OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY – A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST VIEW

Kaisu Paasio

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University of Turku

Turku School of Economics
Department of Management and Entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurship
Doctoral programme of Turku School of Economics

Supervised by

Professor Ulla Hytti
University of Turku
Finland

Professor Dylan Jones-Evans
University of South Wales
UK

Reviewed by

Adjunct professor Saija Katila
Aalto University
Finland

Professor Luke Pittaway
Ohio University
USA

Opponent

Professor Luke Pittaway
Ohio University
USA

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ABSTRACT

For quite some time, the entrepreneurial university has been a significant subject of scholarly, policy and practical interests. While universities are increasingly urged to become entrepreneurial, previous research has focused on portraying what entrepreneurial universities are and what they do, or should do, in contrast to other universities. In addition, a number of entrepreneurial university models propose different paths and activities for the entrepreneurial transformation. Admittedly, research has provided plenty of knowledge about the phenomenon, yet the viewpoint tends to be rather structural and functional, which calls for new approaches and perspectives in researching entrepreneurial universities.

In this study, I take a critical stance towards the mainstream research of the entrepreneurial university and add to our understanding from a fresh perspective by zooming in to the university to focus on the lived experience of university personnel and setting individuals as units of analysis. This study builds on social constructionism, applying narrative methodology and a sensemaking lens to investigate how an entrepreneurial university is constructed from within the university. Voice is given to personnel in a university that has a strategic commitment to becoming entrepreneurial, and their stories are told through my interpretation.

The research material consists of group discussions in which the study participants discuss entrepreneurship in the university context broadly. An unstructured interview method was employed with an eye to giving plenty of room for the participants' spontaneous narration and storytelling. In the analysis, attention was given to the intertwinement of storytelling and sensemaking. I focused on how the university personnel talked about entrepreneurship in the university and what kinds of meanings they gave to entrepreneurship, university and the entrepreneurial university.

As an outcome of this study, I present *six stories of sensemaking* and *four local entrepreneurial university metanarratives* that derived from these stories and the sensemaking processes. The six stories provide different perspectives on the entrepreneurial university, in which the sensemaking process variously covers participants' interpretations of entrepreneurship, negotiation about a university, reflection on the everyday work at the university and a critical consideration of the strategic vision of the university. The entrepreneurial university metanarratives –

here named '*much ado about nothing'*, '*members' club'*, '*progress'* and '*illusion'* – further address the plurivocality of the phenomenon, that instead of one, there are many understandings of the entrepreneurial university that coexist concurrently within the university.

The results of this study indicate that the entrepreneurial transformation not only concerns the structures and functions of a university, but also is a matter of the university personnel's collective sensemaking. This study thus makes a theoretical contribution by providing a new, alternative perspective to the entrepreneurial university conceptualization. It is more nuanced and aligned with the internal and contextual aspects of the phenomenon and critical in the sense that it is attentive to the prevailing interpretations of an entrepreneurial university that tend to be rather stagnant and dualistic. The methodological contribution of this study comes from the use of the sensemaking lens in exploring the lived experience of university personnel as they negotiate the entrepreneurial transformation and construct their understanding about the entrepreneurial university, which allows for a deeper interpretative understanding of the phenomenon. The discussion of the results also advances our understanding concerning the practical implementation of transformation efforts, highlighting the need to understand and make sense of a new strategy as critical elements of engagement.

Overall, the thesis contributes to entrepreneurial university research and discussion with novel theoretical, methodological and empirical results and adds to the existing knowledge of the interpretive literature on the entrepreneurial university.

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurial university, social constructionism, narrative research, sensemaking

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Yrittäjyysyliopisto on ollut niin akateemisen, käytännöllisen kuin koulutuspoliittisenkin mielenkiinnon kohde jo jonkin aikaa. Yliopistoja myös kannustetaan jatkuvasti muuttumaan yrittäjämäisemmiksi. Aikaisempi aihetta koskeva tutkimus on keskittynyt kuvaamaan erityisesti mitä ja millainen yrittäjyysyliopisto on; lukuisat kirjallisuudessa esitetyt yrittäjyysyliopistomallit esittelevät ja tarjoavat erilaisia polkuja ja toimenpiteitä yliopistojen kehittämiseksi yrittäjämäiseksi. Ilmiöstä on siis tuotettu paljon tietoa, mutta näkökulma on varsin rakenteellinen ja funktionaalinen, mikä johtaa tarpeeseen tarkastella yrittäjyysyliopistoa uusilla tavoilla ja uusista näkökulmista.

Tämä tutkimus haastaa edellä kuvattua, vallalla olevaa yrittäjyysyliopistotutkimusta ja samalla lisää tietoa ja ymmärrystä tarkastelemalla yrittäjyysyliopistoa sisältäpäin, ihmisiin sekä heidän kokemuksiinsa ja niistä rakentuviin merkityksiin (sensemaking) keskittyen. Tutkimus asettuu sosiaalisen konstruktionismin jatkumoon, soveltaa narratiivista metodologiaa ja käyttää sensemaking-lähestymistapaa linssinä siihen, kuinka yrittäjyysyliopistoa rakennetaan ja konstruoidaan yliopiston sisältä käsin. Ääneen pääsevät strategisesti ja näkyvästi yrittäjyyteen sitoutuneessa yliopistossa työskentelevät ihmiset.

Tutkimuksen aineisto koostuu ryhmäkeskusteluista, joissa osallistujat keskustelevat yrittäjyydestä yliopistokontekstissa yleisesti ja laajasti. Tutkimuksessa käytetty strukturoimaton haastattelumenetelmä valittiin, jotta osallistujien spontaaneille kerronnalle ja tarinoille oli tarjolla runsaasti aikaa ja tilaa. Analyysissa kiinnitettiin huomiota tarinankerronnan sekä merkitysten rakentamisen ja tulkinnan yhteen kietoutumiseen, erityisesti tapaan, jolla keskustelijat puhuivat yrittäjyydestä yliopistossa sekä millaisia merkityksiä yrittäjyyteen, yliopistoon ja yrittäjyysyliopistoon kiinnitettiin.

Esitän tutkimuksen tuloksena kuusi tarinaa siitä, miten yrittäjyysyliopistoon liittyviä merkityksiä luodaan ja jäsennetään. Kukin tarina tarjoaa erilaisen näkökulman yrittäjyysyliopistoon, jossa hahmottamisen ja jäsentämisen prosessi kattaa eri tavoin keskustelijoiden tulkintaa yrittäjyydestä ja yliopistosta, heidän pohdintaansa jokapäiväisestä työstä yliopistossa sekä yliopiston strategisen vision kriittistä arviointia. Näistä tarinoista johdetut metanarratiivit ’*paljon melua tyhjästä*’,

’*yksityisklubi*’, ’*edistys*’ ja ’*harhakuva*’ puolestaan kuvaavat yrittäjyysyliopiston tulkinnan moniäänisyyttä ja moninaisuutta; vain yhden käsityksen sijasta siitä on olemassa useita, osin päällekkäisiä ja samanaikaisia tulkintoja.

Tutkimuksen kontribuutiot liittyvät tuoreeseen tutkimusotteeseen ja metodologiseen lähestymistapaan, jotka tuottavat uuden, vaihtoehtoisen näkökulman yrittäjyysyliopiston käsitteellistämiseksi, joka on vallalla olevia yrittäjyysyliopistotulkintoja monipuolisempi ja hienojakoisempi ja joka ottaa huomioon myös ilmiön sisäisen kontekstin. Tämä mahdollistaa ilmiön syvemmän, tulkitsevan ymmärtämisen. Sen perusteella yliopistojen pyrkimys muuttua yrittäjämäiseksi ei kosketa pelkästään yliopistojen toimintoja ja rakenteita, vaan siihen liittyy myös yliopistossa työskentelevien yhteisen todellisuuden hahmottamisen, jäsentämisen ja ymmärtämisen prosessi. Tutkimuksen tulokset ja niistä keskustelu edistävät myös käsitystämme muutoksen johtamisen käytännön toteutuksesta – korostaen tarvetta ymmärtää ja sisäistää uusi strategia osana muutoksen hyväksymistä, sisäistämistä ja siihen sitoutumista. Kaiken kaikkiaan, tutkimus antaa oman panoksensa yrittäjyysyliopistokeskusteluun esittelemällä aiheesta uusia teoreettisia, metodologisia ja empiirisiä tuloksia.

ASIASANAT: yrittäjyysyliopisto, sosiaalinen konstruktionismi, narratiivinen tutkimus, sensemaking-lähestymistapa

Acknowledgements

This journey was meant to be. It had been lurking for years, meeting me occasionally, only waiting for the right moment to pounce. I am happy that I finally had an opportunity and enough courage to embark on this journey – and what an odyssey it has been. After years of separation, I have enjoyed my 'homecoming' to the field of entrepreneurship research, among the community of many long-standing and respected colleagues as well as new ones, and I have learned more about doing academic research and the subject matter at hand. But above all, this has been an exploration into myself. For three and a half years, I have reflected repeatedly upon my capabilities, weaknesses, dreams and dreads; you know all those brutal thoughts that arise when you challenge yourself and step outside the ordinary.

Now, the time has come for acknowledgements, and there are many to whom to express my gratitude for making it possible for me to get here. I want to start with my supervisors: my warmest thanks to Professors Ulla Hytti and Dylan Jones-Evans, both of whom I have known and respected for years. It has been a pleasure and an absolute joy to take this journey with you. I am grateful for having had two such experienced and well-read academics by my side. Ulla has had the primary responsibility for my scholarship, and in that role, she has been supportive; her down-to-earth yet highly professional guidance has been a great advantage, not to mention her distinguished methodological proficiency. A huge project, such as writing a PhD thesis, is inherently messy and indefinite, and there are always several concurrent open-ended tasks and thoughts waiting to be completed. Thank you, Ulla, for sharing your ideas about how to cope with uncertainty and incompleteness along the way. I am also grateful for your comforting and supportive words in those few moments of pain when the project has felt like too colossal a task to be dealt with and for your practical advice of eating an elephant one bite at a time. Your commitment and dedication meant a lot to me. You had always time for my questions and contributed constructive comments to my writing, no matter the office hours or time of day; simply put, the journey would have been lonelier, more burdensome and undoubtedly lengthier without you. Geography set natural boundaries to supervision, and the relationship turned out to be less active and intense with Dylan, who lives in another country. I am delighted that despite the geographic distance, we managed to

meet a few times in person, in Wales and in Turku, which were among the highlights of this journey, for both my family and me. Thank you, Dylan, for the freedom that I had; your more laissez-faire approach suited my project and my way of working well. At a later stage of the process, I was pleased to have Adjunct Professor Saija Katila (Aalto University) and Professor Luke Pittaway (Ohio University) as my pre-examiners. My sincerest thanks – your perceptive and constructive comments on my thesis were valuable in enhancing its quality. Thank you, Professor Pittaway, also for agreeing to be my opponent.

As many may know, writing a thesis can occasionally be a lonely process, a characteristic that reached a new level during the Covid-19 pandemic, which made social interaction a rare and restricted resource, thus illustrating the utmost importance of human contact – as well as collegial and friendly support of a PhD candidate. I am grateful for several colleagues who have been around either in person or online. Special thanks to Dr Tommi Pukkinen and Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm for your time, interest and support. Your insightful comments and wit have been of great value – as always. I also appreciate your eye for detail on my manuscript, which challenged me to look beyond the obvious. Thank you, Dr Kirsi Peura, for encouraging me along the way and for sharing experiences from academia and elsewhere over the years. Many thanks also to Dr Sanna Ilonen and Anna Elkina for compassion and encouragement, and for sharing some of the journey of a PhD candidate. There are also many others working in entrepreneurship who have had a role in my journey – a warm thanks to all of you. In addition, a number of colleagues at the Brahea Centre in the University of Turku deserve recognition – thank you for welcoming me back from my research leave so smoothly and warmly. It is as if I never left to slake my thirst for knowledge. From a synergistic perspective, I consider myself fortunate for having had the opportunity to be a part of the research project consortium *ACE – Academic entrepreneurship as a social process*. Thank you to colleagues within the interdisciplinary research group from the University of Turku and the University of Eastern Finland – you gave me a lot of inspiration and points to ponder. Furthermore, a critical and invaluable source of support and wisdom is the numerous brilliant and wise people around the world with whom I have had the opportunity and pleasure to work and collaborate with over the years. There are many to remember and praise, yet there is too little space to mention everyone. Here, I would like to thank particularly Professor Emeritus, father-in-law, Antti Paasio and Professor Jarna Heinonen for your pioneering work in the field of entrepreneurship. It has inspired me and many others. You were advocates of an entrepreneurial university even before it became an established practice and a booming subject of research.

Finally, yet importantly, the fieldwork – group discussions among the university faculty – apart from generating one of the cornerstones of my research, it also

provided a wonderful opportunity for a more sociable period during the journey. A collective and sincere thank you to all the study participants; your contribution was valuable and highly appreciated. I enjoyed listening to your engaging stories, which unfolded the research phenomenon in so many interesting ways. I hope that my interpretations do justice to your narration and experiences.

I feel extremely privileged for having had the opportunity to jump out of the rat race and concentrate on my own research fully – how extraordinary an experience it is that you actually can wear only one hat at a time, ignore most of your daily duties, and simply dig deep into something that really inspires you. I am thankful to Head of Unit Timo Halttunen and the Brahea Centre at the University of Turku for allowing me a leave of absence to dedicate myself to my academic endeavour full-time. Such commitment to science would not have been possible without financial support, of which I am utterly grateful for the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation and Yksityisyrittäjäin Säätiö for supporting my journey all along, as well as Turun Kauppaopetussäätiö, TOP-Säätiö, the Foundation for Economic Education and the Turku School of Economics Support Foundation for their grants. The financial support not only made this journey possible but also gave me confidence that the subject of my research is worthwhile and meaningful, which boosted my motivation and determination along the way.

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fellow after-work yogis, our regular Friday evening sessions both in the studio and afterwards kept me relatively flexible and sane regardless of countless lonely and static hours at my desk. A highly recommended concept, by the way. There are also many others near and far – you know who you are – to thank for being part of my life and bringing me so much joy and happiness.

On a more personal note, I want to thank my family and relatives – you are all important to me. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for pretty much everything. I am grateful for being brought up to value reading, learning and education; I am counting on inculcating those very same values in my own kids now. Thank you for your encouragement and for showing your interest in my studies along the way – it means a lot to me. Thank you also, Tuula, my mother-in-law, for your help and support on so many levels, always. Your collective help with the kids in their hobby transportation, food supply and many other ways has been invaluable during the research project – every PhD candidate should have a similar steady support network. Above all, I want to express my gratitude to Jussi, Otto and Iris. None of this would really matter without you. Thank you for bearing with me during this wonderful yet arduous journey. I apologize for not being the most active and participating wife and mom, and for having had my thoughts so often somewhere deep in my research. Jussi, I am forever grateful for your endless love, support and understanding. Thank you for your time, interest and dedication towards my academic endeavour, and also for cheering me up with daily clips from the animal video club. Your enviable linguistic abilities have been an inexhaustible source of help when I have – and indeed, many times I have – been at a loss for the right expression. Thank you for always believing in me and for taking care of so much of our daily life whilst I have been reading and writing one month after another. You are a true partner, and indeed, together we are complete. Otto and Iris, our utmost achievements, thank you for being yourselves and for reminding me what really is significant. I trust that our discussions around my work have aroused a deeper intellectual curiosity as well as an interest and appreciation towards scientific thinking and knowledge, which essentially are the only devices to overcome ignorance, intolerance and other immature elements in life. Jussi, Otto and Iris – this book is to you. You are my everything.

In *Vallis Gratiae*, on a bright spring day in 2022
Kaisu Paasio

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research phenomenon, aim and objectives

Entrepreneurship in the university context is neither a new nor a unique phenomenon; in fact, notions such as *academic entrepreneurship* and *entrepreneurial university* have become an established part of common discourse in both academia and higher education policy (see e.g. Hytti 2021b; Berglund, Alexandersson, Jogmark & Tillmar 2021; Van Langenhove & Eriksson 2021; Tuunainen, Kantasalmi & Laari-Salmela 2021; Laalo, Kinnari & Silvennoinen 2019; Fayolle & Redford 2014). Personally, as an entrepreneurship scholar working in the university, I have seen the phenomenon as equally relevant and natural in academia and elsewhere. The aim of this study, thus, is not to conduct an exploration of the uncharted, but rather to add to our understanding of something that we already know by changing gears. Consequently, in this study, I investigate entrepreneurship in the university from a fresh perspective: by *exploring a university becoming entrepreneurial, from within and individually*.

The concept and phenomenon of an entrepreneurial university was introduced over two decades ago (Slaughter & Leslie 1997; Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 1998) as an impetus of change, indicating universities' strengthening position and impact in society (Jarvis 2013; Siegel & Wright 2015). Since then, the entrepreneurial university phenomenon has attracted many academic researchers and policy makers, and there is considerable research on the entrepreneurial university. Research has concentrated on framing the entrepreneurial university from functional and structural perspectives, and thus, the focus has been on depicting what the entrepreneurial university is and what it does, and often in these illustrations, it has been compared to other types of universities (Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 2013; 2014; 2016). In other words, there are different models and approaches presenting the entrepreneurial university and its pathways (Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 1998; 2013; 2016; Gibb 2007a; Gibb & Hannon 2006) from different perspectives and with varied foci. In addition, attention has been drawn to universities' institutional factors in shaping their entrepreneurial agendas and transformation, and accordingly, their entrepreneurial architecture, including their structures, systems, leadership, strategies and culture

(Foss & Gibson 2015; 2017; Vorley & Nelles 2008; Nelles & Vorley 2010; see also Bronstein & Reihlen 2014; Sam & van der Sijde 2014), has been investigated.

While the majority of current research has a societal and/or organizational focus, it has recently been suggested that drawing attention to individuals and groups working in the university could provide new insights and thus add to our understanding of the entrepreneurial university (Hytti 2021b). Taking this piece of advice into account, the objective of this study is to explore the entrepreneurial university from intra-organizational and individual perspectives, giving voice to the university personnel in understanding and shaping the entrepreneurial university.

Today, universities are experiencing further pressure from their environment, yet they are still expected to contribute to economic growth and social welfare. Apart from the academic concern (Eriksson, Hytti, Komulainen, Montonen & Siivonen 2021a; Hytti 2021a; Foss & Gibson 2015; 2017; Fayolle & Redford 2014), there is also practical interest as many universities are further incorporating entrepreneurial elements into their activity (Liu 2018). Yet it seems that while we know a lot about the entrepreneurial university, there is still much to explore. This study proposes that mainstream research provides either a positive and idealized or instead a sceptical picture of the entrepreneurial university, and these are often discussed in isolation (cf. Hytti 2021a). Only recently, a more critical orientation has found its way to entrepreneurial university research, and a gradually growing number of researchers have adopted a less divided and assumptive view on the entrepreneurial university, proposing alternative and integrative ways of exploration and interpretation, thus attempting to contribute to a many-sided and broader understanding of the phenomenon. While my objective is not to find and fill in gaps in the existing research (Alvesson & Sandberg 2011; Sandberg & Alvesson 2011), I seek to answer the call to develop bridges between the two opposing discussions in the field (cf. Hytti 2021a; Eriksson, Hytti, Komulainen, Montonen & Siivonen 2021b). Furthermore, I do share the concern of some critically oriented scholars that the entrepreneurial university might become a self-evident pervasive ideology (Du Gay 2000), which cannot be challenged or questioned (see Hytti 2021b).[1] As a way of

[1] Despite my commentary, there is no clear gap in previous entrepreneurial university literature that I aim to fill. Instead, I follow the logic of problematization (Alvesson & Sandberg 2011; Sandberg & Alvesson 2011; see also Shepherd & Suddaby 2017), which is '*a methodology for identifying and challenging assumptions underlying existing literature and, based on that, formulating research questions that are likely to lead to more influential theories*' (Alvesson & Sandberg 2011, p. 247). More precisely, in my research, a trigger for theorizing arises through the detected conflict between literature and phenomena (Shepherd & Suddaby 2017, p. 64), which is a consequence of an iterative process between the 'gaps' observed in the phenomenal world and those observed in the extant literature.

overcoming these biases, I propose a shift in perspective in studying the entrepreneurial university, and by adopting the social constructionist approach (Berger & Luckman 1966), which takes a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge (Burr 1995; 2015; Lindgren & Packendorff 2009), I view the entrepreneurial university as a social construction that is understood and constituted by language. Specifically, I focus on the intertwinement of storytelling and sensemaking (e.g. Boje 2008) in constructing an understanding of the entrepreneurial university, and therefore, a narrative approach and sensemaking lens are applied. The lens of sensemaking (Weick 1995) is particularly useful, because the university and entrepreneurship tend to be like water and oil – they do not mix well. Traditionally, entrepreneurship has not been considered a likely counterpart for a university; instead, the two are seen as contrasting worlds, and even today, entrepreneurship continues to be a rather hot potato in academia that causes concern, even resistance. Thus, a university's entrepreneurial transformation can be assumed to contain ambiguity that requires some '*making of sense*' (ibid, p. 4).

Furthermore, being inspired by critical entrepreneurship scholars (see e.g. Essers, Dey, Tedmanson & Verduijn 2017a; Landström, Parhankangas, Fayolle & Riot 2016) in addressing the entrepreneurial university, my objective is to broaden the scope and challenge the prevailing axioms and underlying assumptions by recognizing mainstream views and then looking beyond them – in order to achieve a more pluralistic and nuanced view of the *entrepreneurial university*. In so doing, I move past external analyses addressing the *whats* – what is an entrepreneurial university, what are its functions and stakeholders, and what are the outcomes and consequences. Instead, I zoom into the university, with an aim of understanding the phenomenon from within by giving voice to university personnel and examining *how* they make sense of, give meaning to, and construct the entrepreneurial university. The university personnel participating in this study have been selected and arranged in groups with an attempt to reflect the heterogeneity of perceptions toward entrepreneurship in university.

This study presents and analyses six stories and four metanarratives from a university that has a strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship and has recently been branded as an Entrepreneurial University. In these stories and metanarratives, based on storytelling in different groups of university personnel, the entrepreneurial university is constructed from inside the university. Each provides a particular snapshot, a viewpoint to the lived experience of the university's entrepreneurial emphasis and transformation, adding to the understanding of the entrepreneurial university as a contextual and changing social construction (cf. Rhodes & Brown 2005). These together contribute to the aim of this study to provide broader and more nuanced knowledge of the phenomenon. The groups whose stories are told in this study are:

- *The academic insiders* (chapter 6.1) – a group of university personnel with profound scholarly knowledge in entrepreneurship. In addition to their scholarship, they are generally considered the entrepreneurship cognoscenti in the university, and some of them are involved with the entrepreneurial university activities.
- *The entrepreneurial stimulators* (chapter 6.2) – a handful of university personnel who are members of a network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons in the university. In their role as liaisons, they are assumed to support entrepreneurship and innovation knowledge among university personnel and students, especially in their respective faculties.
- *The unpredictables* (chapter 6.3) – a group that represents randomness and unpredictability in this study, or serendipity, as I see it. They are random university personnel who have given their consent on another occasion to participate in research on entrepreneurship in the university, implying that they might have a specific interest in the theme.
- *The provincials* (chapter 6.4) – a group of university personnel who interpret the entrepreneurial university outside the university's main campus, since they are situated in one of the local university campuses. The understanding of the entrepreneurial emphasis and transformation in the university might be different further from the 'nerve centre'.
- *The other half* (chapter 6.5) – a pair of teachers with limited experience in entrepreneurship. In terms of the entrepreneurial university, by no means they are considered 'the usual suspects', yet they were identified and invited to participate in this research based on their attendance at an entrepreneurship education training event.
- *The entrepreneurial academics* (chapter 6.6) – representatives of academic entrepreneurs in this study. They have dual positions, because whilst working at the university, they also have their own business commitments. They are also involved with entrepreneurship promotion activities in the university.

1.2 Research question and choices

In exploring the entrepreneurial university, my research question is: *How is an entrepreneurial university constructed from within the university*? In order to answer this question, I investigate a university with a strategic commitment to becoming entrepreneurial and focus on the lived experience of university personnel as they negotiate the entrepreneurial transformation.

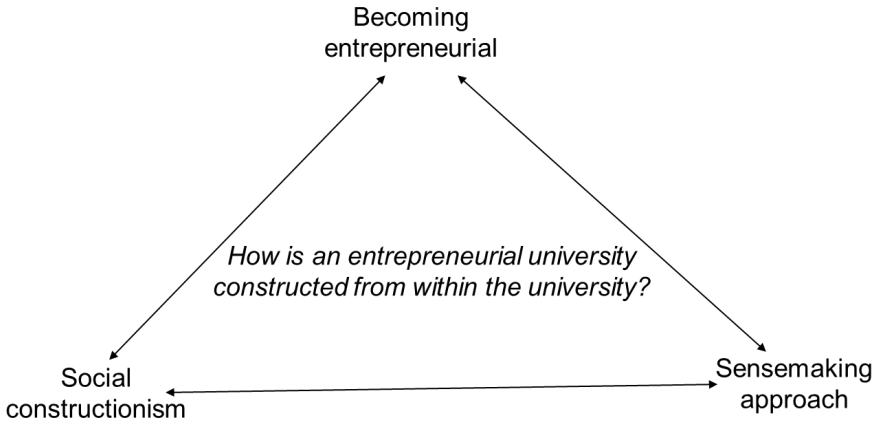

Figure 1. The research approach and the three cornerstones of the study.

The triad above reflects the critical choices and the consequent cornerstones of my research (see Figure 1). On top of the triangle is the context of the exploration – the entrepreneurial university – and the concept *becoming entrepreneurial* refers to the strategic commitment and transformation that is taking place in the researched university; why, how and to what extent are matters of speculation and negotiation among the study participants. This study adopts the *social constructionist* view (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Burr 1995; 2015); thus the entrepreneurial university is understood as a social construction, and attention is drawn to the role and use of language in its construction. The third concept, *sensemaking* (Weick 1995), deals with the question 'What is going on here?'. Through active sensemaking and meaning-making processes, the participants in this study construct an understanding of the entrepreneurial university. In my study, sensemaking is collective, in the sense that it is explored in groups, whilst the participants communicate and interact with each other.

Concerning the choices and key concepts in this study, it must be noted that for the sake of variation and better readability, I use several expressions interchangeably when discussing the *entrepreneurial university*: *entrepreneurial transformation*, *(strategic) emphasis on entrepreneurship* and *entrepreneurial university project* all point to the same phenomenon, that is, a *university becoming entrepreneurial*. *Entrepreneurial promotion,* then, in my vocabulary, refers to advancing and supporting entrepreneurship more generally, which in the frame of this study typically means in the context of a university. Furthermore, *entrepreneurship*, which is known to be a complex phenomenon (Gartner 1990), is also a matter of vivid discussion among the participants in this study. Oftentimes in their discussion, the study participants talk about *entrepreneurship* especially *in the university context*.

Here, I use the term *academic entrepreneurship*, by which I refer to all kinds of entrepreneurial activities carried out in the university context, including entrepreneurship education and research commercialization, as well as varied university-industry and university-society relationships more widely.

1.3 On the research process

In the following paragraphs, I will unfold the research process from the beginning to the end, and finally to the conclusions. Some of the issues are brought forth and discussed elsewhere in this study, and hence, they have here a more cursory treatment. However, for the sake of transparency, I consider it important to unwrap and reflect on the research process as a whole. It helps the reader to follow both the meandering passage that I have taken and my choices along the way.

This research is based on my long-standing interest in *how entrepreneurship is constructed and understood*, and the phenomenon is studied in academic context, in a university that has a strategic commitment to entrepreneurship. Here, I do not touch on the selection of the topic any further, since it is discussed in a detailed manner elsewhere in this study (see chapter 4.1.4). However, it is fair to say that my observation of academic entrepreneurship as being an ambiguous phenomenon has been one motivation for my exploration. Despite having a relatively clear picture of the research aim and my methodological preferences, I did not have a tight research plan, I set only some loose boundaries for the research, which is a conventional setting in qualitative research. In that sense, I welcomed a particular messiness and looseness into my project, and because I did not have predefined frameworks and categories to work with, there was plenty of room for bafflement, deviations, revising and corrections as the process advanced. This hodgepodge was oftentimes a wonderful playground, while at other times a source of frustration and confusion.

At an early stage of my research process, I was introduced to a research project '*ACE – Academic entrepreneurship as a social process'*, which was aligned with my own research interests.[2] My supervisor acted as a director of the research project, and I was lucky enough to be able to connect with the project and the experts working therein and utilize some of the research material within my own research. This material served my research with introductory data and familiarized me with the phenomenon prior to my fieldwork, and later as an opportunity for reflection. I

[2] The ACE (Academic Entrepreneurship as a social process) research project studied academic entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and training in the transformation of universities marked by financial pressure and the growing importance of societal impact. The four-year (2016-2020) project was funded by the Academy of Finland.

enjoyed being a part of a larger interdisciplinary research group, which allowed for interesting discussions and insights around a mutually shared subject of interest, and it gave some mental stimulation to my own project, too.

During the research process, I conducted several literature reviews. In the beginning, the empirical literature was utilized to develop and refine my research idea and to position this study in relation to prior research. At a later stage of the research process, theoretical literature came along, and it was used as a source of inspiration and to incorporate theoretical concepts and viewpoints through inductive thinking. In spite of identifying the separate rounds of literature reviews as empirical and theoretical, I actually read almost anything that I found interesting or that was related to my research question throughout the research process, and in this way, I was receptive to the impulses from both my own research and that of others.

The relationship to theoretical dimensions was necessarily blurry in the beginning of the research process, but also afterwards. The question of how to use theory is often ambiguous in qualitative research, and there are various ways of using it. In my research, I applied a data-driven approach to examine the perceptions attached to entrepreneurship, and in the analysis, I essentially turned to my research material without directive frameworks or schemas, rather following the logic of induction and exploration. From this point of view, the theoretical underpinnings are not about setting hypotheses and propositions but are understood in a more flexible way, as comprising preliminary and changing assumptions that direct the way of doing research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 43-44).

I started my fieldwork relatively promptly, after having been working around my research for only six months; I was encouraged by my supervisor and in the end, I did not see any reason to postpone the start. The fieldwork comprised six group discussions across the university in a period of four months. At the time of my entry to the fieldwork, I had conducted preliminary rounds of literature reviews, which concerned theoretical, empirical and methodological literature. These had advanced my knowledge about the sensemaking approach and the application of it, the concept of the entrepreneurial university, and the previous research of the phenomenon, as well as the ways of conducting qualitative research, especially in the social constructionist view. I consider my jump to the field rather painless; I had been able to reach a good selection of participants for each of the groups, and based on our e-mail exchanges, most of them seemed keen to participate. I recorded all group discussions and transcribed the material soon afterwards. During the sessions, I wrote down some hasty notes, rather spontaneously. Later, I was more organized, and wrote structured descriptions in which I reflected upon my thoughts and perceptions about the sessions, participants and myself, and the interaction.

The data creation and analysis are often intertwined in qualitative research, as was the case in my research, too. I started to familiarize myself with the research

material while I was still conducting the group discussions. Since then, the analysis has been through several stages, steps back and forth, and dialogues with the literature.

Now, looking back at the whole research process, circularity and a certain open-endedness are distinctive features. By no means has the process been linear, and the different phases of the research have been tightly intertwined – no phase was really completed until the whole research was finished. I have embraced the possibility of revising and reformulating the research design, though the kind of inherent incompleteness of the process has sometimes been challenging to tolerate. Then again – as I have reminded myself repeatedly – writing a thesis is very much a learning process, and no matter how well you (think you can) plan it, there are always surprises along the way.

1.4 Outline of the study

This study is composed of eight chapters, which are organized in the following way. The first chapter introduces the research phenomenon as well as the aim and objectives of the study, including stating the research question and describing the critical choices that I have made. It concludes with a depiction of the research process, in which I portray my passage throughout the research, addressing the messiness and circularity of the process, and the intertwinement of different phases of the research – that is, the general characteristics of qualitative research.

The second chapter discusses the scholarly research on the entrepreneurial university and presents three approaches to the phenomenon that I consider classics. In the review, the contribution and shortcomings of previous research are addressed. After that, by drawing from more recent movements in entrepreneurship research (namely critical entrepreneurship studies and social constructionism), I suggest an alternative approach in order to gain a broader and more pluralistic interpretation of the entrepreneurial university.

The third chapter presents the sensemaking approach, which is a central point of interest in this study, because through that very process individuals interpret and gain an understanding of their environment – which in this particular case is a university with a commitment to becoming entrepreneurial. By drawing from some key debates in the field, I discuss the definitions and interpretations of sensemaking, following with a description about how the approach is understood and applied in this study.

The fourth chapter focuses on the research design and methodology underpinning this study. To start the chapter, I discuss the foundations of the study, which are partially informed by the research question, and for another part, a matter of my personal preference as a researcher, which I also reflect on. The remaining

part of the chapter describes data collection, analysis and reporting procedures as well as discusses the methodological limitations of the study.

The following two chapters incorporate the empirical part of my research. Accordingly, the fifth chapter serves as an introduction to the data. It first introduces the participants of this study and the forming of the groups and gives an overview of the building blocks of the stories that then follow, such as the contextual framing, means of storytelling, story compositions, and finally, the content of storytelling. The next chapter provides six stories of sensemaking based on the narration of the lived experience of personnel in a university committed to becoming entrepreneurial. These stories present the group discussions in a story format as the study participants negotiate entrepreneurship in the university context.

In the seventh chapter, the research data are further analysed, and by reflecting on all stories together, I present four local metanarratives of the entrepreneurial university, which go beyond the study participants' sensemaking patterns and provide an interpretation of the entrepreneurial university.

Finally, the eighth chapter concludes the research. There, the research aim and objectives are first revisited, after which I summarize the main findings of this study and discuss the contribution from theoretical, methodological and practical perspectives. Evaluation of the study and suggestions for future research are the final paragraphs.

2 Examination of the entrepreneurial university

In this chapter, I discuss the different ways the entrepreneurial university has been approached, delineated and discussed in previous research. Furthermore, through the various dimensions and approaches that I was able to identify in the literature, I provide a brief overview of the underlying assumptions framing the research in the field. At the end of the chapter, based on my review, I communicate the detected call for a more pluralistic view on the exploration of the entrepreneurial university.

2.1 Framing the phenomenon

2.1.1 A mission update for universities

Over the past few decades, entrepreneurialism has become a common ideology in Europe and elsewhere, and entrepreneurship as an engine for economic growth and employment is a largely accepted catchphrase both in research and in policy. In the European context, the Lisbon strategy in 2000, launched an objective to make Europe '*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*' (Lisbon European Council 2000), and suggested universities play an enhanced role in economic competitiveness and entrepreneurship. The Europe 2020 strategy followed the same path with an aim of '*smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*' (European Commission 2010, p. 3). Universities, situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation, were seen as the key to the knowledge economy and society, and hence, they were given a place '*at the heart of the Europe of knowledge*' (European Commission 2003, p. 4). Thereafter, for example, the European Commission (2013; 2014) and the European Commission and the OECD (2012) together published papers to support universities' entrepreneurial development. Following these aspirations, national governments aimed to reform universities in order to encourage them to become more effective, dynamic, responsive and business-like organizations in several European countries (e.g. Bleiklie, Enders & Lepori 2013; 2017; Sam & van der Sijde 2014; Pinheiro & Stensaker 2014). Overall, the zeitgeist of knowledge, innovation and growth has

been favourable for entrepreneurship as an ideology of the betterment and progress of society (Ogbor 2000), and such a domination of entrepreneurship is sometimes referred to as an entrepreneurial society (Audretsch 2009a; 2009b).

Entrepreneurialism is not only a European attitude, nor is entrepreneurship distinctive only in universities in Europe. On the contrary, the trend is global, and entrepreneurial orientation has been particularly strong in American universities, where the role of the market has traditionally been intense, and universities, being more autonomous from state control, have been forced to be responsive to their environment as well as more active and entrepreneurial (Mowery & Sampat 2005). Entrepreneurial development also started earlier in American universities; Europe has followed, but in a slower pace (Lyytinen 2018).

In the higher education literature, the entrepreneurial orientation in universities derives from the influence of a knowledge-based society. The prominence of knowledge, expansion of education, concurrent need for its diversification and declining public funding are a few examples of societal changes affecting universities. These and higher education reforms in the late 1980s and in 1990s were stimuli for entrepreneurship to enter and take root in European universities (Rhoades & Stensaker 2017). Thus, the entrepreneurial orientation can be seen as a response to several concurrent impulses, those stemming from universities' environment and those arising from universities' internal needs (Gibb, Haskins & Robertson 2013; Etzkowitz, Ranga, Benner, Guaranys, Maculan & Kneller 2008).

2.1.2 Delineating the entrepreneurial university

The concept *entrepreneurial university* can be traced back over two decades to the works of several leading scholars (Slaughter & Leslie 1997; Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 1998)[3] in addressing universities' changing role and growing importance in society (Jarvis 2013; Siegel & Wright 2015). The emergence of the entrepreneurial university is characterized through the expanded role and activities of a university, in which the traditional tasks of teaching and research are complemented by the third

[3] In entrepreneurial university literature, several scholars are variably mentioned as the originators and developers of the concept. Within a tenet that focuses on the role of university in research commercialization and technology transfer, researchers refer to the work of Henry Etzkowitz and his colleagues (e.g. Etzkowitz 1998; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 1997; Etzkowitz et al. 2000) as those initiating the concept. Another stream in the literature refers to Burton Clark (1998; 2004) and his conception of the entrepreneurial university from the viewpoint of management and organization as the founding of the concept. Furthermore, some researchers trace the origin of the term to the work of Slaughter & Leslie (1997; 2001), who talk about academic capitalism in exploring the entrepreneurial transformation in universities.

task of social and economic development (Etzkowitz 2003b). Such a transition, the so-called *entrepreneurial turn* (Foss & Gibson 2015; 2017; Nelles & Vorley 2010) – as both an ideology and a practice – is considered significant; it has been described as an '*evolution of ivory tower to entrepreneurial paradigm*' (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhard & Terra 2000, p. 325), a '*fundamental change in the social contract between universities and the state*' (Martin 2012, p. 543), and, presumably to point out the scale of the change, a '*second academic revolution*' (Etzkowitz 2003b). As a comparison, the first academic revolution concerned a change in which the university turned from a teaching organization to one that combines teaching and research (Etzkowitz 2003b; Elton 2008). Through the second academic revolution, the university took the shape we now recognize by including the third task alongside the tasks of teaching and research (Etzkowitz 2003b; Etzkowitz et al. 2008), which addresses the critical change of the university from a conservator of knowledge to an originator and exploiter of knowledge (Smilor, O'Donnell, Stein & Welborn III 2007; Youtie & Shapira 2008).[4]

The third task has various definitions; according to a broad interpretation, it encompasses all other institutional activities except of those of teaching and research (Vorley & Nelles 2008), whereas in a narrow reading, it is defined as university-business cooperation (Adamsone-Fiskovica, Kristapsons, Tjunina & Ulnicane-Ozolina 2009) or technology transfer (Hackett & Dilts 2004). In any case, the emergence of the third mission is related to the involvement of universities in contributing to socio-economic development, and it has pushed universities into fostering entrepreneurship and exploiting innovations. Thus, one commonly used definition for the third mission is related specifically to the role of entrepreneurship for social and economic development (Sam & van der Sijde 2014). In implementing the third task, the university develops new relationships with its stakeholders (Guerrero, Urbano, Fayolle, Klofsten & Mian 2016) and becomes involved in a broad range of activities, such as patenting and licencing (Baldini 2006; Mowery, Nelson, Sampat & Ziedonis 2004; Sampat 2006; Shane 2004), research commercialization (Etzkowitz 2008), and contract research (Welch 2011), among others. Performing entrepreneurial activities, however, does not automatically

[4] For those who are interested in the history of the university, I warmly recommend the four-volume book series *A History of the University in Europe* (1992; 1996; 2004; 2011), which is an excellent description of the history and development of the European university from its medieval origins up to the present day. The books are edited by Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens. Another recommendation for a historical overview, with a specific focus on the entrepreneurial university, is the chapter *Introduction: A Brief History of Engaged and Entrepreneurial Universities* (Kliewe & Baaken 2019) in the book *Developing Engaged and Entrepreneurial Universities: Theories, Concepts and Empirical Findings*.

transform a university into an entrepreneurial organization. Rather, the entrepreneurial university is a broader concept than just the incorporation of the third task; it relates to, at least, the organizational form, governance, activities, and procedures of a university (Sam & van der Sijde 2014), as we shall see in the following pages of this study.

The phenomenon of the entrepreneurial university has attracted many academic researchers and policy makers, and since the introduction of the concept, research on entrepreneurial universities has burgeoned. Even today, it continues to be conducted from various perspectives and on different topics (Fayolle & Redford 2014). Despite, and perhaps because of, the abundance of research and numerous framings for the entrepreneurial university (e.g. Clark 1998; Röpke 1998; Etzkowitz 2003a; Kirby 2006), the concept as such remains diverse, ambiguous, and lacking a consensus definition (Fayolle & Redford 2014; Guerrero, Urbano, Cunningham & Organ 2014; Kirby, Guerrero & Urbano 2011). In addition, analogous terms such as third-generation university (Wissema 2009), enterprising university (Heinonen 2004), and enterprise university (Marginson & Considine 2000) – as well as the broader and blurrier wordings entrepreneurial paradigm, entrepreneurial wave, and entrepreneurialism – are used in the literature somewhat interchangeably. The terminological heterogeneity reflects the complexity of the phenomenon; the diversity of entrepreneurial approaches that universities have taken is one essential feature of an entrepreneurial university (Fayolle & Redford 2014), which makes a concise definition likely unreachable and even irrelevant. Nevertheless, the entrepreneurial university has become an established and increasingly used concept in higher education research – which oftentimes, in my opinion, has an implicit presumption of effectivity and betterment. Here, however, my aim is not to debate the definition of the entrepreneurial university, nor point out the normativity of the vocabulary, but rather to address the versatility and ambiguity around the concept and phenomenon within the vast body of the entrepreneurial university literature. On a broader note, though, with this study and the approach that I have applied, my aim is to enrich the understanding of the entrepreneurial university by providing yet more viewpoints to the phenomenon – from within the university. I will return to my standpoint and approach in a more detailed and concrete manner at the end of this chapter (see chapter 2.3).

2.2 Different dimensions in the literature

2.2.1 Two main discourses in the field

In the broad entrepreneurial university literature, there are two distinct scholarly discourses explaining and defining the phenomenon (e.g. Kolhinen 2015). The first

stream of discussion – let us call it a *technology- and knowledge transfer-driven discourse* – can be characterized with a focus on the university's activities and position in technology transfer, research commercialization and new venture creation (Etzkowitz 2004; Philpott, Dooley, O'Reilly & Lupton 2011; Uslu, Calikoglu, Seggie & Seggie 2019), in which universities are seen as knowledge hubs (Youtie & Shapira 2008). The other stream has a focus on entrepreneurship education (Gibb & Hannon 2006; Kyrö & Mattila 2012), and therefore, it can be called an *entrepreneurship education discourse*. This approach adopts a wider interpretation of entrepreneurship, suggesting that '*entrepreneurship becomes part of the DNA of an institution, integral to the university's culture and operating model*' (Morris, Kuratko & Pryor 2014, p. 46). Foss and Gibson (2015; 2017) make a similar distinction. According to them, universities can be entrepreneurial in two main ways, of which *academic entrepreneurship* focuses on research and knowledge commercialization (Klofsten & Jones-Evans 2000; Roessner, Bond, Okubo & Planting 2013), whereas *entrepreneurial education* (Gibb & Hannon 2006) refers to the university's teaching mission and support of entrepreneurial competences (Altmann & Ebersberger 2013). Guerrero et al. (2016) in turn, see entrepreneurial universities as drivers of innovation and entrepreneurship, and again, they make a distinction between its different roles as *generating technology transfer* and *creating entrepreneurial thinking, actions, institutions and capital*. According to them, these perspectives are often discussed separately.

In terms of quantity, the entrepreneurial university literature is largely dominated by technology- and knowledge transfer-driven discourse. There is, however, a burgeoning literature on entrepreneurship education, but it is separate rather than well connected to the entrepreneurial university discussion (Heinonen & Hytti 2010).

2.2.2 Developing the entrepreneurial university – focus on functions and structures

Researchers have used various constructs and approaches to advance our understanding of how universities are changing and becoming entrepreneurial. Next, I discuss three approaches that I consider classics in the field, because they are widely known and frequently referred to in defining and describing universities' entrepreneurial orientation. Over the time, these approaches have been both contested and supported, and they have gained new layers and insights. Sometimes their legacy is more visible, other times less so, and links to these classics are less apparent; nevertheless, they are firmly rooted in and pervade the entrepreneurial university discussion. Each approach, the *entrepreneurial university model* by Burton Clark (1998), the *triple helix model* (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 1997) and the

Gibbian approach of the entrepreneurial university (e.g. Gibb 2005a; 2007a; 2007b), emphasizes different perspectives and foci on the phenomenon, yet they have in common a focus on the structural and functional elements of a university becoming entrepreneurial. Unlike the two first-mentioned approaches, which can be understood more like models or constructs that frame the (ideal of) the entrepreneurial university, Gibbian thinking is rather a broader perspective on the phenomenon, yet the underlying scheme is kindred.

The entrepreneurial university model by Burton Clark[5]

Sociologist Burton Clark's (1998) book *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities. Organizational Pathways of Transformation* is one of the pioneering works to examine the entrepreneurial university phenomenon. Clark conducted comparative case studies in five European universities[6] in their transformation into entrepreneurial universities. A critical starting point in his work was the recognition of a rising '*demand-response imbalance'* in the environment-university relationship. According to Clark, continuous changes such as the challenges of teaching and research, coping with more and different students, and doing more with less because of declining public funding result in a '*demand overload'*. To overcome it, Clark suggests an '*entrepreneurial response*', which includes five organizational elements, '*pathways of transition*', in order for a university to shift from a passive mode to an active one and thus transform towards more entrepreneurial ways of action. Clark characterized the entrepreneurial university with the following five elements: the strengthened steering core, diversified funding base, expanded developmental periphery, stimulated academic heartland, and integrated entrepreneurial culture (Clark 1998).

Accordingly, Clark says, the entrepreneurial university has a *strengthened steering core*, which refers to a university's ability to strengthen and systematize its managerial capacities. In the state of decreasing government funding, *diversifying the funding base* becomes important in enhancing the university's performance.

5 In the entrepreneurial university literature, many researchers have illustrated various models for the entrepreneurial university and its evolution (see an overview e.g. in Kirby, Guerrero & Urbano 2011). In this subchapter, however, I focus on Burton Clark's (1998; 2004) conceptualization on purpose, because his interpretation of the university as an entrepreneurial organization provided a novel perspective on the phenomenon (Rhoades & Stensaker 2017), and thereafter, his work has been widely considered as pioneering in the field (Kliewe & Baaken 2019; Shattock 2008).

6 The study was conducted in the Universities of Warwick (UK), Twente (Netherlands), and Strathclyde (Scotland); Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden); and the University of Joensuu (Finland).

These two pathways together increase the entrepreneurial university's authority in making decisions about their strategy and future more independently. The *expanded developmental periphery* includes the establishment of non-academic units to reinvigorate and broaden the university's collaboration with external stakeholders. '*As a halfway house to the outside world the developmental periphery becomes an organizational location within a university for the absorption of whole new modes of thinking*' (Clark 1998, p. 139). *Academic heartlands* are places where academic values are strongly rooted and change is less apparent. In the entrepreneurial university, the entrepreneurial ethos concerns the university widely, thus reaching and stimulating the academic heartlands, too. Finally, Clark sees the entrepreneurial university developing a culture that embraces and is oriented to change. It may begin from an idea or a set of beliefs, but it should become a *university-wide* culture to operate in a flexible and entrepreneurial way. To conclude, Clark's five-piece model of the entrepreneurial university goes beyond the tasks of a university, taking into account the organizational structure, activities, and practices as well as culture and attitudes, thus coming to the vision of universities as institutional entrepreneurs (Foss & Gibson 2015; 2017), which not only contribute to entrepreneurship around them, but aim at fostering entrepreneurialism within the whole organization.

In his later work, *Sustaining Change in Universities: Continuities in Case Studies and Concepts*, Clark (2004) expanded the earlier five case studies into universities in Africa, Latin America, Australia and North America.[7] The focus of the study was to analyse how elements of transformation become elements of the sustainability of change in a university. Accordingly, Clark suggested three dynamics of sustainability: re-inforcing interaction among transforming elements, perpetual momentum resulting from steady accumulation of incremental changes, and ambitious volition embedded in the university as collective commitment and institutional will (ibid, p. 90-93).

Clark's novel approach of the time illuminated new angles in the phenomenon of the entrepreneurial university (Rhoades & Stensaker 2017). For instance, an organizational perspective and widening the scope of the economic viewpoint with a complement of academic elements contributed greatly to research and provoked discussion about the changing relationship between the state and higher education, particularly in Europe (Rhoades & Stensaker 2017; Shattock 2010; Lyytinen 2018).

[7] In addition to the original five European universities, Clark took along nine new universities: Makerere University (Uganda), Catholic University of Chile (Chile), Monash University (Australia) and American universities Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Michigan, University of California, North Carolina State University, and Georgia Institute of Technology (Clark 2004)

Since its announcement, Clark's conceptualization of the entrepreneurial university has been a frequently used benchmark and a point of reference in higher education research. Overall, its impact has been substantial not only in research, but in policy and practice, too (Kliewe & Baaken 2019; Bratianu & Stanciu 2010; Rhoades & Stensaker 2017). According to Rhoades and Stensaker (2017), Clark's influence has been stronger in Europe than in the United States, because his thoughts were timely here, and resonated with the then new trends of public disinvestment in higher education, accountability pressures and a call for greater strategic management. Despite being widely acknowledged, Clark's conceptualization has been criticized, too. Some have claimed it is too simplified with inductive analyses of few cases and a lack of theoretical integration, thus, leaving its contribution, albeit considerable, mainly practical (Shattock 2010; Lyytinen 2018).

Clark's institutional approach has inspired many, and thereafter, research on the entrepreneurial university has contributed to the understanding of universities' structures and functions in their entrepreneurial development. Many researchers have illustrated various models for the entrepreneurial university and its evolution (see an overview, e.g. in Kirby et al. 2011) in contrast to other universities (Etzkowitz 2013; 2014). In addition, *entrepreneurial architecture*, defined as '*the institutional, communication, coordination, and cultural factors internal to an organization oriented towards innovation*' (Nelles & Vorley 2010, p. 168), is used to conceptualize universities' institutional activities and their interdependences when exploring universities' entrepreneurial transformation (Nelles & Vorley 2010; Vorley & Nelles 2008). The entrepreneurial architecture consists of five institutional elements: structures, strategies, systems, leadership, and culture, which are seen as critical components explaining the transition towards the entrepreneurial university (Nelles & Vorley 2010; Vorley & Nelles 2008; Foss & Gibson 2015; 2017).

The triple helix model (following Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff)

For Henry Etzkowitz (e.g. 2004; 2013; 2014), another leading writer in the field, the idea of the entrepreneurial university unfolds through academic involvement in technology transfer, firm formation and regional development. He has been studying the phenomenon widely (e.g. in Europe, US, Japan and Brazil), and proposes a *triple helix model* of close collaboration among universities, government and industry as a lens through which to interpret universities' entrepreneurial transformation (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 1999; Etzkowitz et al. 2000). This view, in which universities are seen as contributors to innovation, technological development, and economic growth, along with a catalyst for regional development (e.g. Jones-Evans & Klofsten 1997; Etzkowitz et al. 2000; King & Nash 2001; Etzkowitz 2003a;

2003b; Yusuf 2007; Zhang, MacKenzie, Jones-Evans & Huggins 2016), has been dominating the entrepreneurial university discussion (Heinonen & Hytti 2010).

The triple helix is an interactive and collaborative system between three institutional spheres of university, industry and government in order to foster regional economic growth and promote entrepreneurship (Cai & Etzkowitz 2020). This mode of interaction emerges because a '*spiral model of innovation is required to capture multiple reciprocal linkages at different stages of the capitalization of the knowledge*' (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 1999, p. 112). Such composition produces a knowledge infrastructure '*in terms of overlapping institutional spheres, with each taking the role of the other and with hybrid organizations emerging at the interfaces*' (ibid, p. 111).

Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) identify three types of triple helix models: the statist, the laissez-faire and the balanced model. According to Etzkowitz (2008, p. 12), '*a balanced model begins from two opposing standpoints: a statist model of government controlling academia and industry, and a laissez-faire model with industry, academic and government separate and apart from each other, interacting only modestly across strong boundaries.*' In the idealized model, each helix has an equal role in collaboration; Cai and Etzkowitz (2020), however, remind us that balanced interactions between the three helices of university, industry and government hardly exist in reality.

Through the lens of the triple helix, Etzkowitz (2013) has investigated the anatomy of the entrepreneurial university, and in his model, there are three stages of development building upon each other. In the initial phase, a university sets a strategic view of its direction towards entrepreneurship, and '*gains some ability to set its own priorities, either by raising its own resources through donations, tuition fees and grant income or through negotiations with resource providers*' (ibid, p. 488). Thus, a precondition for a university to take the role of an entrepreneur is the capacity to set its own strategic direction (Etzkowitz 2016). Here Etzkowitz sees similarities with Clark's (1998) entrepreneurial university model. In the second stage, emphasis is put on research commercialization, and by establishing its own technology transfer facilities, a university '*takes an active role in commercialising the intellectual property arising from the activities of its faculty, staff and students*' (Etzkowitz 2013, p. 488). In the third stage, the focus is on regional renewal, and a university '*takes a proactive role in improving the efficacy of its regional innovation environment, often in collaboration with industry and government actors*' (ibid, p. 488).

The Gibbian approach to the entrepreneurial university

The third approach takes a broader view of both entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university in addressing the entrepreneurial turn in universities. The perspective draws from the work of the late Allan Gibb (e.g. 2005a; 2007a; 2007b; 2012), a prominent entrepreneurship scholar; it is influenced by the entrepreneurial education paradigm (Gibb 2005b; 2012; Gibb et al. 2013; Hartshorn & Hannon 2005) and moves beyond a business context towards a broader societal sphere (Gibb & Hannon 2006). In the wake of his work, many researchers have followed Gibbian thinking and contributed to the broader understanding of the entrepreneurial university (e.g. Hannon 2013; Rae, Martin, Antcliff & Hannon 2012; Davey, Hannon & Penaluna 2016). According to Gibb and Haskins (2014), a broader understanding of the entrepreneurial university is gained by drawing attention to entrepreneurial strategy and entrepreneurial partnerships as well as entrepreneurial curriculum and pedagogy.

Within this perspective, entrepreneurship as a concept in the university context is understood widely, and a university is seen as not only a platform for research commercialization but also as an enabler, supporter and educator of entrepreneurialism (Rae et al. 2012). Accordingly, the idea of the entrepreneurial university can be described in the following way: '*[An entrepreneurial university is] an organization that renews itself to better align with its environment; an institution that inculcates entrepreneurial thinking through its governance structures and managerial policies and practices. [It is an] institution that creates an environment, within which the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviours [is] embedded, encouraged, supported, incentivised and rewarded*' (Hannon 2013, p. 12-13).

The shift towards entrepreneurship is understood to require changes in the organization, and entrepreneurship is suggested to be included in both the university mission and practices (Gibb 2012). According to Gibb (2012), there is a range of '*entrepreneurial related activities*' in all universities; they just may not be labelled as such. It might thus be challenging to recognize synergies and to combine these into a '*whole university*' approach in order to advance entrepreneurial development. Therefore, the concepts of entrepreneurial organization and entrepreneurial leadership are highlighted (Gibb & Hannon 2006; Gibb, Haskins & Robertson 2009; Gibb et al. 2013). In this sense, there are similarities to Clark's model that also bring forth the institutional aspect of the entrepreneurial university and the importance of a university-wide entrepreneurial culture. With regards to the triple helix model, the resemblance appears in the outward orientation, as both draw attention to external stakeholders.

One clear difference among these three approaches lies in the strong commitment to entrepreneurship education of the Gibbian approach. In contrast to Clark's

entrepreneurial university model and the triple helix model, in the Gibbian approach, embedding entrepreneurship education is considered an essential function of the entrepreneurial university (Gibb et al. 2009; Gibb et al. 2013). Accordingly, issues such as entrepreneurship education pedagogics (Gibb 2002; 2005b; Heinonen & Hytti 2010; Kyrö & Mattila 2012), curriculum development (Kozlinska 2012; Morris et al. 2014), impact of entrepreneurship education (Kozlinska 2016) and investigation of the most appropriate and suitable concept of entrepreneurship in higher education (Gibb & Hannon 2006) have gained much attention within this approach.

A further comparison among the three constructs reveals more differences. A significant issue in this respect is the unit of analysis or the focus of interest, which varies somewhat across Clark's entrepreneurial university model, the triple helix model and the Gibbian approach. Clark is interested in the institution, and the entrepreneurial university is seen as an institutional entrepreneur itself. The triple helix model has an outward perspective, and attention is given to the university's networked collaboration, wider innovation ecosystem and the impacts on the region. The Gibbian approach centres back on university organization, and while it is congruent with Clark's model in its focus on the university's (entrepreneurial) culture, it differs in its strong emphasis on entrepreneurship education pedagogy and individual learning. The differing foci provide different understandings of the development of the entrepreneurial university. For example, Clark's five entrepreneurial elements, which are essential ingredients in his thinking, are seen to lead the university as an institution towards a more entrepreneurial mode. Gibb et al. promote a similar organization-wide approach, but they draw from the entrepreneurship education paradigm and problematize the issue of leadership in an entrepreneurial university. Finally, the triple helix model suggests collaborative activities with other key stakeholders in order to contribute to entrepreneurship around the university.

2.2.3 The critical tenet

In the above-discussed approaches, the stance towards universities' entrepreneurial transformation is fairly optimistic. The development is not necessarily considered easy and smooth or without problems, nor are universities seen to follow similar paths in their entrepreneurial transformation (Etzkowitz 2004); the outcome, however, is assumed to be positive from the viewpoints of both society and the university. The inclusion of the third mission and the consequent new activities of universities, as well as their institutional reorganizing, are seen to improve and diversify universities' funding and thus enhance their performance and flexibility.

Literature reveals the other side of the coin, too, where the entrepreneurial turn in universities is depicted with less optimistic scenarios. Much has been written about universities operating within the neoliberal economic framework, and this paradigm shift has resulted in the emergence of the '*academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime*' (Slaughter & Leslie 1997, p. 6). This shift of focus is seen to foster the commodification and privatization of knowledge and the pursuit of profit in higher education (Slaughter & Leslie 2001), thus transforming higher education from a public good to a commodity for a few (Fredricks-Lowman & Smith-Isabel 2020).

Slaughter and Leslie (1997; 2001) introduced the concept of *academic capitalism* to a wider audience, and defined it as universities' reorientation towards market and market-like behaviour, including universities' involvement in for-profit activity and competing for external funding. It provides a framework for understanding neoliberalism, marketization and new managerialism in the context of higher education, and it has a critical orientation in demonstrating the ways in which higher education relates to states, markets and globalization (Slaughter & Leslie 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades 2004; Kauppinen 2012; Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014; Cantwell & Kauppinen 2014). Academic capitalism is said to occur when universities act '*more like economic enterprises that aim to maximize their revenues and/or advance the economic competitiveness of the spaces in which they operate*' (Jessop 2018, p. 104) and further to '*turn universities into enterprises competing for capital accumulation and businesses into knowledge producers looking for new findings that can be turned into patents and profitable commodities*' (Münch 2016, p. 1).

In light of the above, the entrepreneurial university is seen as one that '*increasingly focuses on revenue generation through the production of knowledge (e.g., innovative research, patents, marketable teaching materials) and academics are expected to contribute to the economic and social growth of their respective institutions*' (Fredricks-Lowman & Smith-Isabel 2020, p. 21). This causes concern in terms of economic, social and cultural aspects within academia, and indeed, academic capitalism is seen to have an influence on universities widely – and these are often considered negative effects (Fredricks-Lowman & Smith-Isabel 2020). As an example, for faculty members academic capitalism often occurs as increased uncertainty because of part-time employment and other precarious work (Shaker, Macdonald & Wodrich 2013), and students are influenced by the negative effects of rising education costs (Slaughter & Rhoades 2004; Arum & Roksa 2011). There is also a concern of an unequal division in academia; certain disciplines become more acknowledged and supported because of the interpretation of their better profitability and abilities to attract and channel external resources (Slaughter & Rhoades 2004; Fredricks-Lowman & Smith-Isabel 2020). On a larger scale, some (e.g. Slaughter &

Leslie 1997; Shapin 2008) are worried that the increased collaboration with external stakeholders and the development of university-industry relations will lead to a weakening of the traditional university missions and a loss of academic freedom. In this view, markets are seen as a '*vortex that sweeps everything into its path and that once an activity [has] demonstrated some commercial value, it will inevitably be "commodified", while other attributes are corrupted*' (Etzkowitz 2013, p. 504). Others (Laalo et al. 2019, p. 93) argue that the entrepreneurial university '*establishes neoliberal ideals, redefines the values of European university education, and generates instrumental and one-dimensional understanding of the purpose of university education*'. Thus, the rise of the entrepreneurial university is seen as firmly underpinned with the neoliberal ideology and the critical tenet is calling for further notion of its impact (Taylor 2014; see also Hytti 2021b).

Furthermore, the growing role of entrepreneurship in higher education has raised several other questions, such as whether the '*entrepreneurial paradigm*' is appropriate in that context, how the concept of entrepreneurship fits with the traditional view of a university and finally, whether it needs to be refined (Gibb & Hannon 2006). Academic and policy discussion around entrepreneurship in the university context has also been criticized for the dominance of the technology and knowledge transfer perspective, which is seen as too narrow a focus for a university as an organization in becoming entrepreneurial (Gibb 2007a; 2007b; Heinonen & Hytti 2010; Rae et al. 2012). While the entrepreneurial university remains an interesting research topic, a growing number of researchers have adopted a less optimistic and assumptive view, proposing alternative ways of exploration and interpretation, thus attempting to contribute to a many-sided and broader understanding of the phenomenon.

One example of increasing interest in gaining a broader understanding of the phenomenon is a recent publication on research agenda for the entrepreneurial university (Hytti 2021a), which brings together writings of both mainstream and more critically oriented scholars. A closer dialogue between those two streams of research allows us to reflect upon the entrepreneurial university phenomenon in new ways. For instance, a '*societally entrepreneurial university*' is introduced by examining community engagement initiatives as an example of how universities can deal with societal problems (Verduijn & Sabelis 2021). For their part, Berglund et al. (2021) invite us to explore the entrepreneurial university in forward-looking ways, proposing an '*alternative entrepreneurial university*' to advance our understanding of how '*the entrepreneurial*' is incorporated into the university. Furthermore, a novel addition to the often-neglected individual perspective on the entrepreneurial university is brought forth in studies that address activity and agency of university members: among managers (Hytti, Eriksson, Montonen & Peura 2020) as well as faculty and students (Lahikainen, Peltonen, Hietanen & Oikkonen 2021).

2.3 The entrepreneurial university – time for revision?

2.3.1 Towards a more pluralistic view of the entrepreneurial university

Above, I have given an overview of the existing literature on entrepreneurial universities. Admittedly, academic discussion around the topic is abundant and the phenomenon has been studied from different perspectives, yet the discourse tends to be somewhat stagnant and entrenched. Firstly, the literature is divided, and attitudes towards entrepreneurship in the university seem ambivalent, even contradictory (e.g. Clark 1998; Slaughter & Leslie 1997). A recent article goes as far as calling the prevalent differing views the '*utopian and dystopian polarisations*' (Eriksson et al. 2021b, p. 1). In the literature, the idealized view of the entrepreneurial university is rather normative by nature and often equals a modern university; as such, it is seen as both a goal and a characteristic of an active, receptive contemporary university. The same attitude came forth in the interviews of the university management, which I used for familiarization purposes at the beginning of this study. Within the ACE research project, the university management took the growing role of entrepreneurship as an inevitable part of the university's development; its objectives and consequences, however, were not clearly elaborated in the discussions (see chapter 4.2.3). A contrasting view in the literature – a more sceptical one – points to the entrepreneurial university as a neoliberal idea, highlighting the negative consequences of the development of the commodification of knowledge and the pursuit of profit (e.g. Slaughter & Leslie 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades 2004). In the literature, these differing views of the entrepreneurial university are often discussed in isolation (Hytti 2021a), which further adds to the one-sided and static interpretation of the phenomenon.

Secondly, the entrepreneurial university literature has a functional and structural emphasis, and previous research often portrays what the entrepreneurial universities are and what they (should) do, as well as how to become one. In a large part of the entrepreneurial university research, the unit of analysis is on societal and organizational levels, and attention is drawn to the environmental or institutional factors that explain or predict universities' entrepreneurial transformation (cf. Hytti 2021b). However, if we look at universities today, they are different compared to the time when the entrepreneurial university concept was launched. Universities are rarely considered '*ivory towers*' anymore, and even though they are in different evolutionary phases, they are seen as increasingly engaged with their environment (Zhang et al. 2016). On the side of the traditional missions of teaching and research, many universities have adopted the third mission of contributing to economic

development, such as licencing, spin-out and knowledge transfer (Guerrero et al. 2014; Johnston & Huggins 2016); they have established technology transfer offices and put an emphasis on entrepreneurship in curriculum development. This calls for a different perceptive in studying entrepreneurial universities.

In response to the observations discussed above, I propose shifting gears in exploring the entrepreneurial university. Consequently, I adopt a view from within a university that has committed to becoming entrepreneurial, and I take individuals as the units of analysis. I argue that mainstream entrepreneurial university research with an organizational perspective that has a focus on structures and functions of a university can be enhanced and enriched with the individual perspective, and that allowing space for diverse, possibly challenging and less-mainstream, views creates new layers to the entrepreneurial university, thus contributing to a broader and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. In this study, the positive and negative polarizations of the entrepreneurial university are acknowledged, and further, the exploration extends over and above those, also including the greyer zones in between (cf. Eriksson et al. 2021b). This said, let us now have a look at the perspectives that I have adopted and been inspired by in studying the entrepreneurial university as a socially constructed plural phenomenon.

2.3.2 A social constructionist perspective on entrepreneurial universities

In this study, I adopt the social constructionist view and explore sensemaking in an organizational context in a university becoming entrepreneurial (I discuss social constructionism from the viewpoint of methodology in chapter 4.1.3; here the focus is on its application). Within the social constructionist paradigm, language is seen as a fundamental aspect of the process of knowledge production; it is not only a means to describe and represent the world, but further, it is a way of constructing it and a form of social action. Furthermore, knowledge accumulates in shared interactions with others, through social exchange, relationships and dialogue (Gergen & Gergen 2004), changing the way in which knowledge is treated: '*[It] is therefore seen not as something that a person has or doesn't have, but as something that people do together*' (Burr 2015, p. 11-12).

By adopting the social constructionist perspective, I consider the university '*a potentially fluid field of meaning making*' (Gergen 2009, p. 321) in its entrepreneurial transformation, and I am interested in a dialogue and relations among the university personnel in the process of producing meaning within the university committed to entrepreneurship in their social interaction. In this way, I understand the organization as narratively constructed (Bruner 1991) and its creation through the narrative sensemaking (Rhodes & Brown 2005) of its members. Accordingly,

this study assumes that people engage in social processes, through which they create meaning and negotiate understanding (Fletcher 2006); thus, in constructing the entrepreneurial university, I focus on the ways in which the participants of this study narrate and negotiate the entrepreneurial university and make meaning of it, both in their interaction in the groups and with me.

In addition to the social constructionist perspective, I have taken inspiration from critical entrepreneurship studies (CES) in positioning myself. CES has emerged from a desire to broaden the prevailing setting in entrepreneurship, aiming at questioning and challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions and prevalent norms of entrepreneurship research (Tedmanson, Verduijn, Essers & Gartner 2012; Essers, Dey, Tedmanson & Verduijn 2017b). The critical orientation of this study unfolds in challenging the prevailing understanding of the entrepreneurial university – which carries both idealized and sceptical views, but lacks the ordinary in-between, provides functional and structural knowledge about entrepreneurial universities on organizational and societal levels, but overlooks the individual perspective from within. By adopting, as I describe it, a *moderately critical approach*, I have purposefully created space for a wider understanding of entrepreneurship throughout the study. Thus, I have also given room for diverse, possibly challenging and less-mainstream views of the entrepreneurial university. For instance, in acquiring research material, I have paid particular attention to the identification of study participants and the composition of the groups with an aim to capture the ambiguous and diverse perceptions of entrepreneurship, and the group discussions were carried out in such a manner as to allow multiple interpretations of entrepreneurship.

In my research, I discard the normative idea of entrepreneurship as a 'good thing' with a recognition that '*the more entrepreneurs the merrier*' (Weiskopf & Steyaert 2009); however, I do not land on the opposite side, either. In fact, I do not assume that entrepreneurship is essentially 'good' or 'bad'; neither do I have a preference for whether 'more' or 'less' entrepreneurship in the university context is advantageous. Rather, I am interested in the plurality of ways and the polyphony of voices of how becoming entrepreneurial is constructed from within the university, thus my critical stance is more about being '*open to multiple interpretations*' (Verduijn, Dey & Tedmanson 2017) than proposing a substitutive view to the prevailing one.

Next, let us move on to the sensemaking approach, which provides a lens to explore the social construction of the entrepreneurial university from the perspective of sensemaking and meaning making. In this study, sensemaking is a particularly appropriate perspective, because it allows us to see the process through which individuals create, in an organizational context, order from chaos in new, unexpected situations (Colville, Brown & Pye 2012; Maitlis & Christianson 2014) – which, combining entrepreneurship and university as well as the emergence of an entrepreneurial university, admittedly are.

3 Sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university

This chapter focuses on sensemaking. It first provides an overview of sensemaking research, followed by different discussions and debates in the field, thus arguing for the use of sensemaking as a way to think about and research the entrepreneurial university. Later in the chapter, I discuss the sensemaking perspective applied in this study and explain my choices and preferences that inform its application.

3.1 What is sensemaking?

3.1.1 Defining sensemaking

'*This makes perfect sense to me.*' '*I cannot make sense of this text at all!*' '*How do we make sense of this?*' '*Nonsense!*' In our everyday lives, we tend to use the expression 'to make sense' in varied ways and situations. It relates to those moments of uncertainty in which order is disrupted and we need to figure out what is going on – but what does the concept *sensemaking* actually mean and how do we make sense of something, particularly in an organizational context?

Sensemaking is a cognitive, dynamic, and reciprocal process, which people use to decipher and clarify met reality that includes unexpected elements. Thus, sensemaking mitigates ambiguity. (Heaphy 2017; Will & Pies 2018.) It is an activity central to organizing (Maitlis & Christianson 2014): it '*literally, means the making of sense*' (Weick 1995, p. 4) – that is, '*structuring the unknown*' (Waterman 1990, p. 41), '*framing the reference*' (Cantril 1940, p. 20), and '*putting stimuli into a frame of some kind, which allows for comprehending, understanding, explaining, attributing, extrapolating, and predicting*' (Starbuck & Milliken 1988, p. 51). Sensemaking is a continuous social process directed at creating order from confusion and chaos (Weick 1995) and comprehending situations or issues that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or generally disruptive in some other way (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). It enables people to turn the ongoing complexity of the world into a '*situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and that serves as a springboard into action*' (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld 2005, p. 409). In a similar

vein, people in organizations often meet with novel, non-routine activities and events that violate their existing mental constructs, and by engaging in sensemaking – commencing recursive cycles of enactment, selection and retention – they can develop an enhanced understanding of those ambiguous situations (Bajwa, Waseem & Akbar 2020).

The origins of sensemaking are in the early 20th century; however, it started to gain momentum only later, when Garfinkel (1967) used the term 'sensemaking' in the field of ethnography as an approach to studying the everyday practices of people as they interact, interpret, and account for their experiences of reality (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). Organizational psychologist Karl Weick (1969/1979; 1995), arguably the most influential scholar in sensemaking research, introduced the concept[8] in the organizational context, after which sensemaking-related research became much used, particularly in challenging notions of an objective reality and instead emphasizing the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckman 1966). Concurrently with its expansion, sensemaking research advanced methodologically, too (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). Weick's (1995) pivotal book *Sensemaking in Organizations* summarized the then-current state of sensemaking research (Maitlis & Christianson 2014) and, with its new openings, became an influential milestone and a widely acknowledged point of reference in management and organizational studies (Colville et al. 2012; Maitlis & Christianson 2014; Oswick, Fleming & Hanlon 2011). Since Weick's classic text, sensemaking research in the field has been prolific and variegated (Maitlis & Christianson 2014; see also other reviews: Brown, Colville & Pye 2015; Holt & Cornelissen 2014; Maitlis & Sonenshein 2010; Mills, Thurlow & Mills 2010). Furthermore, sensemaking has been an inspiration for the advancement of social-constructionist, interpretative, and phenomenological perspectives in studying organizations (Holt & Sandberg 2011), a stimulator for the development of process organization studies (Hernes & Maitlis 2010; Tsoukas & Chia 2002; Weick 2010), and an influencer on organizational practice literature (Colville, Waterman & Weick 1999; Weick & Sutcliffe 2001). It continues to attract scholars with various interests in advancing the understanding on how people appropriate and enact their 'realities' (Holt & Cornelissen 2014; Maitlis & Christianson 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015).

While sensemaking is widely applied in organizational research, there is variation in how it is used (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). Some scholars refer to it as a '*theory*' (Holt & Cornelissen 2014; Stein 2004), others use the words '*lens*'

[8] In his early work, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, Weick (1969/1979) uses the spellings 'sense making' and 'sense-making'. In *Sensemaking in Organizations* (1995) and thereafter, he uses the construct as consisting of one word, 'sensemaking' (Glynn & Watkiss 2020; see also for theoretical explanation, Weick 2005, p. 397).

(Sonenshein 2009; Stensaker & Falkenberg 2007) or '*framework*' (Helms Mills, Weatherbee & Colwell 2006; Mikkelsen 2013), while Weick (1995) talks about '*sensemaking perspective*' (other scholars use the term, too, e.g. Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015; Schultz & Hernes 2013; Vaara 2000). Another differentiator in the sensemaking tenet is ontological – whether sensemaking takes place within or between individuals (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2020; Maitlis & Christianson 2014). Research that draws on the cognitivist tradition sees sensemaking as a process of interpreting stimuli and constructing cognitive frames and mental schemata (Starbuck & Milliken 1988; Klein, Moon & Hoffman 2006), whereas in constructivist research, sensemaking is a linguistically affected process that interprets others' accounts and negotiates mutual understandings (Boje 2014; Brown, Stacey & Nandhakumar 2008; Gephart 1993). The latter view is also referred to as an organizational perspective (Rosness, Evjemo, Haavik & Wærø 2016), thus highlighting sensemaking as phenomenon that is mutually constituted (Weick et al. 2005). In sensemaking research, however, the delineations between cognitivist and constructionist approaches are porous (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2020). In addition to these varied approaches, sensemaking literature is abundant with sensemaking-related definitions, constructs and specific forms of sensemaking (see for detailed review, Maitlis & Christianson 2014). To point out a few of these constructs, sensegiving is defined as '*the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality*' (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991, p. 442), and sensebreaking as '*the destruction or breaking down of meaning*' (Pratt 2000, p. 464).

Besides many interpretational differences of sensemaking, there are similarities, too (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). To start with, sensemaking is seen to be triggered by uncertainty and ambiguity (Weick 1995) – when people encounter unexpected or confusing events, they seek to clarify what is going on (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015; Maitlis & Christianson 2014). Secondly, sensemaking is widely understood as dynamic and ongoing (Weick 1995), the very nature that is described as a '*process*' (Weick 1995; Hernes & Maitlis 2010; Gephart, Topal & Zhang 2010; Sonenshein 2010; Cornelissen 2012), a '*recurring cycle*' (Louis 1980) or as something that '*unfolds as a sequence*' (Weick et al. 2005). Thirdly, despite ontological differences, sensemaking is generally considered social even if individuals make sense of their own, since they are always embedded in a social context where they are influenced by the presence of others, be they actual, imagined or implied (Weick 1995). Lastly, sensemaking is an ongoing exercise to understand how people, places, and events are connected, in order to act effectively (Klein et al. 2006).

3.1.2 On organizing, organization and sensemaking

One of Weick's (1969/1979) milestone contributions to organization science is his change in focus: from organizations to organizing (Tsoukas & Chia 2002; Bakken & Hernes 2006; Vogus & Colville 2016). In his influential book, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, Weick (1969/1979) suggested rejecting the view of an organization as an entity, and instead to look at a process, an act of organizing. This shift of focus – from a noun to a verb – addresses an ontological turn that sees organizations as always changing, evolving, and renewing (Vogus & Colville 2016). Organizing, for Weick, is a process whereby the interlocked behaviours of organizational members are conjoined via interpretative processes that seek to explain and justify previous actions. These interpretive processes constitute sensemaking. Thereafter, much of the research with process perspective in organization studies has drawn from this idea (Hernes & Maitlis 2010; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas & Van de Ven 2013; Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

Organizing and sensemaking are strongly intertwined in Weick's thinking (Glynn & Watkiss 2020; Kudesia 2017; Vogus & Colville 2016; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015), both being considered to aim at constructing order out of noise and disorder (Patriotta 2016). In the beginning, there was organizing (Weick 1969/1979), followed first by sensemaking (Weick 1995), and later by organizing and sensemaking (Weick et al. 2005).[9] Differences between the two are minor, as sensemaking and organizing are often considered to constitute each other (Weick et al. 2005), and further, Weick (2001, p. 95) has suggested that it is better to talk of '*organizing as sensemaking*' or '*organizing through sensemaking*' rather than '*organizing and sensemaking*'. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) put this concisely, as they argue that sensemaking is similar to organizing, the latter having been achieved to the degree that sensemaking is accomplished. Thus, organization is said to emerge from an ongoing process in which people make sense of equivocal inputs and enact that sense back into the world to make it more orderly (Weick et al. 2005).

The process perspective, that is, understanding organizations as non-static achievements, means focusing on three interlinked processes of organizing – *enactment*, *selection*, and *retention* (Weick 1979). During *enactment*, organizational

[9] In his recent essay, Weick (2020, p. 1421) himself summarises the evolution of the vocabularies of sensemaking and organizing as well as their relationship in his thinking: *'In 1969, organizing was defined as "the resolving of equivocality in an enacted environment by means of interlocked behaviors embedded in conditionally related processes*" (Weick 1969, p. 91). Ten years later organizing was now defined as "*a consensually validated grammar for reducing equivocality by means of sensible interlocked behaviors*" (Weick 1979, p. 3). These days sensemaking tends to be referred to as "*the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing*" (Weick et al. 2005, p. 409)'.

members undertake action by noticing and bracketing the flow of equivocal experience into segments for closer examination. Organizational members' perceptions of their environment are limited, and when they notice confusing or problematic information, they bracket that information so that they can interpret it. Next, in the *selection* process, organizational members work to resolve what the bracketed information means. It is an equivocality reduction process: reducing the number of conceivable meanings allowed by the information until it becomes actionable. In selection, knowledge structures are imposed in order to rearrange the bracketed information. Some variables thus become more or less central and related in new ways. As an outcome, a plausible understanding of what the environment means is achieved. Finally, during *retention*, information imposed during selection is stored and the selected interpretations are assimilated into the group's identity, interwoven into its narrative of the environment, and used as a reference for further action and interpretation. Eventually, sustained patterns of interaction form interlocked cycles of behaviour that constitute collective actions to cope with equivocality. (Weick 1979; Weick et al. 2005; Kudesia 2017.)

Through adopting a process-oriented language (Langley et al. 2013; Langley & Tsoukas 2010), Weick pointed out that '*organization*' is an outcome of an evolutionary process of organizing, and directed attention to the sensemaking roots of this process. Organization thus emerges from organizing and sensemaking (Hernes & Maitlis 2010; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015). In a similar vein, Tsoukas and Chia (2002) invite us to rethink organizational change. They talk about *organizational becoming* to underline the pervasiveness of change in organizations. According to them, organization is an emergent property of change, and change is prior to organization. Thus, they argue, organization is an attempt to order the inborn flux of human action and to channel it toward certain ends by generalizing and institutionalizing particular meanings and rules. It is also a pattern that is constituted, shaped and emerging from change. This ontological turnabout between organization and change provides a double meaning to organization; first, it is a socially defined set of rules, the '*making of form*', and second, it is an outcome emerging from the enactment of those same rules (ibid, p. 567, 570).

Given the above, to talk about organization seems misleading, as it minimizes the presence of multiple, possibly contradicting rationalities that exist within an organization, and it gives an illusion of stability to what is actually an ongoing process permanently subject to disruption and therefore always in need of re-accomplishment (Kudesia 2017). Therefore, taking organizing as the focus of research is said to help sensitize researchers to group-level processes (Kudesia 2017), as well as to prompt them to focus on '*processes of becoming*' rather than '*states of being*' (Gioia 2006, p. 1711).

3.2 Language matters in sensemaking

Stories and storying are central to human understanding (Lewis 2011); as Kearney (2002, p. 130) puts it, '*There is an abiding recognition that existence is inherently storied. Life is pregnant with stories.*' In a similar vein, narratives and stories have increased their popularity in organizational studies (Boje 2014; Czarniawska 2004; Gabriel 2000).

Communication is a pivotal component of sensemaking because it is attained in part through linguistic and communicative processes (Weick 1995). The idea that sensemaking takes a narrative form unfolds in Weick's famous rhetorical question '*How can I know what I think until I see what I say*?'(e.g. Weick 1979, p. 5, 155; 1995, p. 12, 18, 135; 2001, p. 95) – also known as the sensemaking recipe – addressing the linguistic aspect of sensemaking: that we talk situations, organizations and environments into existence, that language is a means for '*meanings to materialise*' (Mills 2003, p. 35) and that '*sensemaking involves turning circumstances into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words*' (Taylor & Van Every 2000, p. 40). Therefore, it has been stated that '*sensemaking implicates storytelling and storytelling implies sensemaking*' (Colville et al. 2012, p. 8). This insight has been adopted and used in an organizational context by organizational researcher David Boje (1991, p. 106), who refers to organizations as collective storytelling systems, '*in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sensemaking and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory*'. Story thus shapes and conveys sensemaking (Colville et al. 2012). In a similar vein, Jerome Bruner (1990, p. 112) argues that narratives help us attain '*coherence, livability and adequacy*'.

Linguistic factors, which have an effect on sensemaking in different ways, include discourse, narratives, rhetoric, tropes, and stories (Abolafia 2010; Brown 2005; Cornelissen 2012; Cornelissen, Oswick, Thøger Christensen & Phillips 2008; Heracleous & Jacobs 2011). Sensemaking is seen to be carried out through people producing discursive accounts (Cornelissen 2012) that organize their thoughts and actions (Colville et al. 2012; Bean & Eisenberg 2006; Taylor & Van Every 2000; Weick et al. 2005).

3.3 Sensemaking perspective in this study

3.3.1 On choices and preferences

Above, by providing an overview of research in the field, I have presented and discussed various definitions and applications of sensemaking. As we have noticed, while the sensemaking approach in organizational studies has burgeoned, literature

on sensemaking is relatively fragmented (Odden & Russ 2019), thus, my stance needs additional elaboration. So next, by reflecting upon the defining elements and some key debates around sensemaking, I will further delineate the concept by explicating what sensemaking *is* and furthermore, what it *is not* in the frame of this study.

First, as I pointed out earlier, while the idea of sensemaking has become increasingly prevalent in organizational studies, there are differences in the ways it is utilized (see chapter 3.1.1). Consistent with Weick (1995), who talks about sensemaking as a perspective to study organizations, as a '*frame of mind about frames of minds that is best treated as a set of heuristics rather than an algorithm*' (ibid, p. xii), sensemaking in this study is adopted as a perspective – a lens to explore how becoming entrepreneurial is negotiated and constructed among university personnel.

Second, following the discussion of whether sensemaking is regarded as a primarily individual cognitive process (e.g. Klein et al. 2006; Starbuck & Milliken 1988) or as a process of social construction that is enacted through interaction between people (Weick 1995; Weick et al. 2005; Maitlis 2005), I place myself in between. Consequently, I recognize both ontologies of sensemaking and consider it happens both within and between individuals. In the frame of this study, however, I am consistent with several scholars who emphasize the collectiveness of sensemaking, and I focus on the social dynamics of sensemaking in an organization committed to becoming entrepreneurial. From this perspective, sensemaking is concerned with the '*conversational and social practices through which the members of a society socially construct a sense of shared meanings*' (Gephart 1993, p. 1469), thus I pay attention to the ways in which the study participants negotiate and interpret their understandings of the entrepreneurial university in a group setting – or, to put it simply, I examine their use of language and their narratives. Through these discursive processes, the study participants – the sensemakers – are seen to produce '*accounts*', '*narratives*' or '*stories*' rather than create new schemas (Boje 1995; Brown 2004; Maitlis 2005). While these accounts are co-constructions, that is, they are mutually co-constituted among the participants jointly engaging with the idea of the entrepreneurial university and building their understanding of it together, they do not necessarily reflect widespread agreement in the collective (cf. Maitlis & Christianson 2014), which is why I chose to organize several group discussions across the university. I reckon that the interpretation of the entrepreneurial university is best captured by a multiplicity of stories.

Third, the temporal orientation of sensemaking is ambiguous in the literature (Maitlis & Christianson 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015). There have been rigorous debates on whether sensemaking is understood as episodic (Weick 1995;

Weick et al. 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015), continuous (Gephart et al. 2010) or immanent (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015; 2020). Another set of disparities in the temporal orientation of sensemaking concerns whether it is retrospective in nature (Weick 1995; Weick et al. 2005) or whether it can also be prospective or future-oriented (Bolander & Sandberg 2013; Gioia 2006; Gioia, Corley & Fabbri 2002).

Regarding the first-mentioned ambiguity, the mainstream view is that sensemaking is episodic-deliberative (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2020; Maitlis & Christianson 2014; Weick 2010), and it is triggered by distinct, episodic interruptions of organizational activities – cues, such as issues, events or situations, for which the meaning is ambiguous or outcomes are uncertain. This view holds that sensemaking aims at achieving a feeling of order, clarity and rationality, and once that is achieved, sensemaking stops. In other words, sensemaking has distinct starting and ending points (Ala-Laurinaho, Kurki & Abildgaard 2017). Literature suggests that under uncertain situations, sensemaking is triggered by violated expectations (Maitlis & Christianson 2014), organizational crises (Weick 1993), discrepant events (Weick 1995), ambiguous events (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015), environmental jolts, threats to organizational identity and planned organizational change initiatives (Maitlis & Christianson 2014) – such as the entrepreneurial university in this study is – as well as interruption in routine activities (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2020). Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) distinguish five categories of events that trigger sensemaking: 1) major planned events, such as strategic change initiatives, 2) major unplanned events, like disasters and crises, 3) minor planned events, such as introduction of a new policy, adjustments of an existing policy or a meeting among group of experts solving a problem, 4) minor unplanned events, like a small misunderstanding between group members about how to carry out an activity, and 5) hybrids of triggering events (ibid, p. S12). A contrasting temporal view of sensemaking is provided by a stream of research that is influenced by ethnomethodology, asserting that sensemaking is always taking place, without a particular beginning or end (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). The view is expressed in Gephart et al.: '*These sensemaking practices and the production of social reality are ongoing and continually enacted … there is no time out for sensemaking*' (ibid, p. 281), which means that sensemaking is a continuous process (Konlechner, Latzke, Güttel & Höfferer 2019). Recent research has criticized the episodic ontology, suggesting that sensemaking not only takes place in moments of disruption, in episodes when ongoing activities have been interrupted, but is immanent in absorbed coping (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015; 2020). Immanent sensemaking is an action that is habitual, ongoing and non-deliberate (Wrathall 2014), and it takes place simultaneously with actors' responses to an unfolding

situation (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015[10]; see also Niemi, Stenholm, Hakala & Kantola 2022).

As to the latter debate in the literature concerning the temporal orientation of sensemaking being either retrospective or prospective, the classic work has framed sensemaking as a retrospective process (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015; Maitlis & Christianson 2014). Indeed, 'retrospective' is one of Weick's (1995) seven core properties of sensemaking,[11] pointing out that people look back at their actions and reflect on them. Recently, there has been a growing critique of the dominance of retrospective sensemaking (e.g. Bolander & Sandberg 2013; Kaplan & Orlikowski 2013; Stigliani & Ravasi 2012), claiming that it ignores future occurrences. Concurrently, there is increasing interest in the possibility of prospective or future-oriented sensemaking (Maitlis & Christianson 2015), proposing that future-oriented sensemaking (constructing meanings that create images of the future) is embedded in past and present temporal states and uses both past and present temporal orientation to provide contexts for proposed future entities (Gephart et al. 2010), and further, that prospective sensemaking is based on interrelated cycles of retrospection (Stigliani & Ravasi 2012). Scholarly debate around the retrospective-prospective nature of sensemaking continues, and researchers are increasingly calling for delineating the meaning and distinctiveness of prospective sensemaking, particularly beyond a derivative of retrospective sensemaking (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2015; Maitlis & Christianson 2014).

In light of the above, the temporal orientation of sensemaking is by no means definite in the frame of this study. Consistent with the existing literature in which temporality remains ambiguous and unsolved, the temporal orientation in this study

[10] Sandberg and Tsoukas (2020) assert that sensemaking is not a singular, but a variable phenomenon that comprises four major types: immanent, involved-deliberate, detached-deliberate, and representational sensemaking. Furthermore, by drawing on phenomenology, they develop a typology of sensemaking in organizations, which reconsiders existing sensemaking research and provides an integrative conceptualization of what defines sensemaking and how it is connected with organizing.

[11] Weick's (1995, p. 17 & 76-78) initial conception of sensemaking includes seven properties: 1) grounded in identity construction (who we understand ourselves to be in relation to the world around us influences how we see the world), 2) retrospective (we shape experience into meaningful patterns according to our memory, thus we rely on past experiences in interpreting current events), 3) enactive of sensible environments (sensemaking is about making sense of an experience within our environment), 4) social (sensemaking is dependent on our interactions with others), 5) ongoing (sensemaking is continuous, it is a never-ending sequential process), 6) focused on and by extracted cues (in our sensemaking, we focus on certain elements and ignore others by extracting contextual cues), and 7) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (when making sense of an event, we do not rely on the accuracy of our perceptions, but rather, we look for cues that make our sensemaking plausible).

has ambiguities, too. Firstly, sensemaking is *both* an episodic *and* a continuous process – it can be episodic in one situation and continuous in the other. I do understand sensemaking as continuous rather than episodic; however, it is expected that the university's recent strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship is the novel, confusing, and unexpected event that disrupts university personnel's understanding of their organization in the sense that it triggers their sensemaking. While I assume the strategic revision in the university to be an ambiguous event that causes university personnel to seek to clarify what is going on, I consider it cyclic in nature (Weick et al. 2005). Thus in the Weickian sense, it is a constant dialogue between action and provisional sense – that is, continuous. Furthermore, concurrent with the strategic revision that has no distinct beginning or end (the university was 'entrepreneurially oriented' already before the strategic revision, and there is neither an explicit starting point nor a clear completion for 'becoming entrepreneurial'), the meaning making regarding the university (as an organization) never really 'times out'. Therefore, the view that I have applied includes also elements of immanence, which, as introduced by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015; 2020), links to non-episodic ongoing sensemaking. Secondly, in the frame of this study, sensemaking is *both* retrospective *and* prospective. While I recognize the debate concerning such temporality (for more, see for example Introna 2019), it is held in this study that the study participants bring both their past and future into the present in their negotiation and meaning construction of the entrepreneurial university.

3.3.2 Making sense of the entrepreneurial university

According to Weick (1993), sensemaking typically begins with ambiguity that triggers sensemaking. In this study, the entrepreneurial transformation of the university may represent such ambiguity, a cue that triggers sensemaking. In the university context, the declaration of the entrepreneurial university could be seen as a particular discrepancy in the ordinary order of events, because the university and entrepreneurship are often contrasted against each other rather than considered a likely paring – which indeed is the elementary blueprint of the entrepreneurial university. Thus, in the framework of this study, it is assumed that the university's new strategic direction towards becoming entrepreneurial may lead to uncertainty, ambivalence and equivocality. Becoming an entrepreneurial university can result in a novel and uncertain situation that disrupts the established order and creates a need to figure out what is going on within the organization (cf. Weick 1995; Maitlis & Christianson 2014). University personnel are invited to ponder many kinds of issues that they find worrisome in a confusing situation, such as what the entrepreneurial university is, why we should become one, what is it in for me, and where it takes the university. In such conditions, sensemaking becomes evident, and organizing is

needed to make sense of this new, ambiguous concept of an entrepreneurial university. Through the process of sensemaking, '*people redeploy concepts in order to ward off blind perceptions, and redirect perceptions to ward off empty conceptions*' (Weick 2012, p. 151); thus, the study participants develop a better understanding of the entrepreneurial university (cf. Weick & Sutcliffe 2001).

Before going further with the entrepreneurial university sensemaking process of the participants in this study, the next chapter discusses the overall research design and the methodological preferences that position this research.

4 Research design and methodology

As in any research and in qualitative research particularly, there are many philosophical aspects underpinning methodological approaches. In this chapter, I discuss the overall research design and the methodology of this study. I start from the philosophical viewpoint, touching upon the issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology, which reflect my relation to knowledge and reality as a researcher as well as the ways in which I can bring forth new knowledge through my research (cf. Guba & Lincoln 1998). Then, the selection of the study participants and the data collection are explained, after which the methods and techniques of organizing, analysing and presenting the data are outlined. Finally, some issues of concern regarding methodology are discussed.

4.1 Foundations of the research

4.1.1 On research philosophy and the relation to knowledge

In this study on the entrepreneurial university, my interest lies in how the entrepreneurial transformation of a university looks in the eyes of those experiencing it and further, how they narrate their lived experience thereof. More specifically, being inspired by storytelling in organizations (e.g. Boje 2008), I focus on the intertwinement of storytelling and sensemaking in aiming to unfold how the university's entrepreneurial transformation is negotiated and constructed from within the organization. From these beginnings, the underlying research paradigm[12] of this study is *interpretivism*, as I aim at *understanding* (*verstehen*) of the phenomenon in contrast to the positivist approach of providing an explanation

[12] Following the thoughts of Guba and Lincoln (1998, p. 195-196), I consider a paradigm to be a worldview that guides my research process along the way. As a guiding construction, a paradigm has a fundamental influence on matters concerning ontology, epistemology and methodology.

(*erklären*) to the phenomenon.[13] The interpretive reading adopts an ontology that assumes a subjective and socially constructed world. Accordingly, I see reality as local and specific in nature, acknowledging that there are multiple realities, which are produced in social interaction. I consider access to individual, specific and changing realities through social constructions, such as language and shared meanings (Guba & Lincoln 1998, p. 206-207). Therefore, in order to unpack the sensemaking and meaning production processes about becoming entrepreneurial, I focus on language practices – the ways in which the study participants communicate and interact.

From the epistemological point of view, I have adopted a transactional and subjectivist view (Guba & Lincoln 1998, p. 206-207), and I acknowledge myself as a part of the knowledge production process, or, to put it more concretely, I am the primary research tool, with a close relationship to those researched. This welcomes my personality and subjectivity to be present in this study, abandoning the (illusion of) objectivity and neutrality. Therefore, reflexivity is proposed, which I will discuss in more detail a bit later (see chapter 4.1.4).

My methodological approach, which emerges from the above discussed ontological and epistemological stances, involves a philosophy of how we come to know the world from the practical viewpoint, draws on hermeneutical[14] and dialectical traditions (Guba & Lincoln 1998, p. 206-207), and builds on narrative and ethnographic research, the latter, however, playing a significantly smaller role in this study. Accordingly, I have adopted a narrative approach, which '*acknowledges the power of storytelling*' (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 215) both in collecting the

[13] The *erklären* (to explain) – *verstehen* (to understand) dichotomy was introduced by the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), addressing the distinction between natural and human sciences. According to him, the main task of natural sciences is arriving at law-based causal explanations, while the principal task of the human sciences is to understand human and historical life. (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dilthey/.)

[14] Hermeneutics, originated by German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), is a study of interpretation, with a focus on establishing a scope and validity of interpretive experience. Since Schleiermacher's thinking, hermeneutics has been developed further by several philosophers, such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, for example, and it has a role in several disciplines whose subject matter requires interpretative approaches. (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/.) An adjacent concept of the *hermeneutic circle* can be seen as a way to conceptualise the circularity of understanding and the process of interpretation in which the researcher is involved during the research. Interpretation does not happen in a vacuum but rather in a hermeneutic process, which takes into account the interplay between the parts and the whole. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 33-35.)

research material and in the analysis. I will discuss the narrative research approach employed in this study in the next chapter in more detail (see chapter 4.1.2).

For some parts, there are ethnographic[15] characteristics in my work. For example, I am a member of the organization that I research, and the familiarity can be utilized when seeking for an emic perspective or a 'native's' point of view (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 150; Silverman 2006, p. 70-73) in aiming at understanding how becoming entrepreneurial is constructed from within the organization. I do not hold a dual position both as researcher and researched, but indeed, much of my knowledge of the organization has been utilized in planning and conducting the research as well as in interpreting the research material. My familiarity with the university allows for a window into the institution and helps in collecting and understanding the first-hand experience (cf. Peura, Elkina, Paasio & Hytti 2021). In my view, the organization that has set a strategic commitment to becoming entrepreneurial can be seen as culture in the way that Van Maanen (2011, p. 221) suggests: '*[---] culture should be understood to reside largely within a sphere of social relationships and only indirectly be tied to places (or organizations)*.' Consequently, my research is sympathetic to ethnography; however, it cannot and should not be counted purely as ethnography. Firstly, my research contains neither long-term fieldwork nor systematic participant observation (I did write down my 'feeling notes' during the group discussions, though), which are among the classical characteristics of ethnographic research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 156-157). Secondly, I do share the experience of the everyday life in academia with the study participants, and hence, I understand the organizational setting, but I did not pay visits to the university in order to observe the study participants in their work, and the period of my research is remarkably short compared to that of a typical ethnographic setting. Thirdly, I do not utilize site documents in my study, because I am not aiming to understand the culture per se (that is, the organization) or the cultural meanings holistically, but rather I am interested in the construction of becoming entrepreneurial as the study participants experience and negotiate the entrepreneurial university.

[15] In comparison to the original ethnographic research, that is, the work of nineteenth-century anthropologists who travelled far to observe different cultures and tribes in order to really understand them (cf. Silverman 2006, p. 70-73), there is little resemblance in my research. However, today's ethnography encompasses a much broader range of work, including business-related ethnographic research in workplaces and organizations (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 151); hence, it is relevant and worthwhile to reflect ethnographic features in my research.

4.1.2 Narrative approach in this study

Donald Polkinghorne (2007, p. 471), a prominent narrative theorist, has stated that '*Narrative research is the study of stories.*' Following this line of thought, I find narrative inquiry particularly relevant, because I am interested in the lived experience of personnel in a university committed to becoming entrepreneurial, and I study the ways in which they make sense of and give meaning to the entrepreneurial university during this transformation – thus, the stories that they tell are the focus. In this study, the sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university is explored through the study participants' storytelling – narratives that they produce both together and with me in the group discussions. This gives the participants the role of teller and meaning maker, instead of treating them as providers of information that is neatly stored and presented. Narrative research has two methodological means in this study; it is used both in collecting the research material and in analysing it (for details, see chapters 4.2.2, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). Furthermore, the outcome of this study is presented in a storied format (for details, see chapter 4.3.4).

Obviously, I am not alone in my interest in storytelling. In fact, the development and use of narrative approaches with an emphasis on the socially constructed nature of organizations and the role and use of language in its construction is one indication of the 'linguistic turn' that has taken place in organization studies as well as in the social sciences more generally (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000; 2011; Deetz 2003). In addition to disciplines such as sociology, history, psychology, communication studies, folklore, anthropology, and philosophy, narrative attention has been drawn in organization studies (Rhodes & Brown 2005), and it has been proposed that '*[o]rganizational story and storytelling research has produced a rich body of knowledge unavailable through other methods of analysis*' (Stutts & Barker 1999, p. 213).

Across the broad field of organization research, stories are playing an important role in studying organizational change, and there is plenty of research with narrative approach on organizational change (e.g. Bryant & Cox 2004; Whittle, Mueller & Mangan 2009). In this study, my focus is not on organizational change per se, but rather I see an organization as narratively constructed (Bruner 1991) from '*networks of conversations*' (Ford 1999, p. 485), and narrative sensemaking thus attests to the pluralization of possible ways that sense can be made and meanings can be given to an organization (Rhodes & Brown 2005). In this sense, organizations can be seen as in constant flux (Langley et al. 2013; Tsoukas & Chia 2002), and narratives are an essential part of the process by creating meaning through defining and ordering events (Weick 1995; Rantakari & Vaara 2017). The entrepreneurial transformation, however, is understood as a critical 'change of order' within the organization, which requires narrative sensemaking (cf. Rhodes & Brown 2005), and by applying a narrative approach, I acknowledge the essence of language and storytelling in

contributing to the understanding of the organizational phenomenon (cf. Grant, Hardy, Oswick & Putnam 2004; Tsoukas 2005). Consequently, language is seen as constructing organizational reality, not just reflecting it (Hardy, Lawrence & Grant 2005), and narratives are seen to be created and supported through socially constructive processes that involve negotiation of meaning with different organizational stakeholders (Grant et al. 2004; Hardy & Phillips 2004).

A narrative mode of knowing, initially presented by Jerome Bruner (1986; 1990), is a widely quoted notion among narrative researchers (Czarniawska 2004). According to Bruner (1986), in contrast to the logico-scientific mode, the narrative form of knowledge holds the idea that the world is socially constructed and understood by means of language. Therefore, meanings are not considered static, but rather they are seen as being constantly created, changed and negotiated in social interactions (Weick 1993), as Denzin (1997, p. 5) describes it: '*Language and speech do not mirror experience: They create experience and in the process of creation constantly transform and defer that which is being described. The meanings of a subject's statements are, therefore, always in motion.*'

Review of the existing literature on narrative research exposes a wide diversity in defining a narrative (e.g. Riessman 2011; Riessman & Quinney 2005). Here, I take as a starting point Elliott's (2005, p. 3) proposition of a narrative: '*[It] can be understood to organize a sequence of events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its relation to that whole. In this way a narrative conveys the meaning of events.*' Even though there are conflicting views among researchers about what counts as a narrative, Elliott, then, relying on her above definition, has outlined three key features of a narrative: that they are *temporal*, *meaningful* and *social*. These features are intertwined in the sense that the meaning of events derives from both their temporal ordering and the social context in which the narrative is constructed (Elliot 2005; see also Hinchman & Hinchman 1997).

Temporality is perhaps one of the most often used attributes of a narrative. Accordingly, narrative is seen as a story that has a beginning, a middle and an end, and this chronology of events distinguishes a narrative from a description (Elliot 2005). The notion of plot is closely related to the temporality and sequentiality of narratives, and it is said to bring events into a meaningful whole (Polkinghorne 1988), as in '*Narrative creates its meaning by noting the contributions that actions and events make to a particular outcome and then configures these parts into a whole episode*' (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 6). Narratives are considered social in the sense that they are produced for a particular audience and in a particular situation (Elliott 2005). Many researchers have highlighted the importance of the context of the storying and the role of the listener in the construction of narratives (Gubrium & Holstein 1998;

Mishler 1986); some (Plummer 1995, p. 20) have gone as far as seeing stories as '*joint actions*'.

In narrative research, the terms *story* and *narrative* are often applied interchangeably (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 217), and though they have some differences, they are seen to have similarities, such as chronological order (Labov & Waletzky 1967) and thematic ordering of events (Czarniawska 1998).[16] Following Polkinghorne (1988), I understand stories and narratives as synonyms, and furthermore, storytelling refers to the act of narrating. For the sake of clarity, however, in Chapter 6, I use the term *story* to highlight the story format of the presentation, in that I provide stories about the study participants' sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university, in which the sensemaking takes place and unfolds as the stories go forward. In Chapter 7, then, the use of (meta)narrative refers to the interpretations derived from the sensemaking process as well as the structures and patterns that were detected therein.

4.1.3 On the social constructionist approach

Social constructionism or the social construction of reality can be thought of as a theoretical orientation that examines the development of a jointly constructed understanding of the world (Galbin 2014). Sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) introduced social constructionism in their widely known book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, in which they stated that '*reality is socially constructed*' (ibid, p. 13) and '*the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality*' (ibid, p. 15). They justified their scholarly interest in questions of 'reality' and 'knowledge' by their social relativity. Thus, social constructionism acknowledges that a single universal reality does not exist; instead, understanding the world depends on peoples' perceptions, connotations, emotions and motives about the world they live in (Dyson & Brown 2005). Fletcher (2006, p. 422) has a similar line of thought, and she says that social constructionism '*derives theoretically from the relationality between people, institutions, material objects, physical entities and language, rather than the private sense-making activity of particular individuals. As a result, we are encouraged to see our modes of description, explanation and representation as derived from relationship.*'

[16] To exemplify differences between a story and a narrative, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016, p. 217-218) mention the story of Adam and Eve. It can be seen as an example of a story shared in the Christian culture, whereas from the narrative perspective, the very same story can be used to construct a narrative that is told either from Adam's or Eve's point of view.

Social constructionism draws from a number of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, sociology and linguistics, which makes it multidisciplinary in nature – and ambiguous in definition (Burr 2015). The different disciplinary roots in social constructionism have led to differing perspectives, and Fletcher (2006) for example, makes a distinction between three variants of social constructionism: *social constructivism*, *social constructionism*, and *relational constructionism*. The differences between these variants lie in research interests and levels of analysis, positive versus critical views, and macro versus micro process analysis (Cunliffe 2008) as well as in their focus on explanatory structures (Fletcher 2006). Social constructivism stems from psychology with a focus on an individual's cognitive processes. Fletcher draws on the thought of Vygotsky (1981), Bruner (1990) and Gergen (1999) and explains that social constructivism is '*concerned with how individuals mentally construct their worlds with categories*' (Fletcher 2006, p. 426). The second variant, social constructionism, has its roots in sociology and particularly in the works of Berger and Luckman (1966) and Giddens (1984). It includes ideas of social structuration theory, and while individuals as social beings are still central, attention is drawn to social and cultural situatedness rather than cognitive aspects; thus the focus is on '*the interplay between agency and structure linking individual constructions of sense-making and enactment to the societal level through processes of structuration*' (Fletcher 2006, p. 427). The third variant in Fletcher's division is relational constructionism, which has multidisciplinary roots in sociology of knowledge, social phenomenology and cultural psychology. The focus of interest is on '*the relationality and co-ordinations between people and their text/contexts*' (ibid, p. 427). In addition to these different variants that Fletcher addresses, the field is variegated; constructionism and constructivism are used interchangeably, sometimes there is a prefix 'social', other times not, and generally, there are different emphases and foci of interest (Fletcher 2006).

According to Burr (2015), various distinctions in social constructionism are rather vague, and instead, she identifies four key assumptions of social constructionism and invites us to think as social constructionist any approach that accepts one or more of these assumptions. First, social constructionism takes a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, and awakes for discussion, urging us '*to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world*' (ibid, p. 2). In a social constructionist view, it is assumed that the world does not present itself objectively to the observer; rather, it is relational and mediated by language. Second, social constructionism argues that the ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts in language that we use, are historically and culturally specific, that is, they are understood at a particular time and in a particular

place. Burr (2015, p. 4) characterizes the specificity aptly: '*This means that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Not only are they specific to particular cultures and periods of history, they are products of that culture and history, dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time. The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better, in terms of being any nearer the truth, than other ways.*' Third, in social constructionism, social processes sustain knowledge, and therefore, all kinds of social interaction, language particularly, is of great interest to researchers of that tenet. '*Therefore, what we regard as truth, which of course varies historically and cross-culturally, may be thought of as our current accepted ways of understanding the world. These are a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other*' (ibid, p. 5). Finally, knowledge and action go together in social constructionism (Burr 1995; 2015; see also Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 21). Following Burr's (2015) proposition to interpret social constructionism as a wider orientation, instead of making distinctions between the various perspectives in it, I use the term *social constructionism,* and in so doing, I take notice of Burr's assumptions of the relation to knowledge and the phenomenon researched.

In entrepreneurship research, the social constructionist approach is increasingly being used to balance the dominance of functionalist and positivist approaches (Refai, Klapper & Thompson 2015; Pittaway, Aïssaoui & Fox 2018), and it is assumed to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship research through opening up possibilities for the inclusion of new theoretical fields and methodological approaches. In addition, it is argued that the lack of explicit discussion on underlying basic assumptions in mainstream entrepreneurship research – of a deductive, quantitative, hypothesis-testing paradigm – tends to imply an un-reflective and taken-for-granted attitude to the hidden claims and perspectives that follow the use of these methodologies (Lindgren & Packendorff 2009).

In this study, the social constructionist view with a focus on individuals generating meaning together in order to construct their organization is seen to provide a fresh approach in investigating the entrepreneurial university (cf. Camargo-Borges & Rasera 2013).

4.1.4 A few words about subjectivity, reflexivity and the researcher in me

Hardly ever is research truly objective, especially in social sciences. I am not a *tabula rasa* in my exploration; I cannot ignore my background as an entrepreneurship scholar, nor can I forget my experiences working in a university; rather, my

theoretical and practical pre-understandings have an influence – either consciously or unconsciously – on how and why I study entrepreneurship in the university in the manner that I do. In other words, my prior knowledge and experiences are an inseparable part of me as a researcher; in fact, they have made me sensitive to some issues and possibly ignorant of others whilst I study a university becoming entrepreneurial. Therefore, transparency is needed, and I use reflexivity as a tool to acknowledge my subjectivity. According to Elliot (2005, p. 153), reflexivity refers to '*the tendency critically to examine and analytically to reflect upon the nature of research and the role of the researcher in carrying out and writing up empirical work*'. Thus, from the methodological point of view, the notion of reflexivity means '*awareness of the identity, or self, of the researcher within the research process*' (ibid, p. 153). Consequently, admitting the influence of my pre-understandings and subjectivity, I have tried to reflect carefully and consciously on what I know and how I know it throughout the research. Apart from the continuous reflexivity, which I have attempted to convey in my writing, the following paragraphs will shortly present where I come from as a researcher in order to establish an understanding of the 'researcher in me'.

To begin with, I am a daughter of an entrepreneur and a wife of one. My dad, nowadays retired, used to run a machine workshop for a number of years and I am married to a serial entrepreneur[17]. For most of my life, therefore, I have been strongly exposed to entrepreneurship; I have seen the everyday practice of a small and medium-sized machine workshop that employed dozens of workers and was a significant subcontractor for large engineering corporations and later for shipyards, as well as the creation and management of small, knowledge-intensive businesses. In addition to the experiences in the family, I am academically involved in entrepreneurship. Most recently, I have been studying entrepreneurship as a PhD candidate, and before that, I taught entrepreneurship in the university, mainly to undergraduates, but also in adult and continuous education. In addition, I have been a participant in numerous national and international research and development consortiums in the field of entrepreneurship. Surely, I did not start my exploration in the dark, and the research topic, for example, stems from my desire to understand the essence of entrepreneurship, which, as I have come to know, is a complex phenomenon. Having been involved in the entrepreneurship realm in academia for so long, I found it meaningful to explore the phenomenon in the university context.

[17] I have followed the definition of Westhead and Wright (1998) and Westhead, Ucbasaran and Wright (2005) stating that serial entrepreneurs are repeat business starters who sell or close down their business but later inherit, establish, and/or purchase another business. Another group of habitual entrepreneurs are portfolio entrepreneurs, who simultaneously manage two or more independent businesses.

In fact, in recent years, universities have undergone several structural and functional changes, and consequently, they are considered to be moving towards being more enterprising. Entrepreneurship is gaining a firmer toehold in many strategies, practices, and processes of the university (Jarvis 2013; Siegel & Wright 2015), and the concept of the entrepreneurial university (e.g. Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 1998) has been introduced here and there. I became interested in the idea of becoming entrepreneurial, and I wanted to know how it is constructed and understood within the university.

Based on appropriateness, practicality, and accessibility of the research site, I decided to conduct the research in my home university, which has a particular strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship. I present the context of the research site in more detail elsewhere in this study (see chapter 5.2), and here I only briefly point out my familiarity with the university. Our common journey goes back to 1995, when I entered the university as a first-year student in sociology. Even as an undergraduate, I did some casual jobs in the business school, and after graduation, I went there full-time. Since then, I have worked in various academic positions in the university and most recently, have also been engaged in promoting entrepreneurship in the university.

My involvement in the university characterizes this work as a backyard study (Glesne 1999, p. 26-27), endogenous research (Trowler 2011) or, as most commonly stated, insider research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Hellawell 2006; Trowler 2011). Insider research is considered a legitimate alternative in an organizational research context (Brannick & Coghlan 2007), especially when aiming at understanding multiple voices and subjectivities, and it fits with the interpretivist research that is concerned with interpreting meanings produced by members of a social group (Brannick & Coghlan 2007). The role of an insider in a research project is seen to have both advantages and disadvantages (Peura et al. 2021). The former are attached to, for example easier access to the informants and a better chance to develop closer relationships with the informants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007, p. 168-170; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 59; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle 2009). The disadvantages, then, are related to a possible confusion of what I actually know (or think that I know) about the phenomenon and what can be known based on the research material (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 60). I have utilized my insider role in the identification and selection of the study participants. I opted for a purposive sampling, in which I took advantage of my knowledge, experience and contacts in reaching appropriate participants. Obviously, there are a lot of assumptions and prejudices involved, and while I consider my insider role an advantage in the selection process as well as in conducting the group discussions, I have put a lot of emphasis on opening up and reflecting on these (see chapters 4.2.4

and 5.1 for the selection process and 4.2.5 for conducting the discussions; in addition, I discuss the possible limitations of the method in chapter 4.4).

Based on my theoretical knowledge and experience of the complexity and ambiguity of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon, I wanted to challenge the somewhat taken-for-granted assumption of the positive influence of entrepreneurship, which I have noticed to be prevalent in entrepreneurial university research. Taken from another angle, I have also noticed that there are sceptical voices towards entrepreneurship in the university context. However, instead of attempting to deny neither the positive nor the negative interpretations, I wanted to consider both and provide more perspectives, particularly from the space in between, to the current discussion. Even though a neutral position for a researcher is typically considered an advantage, I did not keep my moderately critical stance hidden when I was interacting with the study participants – quite the contrary, and I assume it provided a substrate for tensions, paradoxes and ambiguities around entrepreneurship in the university context to come forth spontaneously.

Finally, I have intentionally used the personal pronoun *I* on the pages of this thesis. This is a widely adopted convention among qualitative researchers; however, in the following lines, I will briefly open up what I aim at with such a decision. Firstly, it is a matter to bring forth my authority over this research (Hyland 2002), in particular, about the decisions and preferences that I have made during this process. In so doing, I have tried to convey a more personal process – that of mine as a researcher – intertwined with the process of doing research. Secondly, it highlights the inescapable subjectivist epistemology of interpretive research, that the researcher is an inseparable part of her work and an essential instrument, so to speak. My pre-understandings and prejudices have influenced this research along the way, I have been involved in the data creation, and the findings are based on my interpretation – had there been another researcher with a different background and experiences, the process and the outcome would look different from this one. Apart from the authority and engagement shown by the use of the first-person pronoun, reflexivity unfolds in writing myself into these pages, thus contributing to the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba 1985) of the study, which I will discuss in more detail later (see chapter 8.4.1). Furthermore, drawing from Van Maanen (1988) and his analysis of different approaches to writing about (ethnographic) research, I have tried to follow loosely what he calls an impressionist research tale, a research account in which the idea is to '*evoke an open, participatory sense in the viewer*' (ibid, p. 103). In other words, by providing a rich texture of details, characters and issues under discussion, I invite the reader to interpret the negotiation and construction of an entrepreneurial university together with the study participants and me.

Finding my own voice as a researcher was a relatively long process. In the beginning, the writing was quite monotonous, and my voice was hidden somewhere

behind all the literature that I was reading and assimilating. As my knowledge advanced and I ventured to unleash my scientific imagination, the 'researcher in me' grew stronger and I was able to establish my own voice. In the end, I felt fairly comfortable in writing and reflecting from the position that I did – that is, a qualitative researcher who admits and reflects upon the influence of her pre-understandings and prejudices when conducting insider research in a university that is in a process of becoming entrepreneurial.

4.2 Acquiring research material

4.2.1 Combining social and individual – group discussion for collecting material

I chose a group as a unit of material collection based on its appropriateness to generate suitable material concerning my research question. In my study, a group setting was especially appropriate, because it served as access to participants' own language, concepts and concerns, offering an opportunity to seize the particular terminology, idioms and vocabulary the participants typically used (Wilkinson 1998, p. 180-181). Thus, it provided authenticity in unfolding the process of an entrepreneurial university sensemaking. Typically, an interviewer has less control over the conversation in a group (Wilkinson 1998, p. 180-181; 2004, p. 181; Koskinen, Alasuutari & Peltonen 2005, p. 124), because the participants react not only to the questions addressing the topic at hand that are initiated by the interviewer, but they also talk to each other. Thus, a group interaction enables participants to react and build on each other's contribution, resulting in a more elaborate description or even unexpected insights, which are not that common in individual interviews (Wilkinson 1998, p. 188-189; Wilkinson 2004, p. 180). This might also decrease a possible bias in the set of questions generated by the researcher (Koskinen et al. 2005, p. 124). In addition, a group setting is said to encourage the production of more fully articulated accounts in both extent and detail. Participants tend to tell personal details, express stronger views and opinions in a group; they also elaborate their perceptions more explicitly with respect to other members of the group. The method is considered especially appropriate when studying how different views are constructed and how they are expressed. (Puchta & Potter 2004.) Finally, groups offer an opportunity '*to observe the process of collective sensemaking in action*' because they let the researcher see how views and perceptions are constructed, expressed, defended, and possibly modified in the course of discussion (Wilkinson 1998, p. 190-193).

A group setting in data collection has increased in popularity among social sciences since the 1990s. Certainly, one reason for the rapid growth is its flexibility

in terms of conducting data collection (Morgan 2002, p. 141-142; Wilkinson 2004, p. 177-178). There are also other advantages over the one-to-one interview, such as effectiveness in collecting data from a large number of participants, and more importantly, the realistic nature of conversation; group settings often include storytelling, joking, arguing, persuasion, disagreement and other elements of everyday communication (Wilkinson 2004, p. 180-181).

There are several definitions and variations for a group setting (Morgan 2002, p. 141). In my study, it is a means for collecting qualitative material, which involves engaging a small number of participants in an informal group discussion focused on a particular topic (e.g. Wilkinson 2004, p. 177; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 183), with an assumption that sensemaking is produced collectively in the course of social interaction between the participants (Wilkinson 1998, p. 186). I applied the term *group discussion* instead of group interview or focus group interview to emphasize the informal and conversational nature of the group setting and further, my interest in group interaction and social dynamics. Similarly, I call myself a *facilitator* instead of an interviewer to address my position rather as a peer moderating the discussion and at the same time participating (as a colleague) in the construction of the entrepreneurial university.

It is often argued that the interaction between participants is salient in a group discussion (Morgan 1996, p. 129-130; Puchta & Potter 2004). Albeit the social interaction was not my primary concern per se, a group setting provides one more dimension in understanding the construction of becoming entrepreneurial. Accordingly, it allows me to take into account the social interaction between the participants, e.g., how they react to each other's views, comments and questions, how they form comprehension between differing understandings and how they build shared constructions (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 185). Therefore, I consider it generates richer and more accurate information on the construction of the phenomenon than do individual, sequential encounters. The material produced in a group is more than a sum of individual positions; it is rather '*a product of collective interactions*' (Mangold 1960 in Bohnsack 2004, p. 215), which is brought out during the discussion. In other words, the group discussion, as a social occasion, forms joint and shared constructions, which are jointly elaborated from individual opinions.

Methodology literature (e.g. Wilkinson 2004, p. 179; Morgan 2002, p. 151; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 188-189) emphasizes the moderator's important role when collecting material in a group setting. Besides the same skills involved in one-to-one interviewing, the group setting is more sensitive to social interaction and the moderator is presumed to encourage the quieter participants and discourage the more talkative ones to enable full participation in the discussion, though it is not expected that everyone is asked the same questions or to contribute similarly (Wilkinson 2004, p. 179). I was prepared to intervene in the discussion, if some

participants were to dominate too much. In addition, I had a number of follow-up questions that I could ask the quieter participants directly to invite them to contribute.

The group setting has been criticized for being less natural than an individual interview; it seems more staged and highlights the role of a moderator in directing the discussion (Morgan 2002, p. 150-151). The dynamics within a group might generate such tension between the participants that some are reluctant to contribute or the opinion of some may be too much affected by others, possibly the more dominant members of the group (Koskinen et al. 2005, p. 124). Groups might also generate more critical views than individuals would (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 189), as faults and sensitive topics seem to be easier to discuss in a group (Wilkinson 2004, p. 180). Bearing these in mind, I prepared myself to facilitate an informal group discussion in a comfortable manner to keep the discussion flowing and enabling everyone talk freely and participate equally.

4.2.2 An unstructured interview to elicit the study participants' reality

Among Silverman's (2010, p. 190-191) typology attached to different types of research problems, which consists of positivist, emotionalist and constructionist models for interview studies, I applied a constructionist view, in which the focus is on meaning production during the interview between the interviewer and the interviewees (Silverman 2010, p. 191; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 92). This relates to what Holstein and Gubrium (2004) call an active interview, highlighting the activeness in interviewing and emphasizing the interview as a site and occasion for meaning making, not only as one-way data collection, but two-way data creation (Holstein & Gubrium 2004), which influences both parties in the interview (Neergaard & Leitch 2015, p. 4).

My interest in storytelling directed the inquiry; therefore, I employed an interview which resembled everyday conversation and was very informal in nature, and hence, produced rich and abundant research material. Such unstructured interviews are said to be especially appropriate within the interpretivist research paradigm, with an objective of gaining an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon from the perspectives of those experiencing it (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). There are several terms referring to unstructured interviews, and these are used interchangeably in the methodology literature, such as conversational (Neergaard & Leitch 2015, p. 8), open (Flick 2002), narrative (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 220), in-depth or ethnographic interviews (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). Even though the definitions of an unstructured interview are various, common to all is the concern with lived experience and allowing space to narrating uninterruptedly (Neergaard & Leitch 2015, p. 8). Hence, the focus is on the '*direct*

description of a particular situation or event as it is lived through without offering causal explanations or interpretive generalizations' (Adams & Van Manen 2008, p. 618). The objective is to obtain the interviewees' views and experiences as clearly as possible and in their own words (Neergaard & Leitch 2015, p. 8) in order to gain their perspective in the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 59).

The usage of open-ended questions is said to work well in eliciting narratives (Riessman 1993; Squire 2008) because it allows approaching the study participants' experience world in a more comprehensive way (Flick 2002). In addition, Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) argue that imposing too much structure on the interview limits the interviewee's responses, resulting in a less complete understanding of the researched phenomenon. Therefore, loosely following the logic of an unstructured interview method, instead of using a predefined list of structured interview questions, I had only four core themes to cover the topic of my interest:[18] 1) entrepreneurship and university, 2) entrepreneurship promotion, 3) entrepreneurship on a personal level, and 4) the future of the entrepreneurial university. Within each theme, the study participants were free to build a conversation, and I encouraged them to discuss openly and to formulate their stories from their own perspective, but I was also able to ask follow-up questions for clarification or elaboration on what was said and meant. Hence, though the study participants were the focus, I too had an active role in the production of stories (Elliot 2005), and the group discussions as whole were a joint meaning making, sense making and co-construction of understanding by the study participants and me (Neergaard & Leitch 2015, p. 7).

Unstructured interviews also provided opportunities for more spontaneous interaction between the study participants. They were given plenty of room both to react to each other's utterances and to start with issues that they found worth sharing with the others. Sometimes I employed narrative-pointed questions, which are open-ended and can focus on a specific event or cover a longer period of time (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 220). As an example, I started the discussions with an unstructured invitation to contribute to the topic at hand by saying '*Let's talk about entrepreneurship in university – how do you perceive it? Can you give me some examples, please?'* Such a loose start was intentional; instead of giving a definition for entrepreneurship or pointing a specific event that would interconnect entrepreneurship and university; I let the study participants to decide on how to talk. At times, I took a more active role in the production of stories and through my own

[18] In an ideal unstructured interview, the interviewer follows the interviewee's narration and reacts spontaneously in that narration. Sometimes, an aide memoire or agenda (Briggs 1999) – a broad guide to issues that might be covered in the interview – is used. The use of an aide memoire brings consistency to the series of interview sessions, hence balancing between flexibility and consistency (cf. Zhang & Wildemuth 2009).

storying concerning entrepreneurship in the university, I encouraged others to formulate their own stories. Such a setting is largely dependent on what the study participants say and how they talk – in addition, it is likely to produce insights and topics that were not expected (cf. Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). This means that every group discussion is unique, and as such, very valuable. In fact, the diversity of the group discussions surprised me; surely, I did expect variation on many levels – indeed, that was the initial idea in selecting the study participants, but still, it came a bit as a surprise to me that each discussion really was both unique and alike.

Besides the advantages of the unstructured interview discussed above, there are also challenges in the method. For instance, compared to more structured interview techniques, the researcher has less control over the interview; if the discussion gets side-tracked, it might be challenging to decide how and when to intervene and pull the discussion back on track (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). Another challenge concerns data analysis, because the interviews are contextual; multiple conversations generate different questions, resulting in a variety of responses, requiring special attention to analyse the data systematically and to find patterns within it (cf. Patton 2014).

In my opinion, an unstructured, open interview served its purpose well. It produced spontaneous stories and provided rich and polyphonic material from the study participants' perspectives to delve into the intertwinement of storytelling and sensemaking in becoming an entrepreneurial university.

4.2.3 Setting boundaries with the existing material of university management

Prior to the fieldwork, I had an opportunity to utilize research material that was collected within another project (ACE – Academic Entrepreneurship as a social process; for details, see chapter 1.3). The full research material was extensive, but the part that I exploited consisted of ten interviews with the university management covering the topic of academic entrepreneurship. The research material served as an introduction and a familiarization; it gave me good insight into the ways in which entrepreneurship is understood as a phenomenon and a strategic component at the university management level.

Based on the research material, the role of entrepreneurship is mainly instrumental and it seems to be a byword reflecting the zeitgeist: that a modern university is assumed to be entrepreneurial and engaged with the surrounding environment. Accordingly, entrepreneurship was presumed to strengthen the university in its role as a contributor to innovation and technological development, and from a more concrete viewpoint, to prepare the students better for a changing working life and improve their employability in the uncertain future.

As a conclusion, the university management gave a picture of entrepreneurship from afar; it was discussed predominantly through policies, processes and the strategy of the university, giving an administrative flavour and an arms' length perspective to the phenomenon. The top-down directionality and the strategic vocabulary of the university management seemed distant from the actual activities and practices. I preferred the 'real stuff' to the 'management speak' – though with the interpretative approach I was not after 'the truth' as such – and therefore I decided to turn to the university personnel in a wider scope and exclude the management level from my research. In addition, my focus on university employees is in juxtaposition to the mainstream. The existing research on organizational change tends to have a narrow perspective; it primarily focuses on the meanings the management constructs during the change, leaving aside the employee perspective. In addition, if the employee perspective is considered, the typically limited focus on positive and negative meanings of change makes common a narrative in which employees resist change and managers try to overcome employee resistance. (cf. Sonenshein 2010.) I consider the strategic side that was detected in the management interviews as one of many attached to the entrepreneurial transformation, and I argue that the grass roots perspective might better capture the complexity and diversity of the phenomenon, adding to the understanding of the construction of an entrepreneurial university.

4.2.4 Identifying and reaching the study participants

My identification and selection strategy for the study participants was based on *purposeful sampling* (Patton 1990, p. 169), or *purposive sampling* (Silverman 2010, p. 141), because I focused on information-rich study participants serving the purpose of the research project. Patton (1990, p. 169-181), for example, has classified different sampling strategies for selecting informants purposefully. Amongst those, I applied an *intensity sampling*, in which the sample consists of rich examples of the phenomenon of interest. The idea is that I used my knowledge, experience and contacts in identifying appropriate study participants. In addition, I discussed the criteria and preferences with my supervisor along the way.

I knew that attitudes towards entrepreneurship are not homogeneous across the university. Based on my personal experience and countless discussions with colleagues and other university personnel, I had realized that entrepreneurship is an ambiguous and complex theme in the university context (and therefore, extremely interesting for a researcher). Bearing in mind the ambiguity, I set three criteria in choosing the study participants. Firstly, they were to 'have something to say' about entrepreneurship. In the beginning, I thought that due to the university's recent strategic commitment to entrepreneurship, a majority of the university personnel

certainly would have opinions, positions and perceptions concerning entrepreneurship in the university. Another mitigation was my interpretative approach; I was not interested in facts or figures, but rather assumptions, views and positions that university personnel attached to entrepreneurship in the university context, which I considered to reduce the requirement of both actual and factual knowledge about entrepreneurship.

When further assessing the appropriateness and accessibility of the study participants, I decided to put more weight on familiarity with entrepreneurship and therefore directed my attention especially to university personnel with a known exposure to, experience of or opinion about entrepreneurship. I expected this to increase an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship in order to contribute adequately to the group discussion. I realize that such adjustment may have excluded some interpretations that exist or emerge among university personnel, but at the same time, it enhances and validates the 'researchability' of the topic. The participants' ability and motivation to discuss the matter increases if there is a resonance or an overlap of some sort with their experience or interest, hence the topic seems relevant and meaningful to them, too.

Secondly, I was looking for variation to capture the heterogeneity of opinions and perceptions about entrepreneurship. In addition, I wanted to give space for diverse, possibly challenging and less mainstream views of entrepreneurship in the university. Even though I was not aiming at an all-embracing representation of social construction of entrepreneurship in the university, I wanted to unfold the process in its multiplicity by providing varied snapshots and reflections across the university, and therefore, I thought heterogeneous groups were a necessity. To ensure heterogeneity, I thought about variation in the exposure to entrepreneurship, geography of the university, representation of different fields of science and personnel categories as well as some typical background information. Finally, I left space for unpredictable discovery, and therefore, I decided to ignore the above issues in the composition of one group.

Thirdly, the group setting and my desire for rich and abundant storytelling required an ability to narrate and discuss the subject matter extensively (Warren 2002). As Morse (1986 in Morse 1994, p. 228) points out, good informants should have the ability to reflect and articulate on the matter of interest and be willing to spend the requisite time in the discussion. Because all of the study participants have an academic education, holding either a master's or a doctoral degree, I expected that they were able to produce high-level linguistic material by expressing their thoughts, experiences and views verbally in the group discussion. Furthermore, many academics have experience in verbal activities; they are used to giving lectures, talks and keynote presentations as well as directing other conversational functions,

hence I trusted that in general, the study participants were able to produce rich and thick enough material (Patton 1990, p. 181) for my research.

Initially, my standpoint for the selection strategy was rather structural, and I planned to visit all faculties of the university to collect research material. Certainly, within the different faculties, I would have recognized various perceptions and experiences of entrepreneurship, but that would have been too obvious a categorization. After all, entrepreneurship is both a multidisciplinary and an interdisciplinary phenomenon, which should be taken into account also in the exploration.

In accordance with the above-discussed criteria, I outlined six groups with appropriate characteristics. They were not groups per se, but university personnel with some particular commonalities, and thus, for the purpose of my research, considered an assortment to the group discussions. They were heterogeneous in terms of their exposure to entrepreneurship, field of science, job description, position at the university and gender. I expected such an assortment to bring forth the ambivalence attached to entrepreneurship in the university, and therefore, to advance my understanding about the multiple ways in which entrepreneurship is constructed within the university. Some of the identified study participants were my acquaintances and colleagues, and I knew about their varied exposure to entrepreneurship and ability to reflect their stance, which I assumed would increase an adequate level of knowledge, alteration and depth in the discussions, which is considered a good position for a group discussion (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 186). Furthermore, within the groups, many participants were familiar with each other, which I assumed would ensure a comfortable and confidential atmosphere to discuss and reflect on the topic freely.

I contacted the study participants by sending them e-mail invitations. I purposely over-invited participants to the group discussions in order to have a reasonable number of attendees and to make sure that in case of a sudden cancellation, the number of participants would remain sufficient. In the invitation, the purpose and the expected duration of the group discussion as well as the objective of my PhD thesis were briefly introduced, and the nature of my research was highlighted in such a way that the participants understood that they were not expected to 'know' or have facts about the subject matter. On the contrary, I emphasized that they were to participate the group discussion as they were, without any preliminaries and that everyone's contribution was equally valued.

Even though the number of study participants is seldom a relevant issue in qualitative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 89), I expected that six groups – each with a specific emphasis and a good number of participants – would provide rich and meaningful material, that is, to manifest intensely (Patton 1990, p. 171) how an entrepreneurial university is constructed within the university. In addition,

concordant to the purposeful sampling strategy, I had an opportunity to invite more groups, if necessary, as the research unfolded (Neergaard 2007, p. 259), but I never did because the research material turned out to be sufficient.

4.2.5 Interacting in groups

I organized six group discussions to collect material for my research. The following sessions overlapped with the transcribing of previous sessions on purpose, because I wanted to benefit from the intensity and involvement as the experience was still fresh: each encounter advanced both my understanding of the construction of the entrepreneurial university and my sensitivity in conducting the group discussions. Among the six groups, the number of participants varied from two to five, which is considered an appropriate count (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 186; Syrjälä & Numminen 1988, p. 105) to keep the discussion flow and to enable everyone to participate in a group setting. In two groups, there were cancellations just before the group discussion, and with such short notice, instead of trying to recruit substitutes, I decided to proceed with the remaining number of participants. The group discussions lasted around three hours, and they were all recorded with the consent of the study participants. I had included the assumed duration of the group discussions in the invitation letters, so that invitees could take into account the relatively long time that I was booking when they pondered their participation. The participants were very committed to this study. In only one group, two participants, due to their other duties, had to leave before we finished the discussion. In the remaining groups, all participants were in attendance during the whole session.

At the beginning of each group discussion, there was a brief recap of the purpose of the study and a reminder of the desire for a conversational interaction among the study participants. Afterwards, a short introduction round took place; sometimes, it was just a quick stating of names and positions in the university, whereas at other times, it turned out to be a lengthier familiarization discussion. Oftentimes, however, the study participants got to know each other better in the course of discussion, as they referred to their families, residences, preferences and other personal issues when they talked about entrepreneurship in the university.

Group discussion can include tasks such as telling a story or drawing a picture (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 189). In my study, each group discussion started with an informal brainstorming session, during which the study participants were invited to talk freely and spontaneously about entrepreneurship and the university, and at the same time, to generate words and wordings on Post-it notes that they associated and connected with those two concepts (brainstorming sessions are discussed in more detail in chapter 5.3). The outcome of the brainstorming, a jointly

generated mind map, was reviewed and exploited during the group discussion that followed.

I motivated myself to fill the role of a facilitator who gives plenty of room to the study participants and tries her best to make the sessions relaxed and comfortable for extensive, unrestricted and equal discussion. In the fieldwork, I grew in my role to be a reflexive, sensitive and committed facilitator, who intervened in the discussion – sometimes intuitively and at times, more purposefully. I tried not to express my opinions and perceptions too much or avidly. Sometimes, I contributed to the discussion by reflecting on some of my personal experiences or by sharing information about activities related to entrepreneurship in the university. This way, I signalled that I was not a random, anonymous researcher coming from outside academia, but an informed peer who shared the experience of the same university and, at the same time, conducts research. Indeed, in qualitative research, it is often anticipated that in order to include the informants' perspective and voice in the research, the distance between the researcher and the informants is to be kept short (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 59). In my research, it can be assumed that employment in the same organization, sharing a similar praxis of everyday working life in academia, and an experience of the recent promotion of entrepreneurship in the university nurtured the experienced closeness between the study participants and myself as a researcher (and a peer).

Even though the general setting followed the same schema in every group discussion – a researcher invited the study participants to discuss a designated theme – each session was different and unique. The groups comprised people with varied backgrounds, knowledge and motivations; they reacted to each other, the situation, subject matter, and me in various ways. One group, for example, ended up with a shared and collective story of the entrepreneurial university; their discussion around the topic was wordy and rambling, and there was much humour involved. Another group with only two participants had a tighter focus on the topic of my research, and in their discussion, they especially brought forth the perspective of teaching and education. A third group took practical advantage of the gathering, and while they talked about the given topic of entrepreneurship in the university, they tossed around ideas about collaboration possibilities in terms of entrepreneurship promotion.

I too had an influence on, and I was influenced by, the sessions; my pre-understanding of and assumptions about each group generated expectations and therefore directed my attention. In addition, every group discussion advanced and deepened my knowledge and understanding, which had an effect on me as both a researcher and a facilitator of the group discussions; though I was the same, I was different, too. For example, in the first group discussion, I tried to cover all the core themes and keep the chronological order that I had prepared for but realized afterwards that if the participants discussed only entrepreneurship and the university,

I had worthwhile research material. Therefore, with the following groups, I did not mind if all the themes were not fully covered or the flow of discussion followed a different path that I had in my mind. In another group discussion, I let the group meander freely around issues that I had not even brought up. In the analysis, I realized that what seemed like an arbitrary sidetrack in the discussion turned out to be important; when a discussant expressed wordily his frustration over the recent (ill-conceived) structural changes in their faculty, he was also implicitly criticizing the university about its change management. He doubted that the university had capacity to execute its entrepreneurship strategy.

Tolerating silence is an important ability for a researcher conducting an interview (Qu & Dumay 2011), especially in a group setting. There is a lot of social import in silence: who gets to talk first, who gives others a say, and does someone try to talk over others? In fact, it is suggested that in order to look for the implicit meanings of respondents, researchers should acknowledge silence, too, not only the spoken words (Charmaz 2002; 2004). By every group discussion, I got more and more used to silence; in silent moments, I learned to wait before rushing in with a comment or a question. I noticed that silence was often an important marker, sometimes a new topic emerged, or there was a return to something unfinished or a summing of a previous theme. At times, I interpreted silence as a call for my intervention – to dig deeper, to even the study participants' contribution or to move on to the next theme. In one group discussion, the participants started to ask me about the university's entrepreneurship strategy, and another group invited me to join the speculation about the new rector and his possible views about entrepreneurship. In both situations, I gave up my assumed objectivity (as a researcher) and discussed the matters as a peer.

4.3 Solving the puzzle

4.3.1 Arranging material and orientation to analysis

After each group discussion, I made some notes about my impressions of the session, observations about the flow of discussion and interactions between the participants. Such practice is recommended (see e.g. Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 192) because general feeling about the group is still fresh in memory, and these experiences can be reflected on to enhance the following group discussions. I also utilized these notes later in the analysis of the research material. My general perception of the discussions was very positive, I felt that the study participants were committed to the discussions and contributed well. I was excited about the diversity of the research material, and my enthusiasm grew as the material accumulated. I noticed that there were both general and unique elements in the ways in which the groups constructed their understanding about entrepreneurship, the university and

their interplay. These provided many interesting avenues for investigating the sensemaking of an entrepreneurial university.

I understand transcription rather as a part of the analytic process than a separate, mechanical task that takes place prior to the analysis (Silverman 2006; Elliott 2005, p. 51). Therefore, I found it crucial to transcribe the audio tapes into text by myself and in close temporal relation to the group discussions. The transcription took place soon after each discussion, and it was exact and punctual, resulting in 180 pages of transcriptions in total. In addition to the verbatim transcription, I made notes about social interaction in the groups, and for example, laughter, smiles, sneers, and (long) pauses as well as talking on top each other were recorded. The volume of the transcriptions varied according to the length of the group discussions: the shortest session resulted in 15 pages while the longest discussion amounted to 50 pages. Besides the transcription, I made reflections in the margins (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 66-67) regarding my interpretations of emerging themes and interaction between the participants.

Following the group discussions, the transcription phase was the first time I really interacted with my research material; it threw me right back to the field, but with a more analytical lens. Quite obviously, I had focused on the actual situation (that is: being worried about technical issues and time constraints, wondering whether or not I should intervene in the discussion and whether the group would interact properly) during the group discussions, and the transcriptions revealed some interesting issues, patterns and structures in the meaning making and negotiation of the entrepreneurial university that I had not even noticed at the time. For instance, the narratives included a number of accounts in which the study participants gave lively examples of their own experiences when talking about entrepreneurship in the university context. Such telling provided plenty of story-like accounts, which I considered fruitful for the analysis. Another discovery was the ambiguity around entrepreneurship; the study participants understood entrepreneurship differently and connotations thereof were varied, to say the least.

4.3.2 The setting of the analysis

In all honesty, finding an appropriate method of analysis was one of the most demanding tasks in my research process. With the given research question and the consequent open interview strategy that I applied in the data collection, as well as my interest in storytelling, I essentially turned to narrative analysis. However, as many may understand, focusing on narrative methodology does not necessarily ease the pain of methodological ambivalence, since narrative analysis is rather a complex family of approaches to different kinds of texts with a storied form (cf. Riessman 2008). Despite many scholars' extensive work on developing narrative

methodologies (e.g. Riessman 1993; Elliot 2005), to date, '*there is no single narrative method, but rather a multitude of different ways in which researchers can engage with the narrative properties of their data*' (Elliott 2005, p. 37). At the end of the day, my analysis turned out to be an interesting, yet intensive, arduous and messy process, which makes use of several techniques and ideas that are used in narrative research. Before opening up my analysis any deeper, let me first discuss my position and choices within the broad realm of narrative analysis. In the chapter that then follows, I will describe my analysis in a more detailed manner (see chapter 4.3.3).

According to Riessman (1993), narrative analysis takes the story as its object of investigation, and the purpose is to see how storytellers make sense of the events and actions in their lives. Polkinghorne (1995) defines narrative analysis in a similar vein, as the use of stories to describe human action. Literature suggests different classifications and typologies to elucidate the multitude of various approaches, methods and techniques under the broad umbrella of narrative analysis (Elliott 2005).

Polkinghorne (1995), for example, makes a distinction between two forms of narrative analysis based on Bruner's (1986) modes of thought. In the dichotomy, the *paradigmatic mode* has a focus on '*good theory, tight analysis, logical proof, sound argument, and empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypothesis*', whereas the *narrative mode* is concerned with '*the particulars of experience and to locate the experience in time and place*' (Bruner 1986, p. 13). Polkinghorne (1995, p. 12) extended Bruner's work by introducing two types of narrative inquiry: *paradigmatic analysis of narratives* and *narrative analysis*. The difference between these types of inquiry lies in the treatment of the data and the data analysis procedures. When performing paradigmatic analysis of narratives, the data consist of stories and narratives, and the analysis, moving from stories to common elements or themes, concerns plots, narrative structures and story types. Thus the focus is on narrative as a form of representation. In narrative analysis, by contrast, the data consist of actions, events, and happenings, and the analysis uses plot to tie the data together as narratives, thus the focus is on narrative as a mode of analysis. (Polkinghorne 1995; see also Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016.) Oliver (1998) distinguishes these two approaches further by pointing out that the strength of paradigmatic analysis is its capacity to develop general knowledge, yet it can be abstract and formal, whereas narrative analysis allows for insights and understanding about those being studied.

Another often-cited categorization for understanding the different approaches to narrative analysis is based on Mishler's (1995) typology of the three different functions of language: *meaning*, *structure* and *interactional context* (Elliott 2005; Riessman 2008). Accordingly, the approach with a focus on the meaning of language has an analytical interest in the *content* of the narrative, by posing a question of 'what

is told'. In this approach, language is seen as a resource rather than a topic of investigation, thus, themes – what is being spoken – are analysed and the story is organized around these themes. However, as many researchers have pointed out, the narrative forms are important meaning-making structures, hence these should be kept, not fractured (Riessman 2008). In the next approach, then, the analytical emphasis shifts towards the telling, with a focus on the way a story is told – the *structure* of the narrative, that is. In this way, both the 'what' and 'how' become central in the analysis, as Riessman (2008, p. 3) states: '*Although thematic content does not slip away, focus is equally on form – how a teller by selecting particular narrative devices makes a story persuasive.*' In this approach, thus, language is investigated closely and the analysis also goes beyond its content. A well-known framework in this respect is a structural model of narratives by Labov and Waletzky (1967). Many advocate the model, and Riessman (1993), for example, argues that by starting with the focus on the structure and form of the narrative, researchers can avoid the risk of seeing only the content. However, context matters, too, and as we know, storytelling does not happen in a vacuum (nor does sensemaking, for that matter). The *interactional context* approach emphasizes the co-constructed and co-narrated nature of narratives (Elliott 2005). In the interactional analysis, attention to thematic content and narrative structure are not discarded; rather, the analytical interest shifts towards storytelling as a process of co-construction, in which the teller and the listener are assumed to create meaning together (Riessman 2008).

Now, it should be restated, as with all typologies, that these frameworks are, if not oversimplifications, some kind of reductions and generalizations. Therefore, it can be assumed that researchers might focus simultaneously on more than one of the functions of narratives outlined in the above frameworks. (cf. Elliott 2005.) Similarly, since I am aiming at understanding the storytelling situation as a whole, including an interest in what is being said, how it is said and the interaction involved, in light of these frameworks, I take into account several aspects of a narrative. Thus, regarding the dichotomy of the basic types of narrative analysis introduced by Polkinghorne (1995), I apply a combination of these methods. Consequently, in the analysis, I focus on narratives both as a form of representation and as a mode of analysis. These together, I assume, provide both breadth and depth to the analysis. As to the typology by Mishler (1995) of the alternative foci of analysis, I take into account all the three approaches. Thus, my interest in the analysis has a focus on the content of the narratives, and the structure and form of the narratives as well as the context of the narration. Furthermore, in my study, the interactional context has yet another layer, that of the other tellers and their interaction, since the research material is collected in a group setting.

4.3.3 Analysing the material

I started the analysis with an open mind. I had Denzin's (1997, p. 246) precept in my head, in which he suggests pursuing the '*messy*' approach to reading and writing narratives. In the beginning, I read the transcriptions several times in order to find out '*what is going on here?*' (Weick et al. 2005) in the Weickian spirit of sensemaking. While reading the transcriptions, I made notes about my observations regarding the content and setting of the discussions, interaction among the participants, and my role and intervention along the way – that is, an overview of the research material. In each round of reading, I reviewed my previous notes and the interpretation developed further.

In conducting the analysis, I did not confine myself to any particular method, but rather, I took inspiration from several methods, ideas and techniques used in narrative research. As an example, I followed the idea of close reading (Duck 2018; Jin 2017) and organized the material in categories, concepts and themes (Thomas 2006; Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry 2017), but most importantly, much of the analysis was made through interpretative writing. In fact, writing was an integral part of the analysis, and for most of the time, I was thinking through writing and the analysis advanced by each round of writing. It must be noted that the analysis was data-driven and inductive by nature, and considering the reasonable amount of research material of this study, instead of using any data analysis software, I relied on old-fashioned coloured pens and paper.

Drawing upon the research question (*How is an entrepreneurial university constructed from within the university?*), I had three selections of questions to be posed to my research material.

1) *What is the content of the narrative?* With a focus on the content, I look at what is being said in the discussions; what the content of the narratives is (Riessman 2008) and what kinds of meanings the participants give to entrepreneurship in the university. The analysis draws attention to definitions and activities related to entrepreneurship as well as the conditions for entrepreneurship in the university as described in the narratives. In the thesis, the content of the narratives is brought forth not only in the stories of sensemaking, but also in chapter 5.5, in which the participants' storytelling is presented as themes and the storyline is developed around them.

2) *What is the structure of the narrative?* Narrative analysis is suggested not to focus only on the content of narratives, but also to take into account the structure by asking '*Why was the story told that way?*' (Riessman 1993, p. 2). Here, the analysis focuses on the telling, the way the narratives are told (Riessman 2008) or what their form is (Labov &

Waletzky 1967). In other words, I look at what kinds of narrative strategies, structural elements and tools the participants use in their telling about entrepreneurship in the university (see chapter 5.4).

3) *What is the interactional context of the narrative?* A further understanding of the narrative is suggested to be gained by focusing on the context in which the narratives are generated (Riessman 2008). This draws attention to storytelling as a process of co-construction. Here, the analysis has two different perspectives: it takes into account the social and cultural context in which the participants' experiences are taking place and the interactive situation in which the narratives are told (Elliott 2005). The particular setting in this study is the university organization and its entrepreneurial transformation – it is in this context that the participants are making sense of entrepreneurship in the university. The context, obviously, has several layers in it, which needs careful consideration in the analysis. In terms of the interaction in the meaning-making process, I look at both the dialogue among the groups and that between the groups and myself as the researcher of the study and the co-constructor of the narratives.

In the analysis, I posed different questions to my research material from the above-discussed set of questions. In answering these, I generated thick descriptions and accounts around the posed questions. I then read the descriptions and accounts against the transcriptions and established interaction between them. Through this interaction, I started to sketch the stories in their current form (see Chapter 6). This was an iterative process, and I wrote the stories several times in an attempt to make them both interesting and relevant from the viewpoint of my research question. I also did regular check-ups with the original audio material to ensure accuracy. For some parts, the written stories closely follow the initial transcriptions and the setting in the group discussions, whereas for other parts, the resemblance is slighter.

I continued the analysis on an aggregate level by reading and reorganizing the stories that I had written. The sequential reading revealed repetitive contents and structures in the accounts across the material, which are reported as means of storytelling, story compositions and themes (see chapters 5.4 and 5.5). I then returned to the transcriptions to look for more repetitive patterns, and I also read literature about the entrepreneurial university, thus reflecting my material against the extant research on the phenomenon. This led to an observation of less pronounced themes – those that, in contrast to the literature, were not developed into critical elements of sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university in my material.

In the next phase, I looked at the stories and themes that I had interpreted and written together, as a cumulative outcome of the analysis, and I asked myself 'What

do they tell about the entrepreneurial university?', 'How is the entrepreneurial university understood?' and 'How is it shaped in the participants' interaction?' My focus on gaining an overarching interpretation of the participants' narratives and accounts, my search for types of general patterns or structures of their constructions of the entrepreneurial university, led me to building metanarratives. However, I did not want to compress the richness into only a single narrative, but instead, I was looking for several meta-level generalities. This phase in the analysis was influenced by my preconceptions based on my understanding of the entrepreneurial university and sensemaking literature, as well as my earlier observations of the research material. The metanarratives in this study (see Chapter 7) are thus grounded in the talk of the study participants, but I added more meat on those narrations through my interpretation and illustration. In order to provide the reader a good understanding of the stories, themes and metanarratives that I interpreted from the research material, I have used dialogues and anecdotes in full awareness that description alone is not sufficient, but rather, '*the data must be challenged, extended, supported, and linked in order to reveal their full value*' (Bazeley 2009, p. 8).

During the analysis, I relied on several sets of materials. Quite obviously, I was reading my research material, and the stories and themes that were accumulating by my writing as the analysis proceeded. In addition, I read literature about doing narrative analysis, sensemaking perspective and the entrepreneurial university; thus I was moving between my material, theory and empirical literature whilst writing down my interpretations one round and phase after another. Throughout the analysis, I have drawn attention to both the parts and the big picture in the participants' storytelling. In so doing, I have followed Denzin's (1997) advice, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter: to pursue the '*messy*' approach, which '*embraces experimental, experiential, and critical readings that are always incomplete, personal, self-reflexive, and resistant to totalising strategies*' (ibid, p. 246). Consequently, instead of seeking to present as neat and coherent a picture as possible from the meaning-making process, I have also paid attention to '*fragments of stories, bits and pieces told here and there*' (Boje 2001, p. 5) that were improper and incomplete in the narratives of the participants. Furthermore, I have focused my analytical interest on interaction in the storytelling, both from the viewpoint of my interventions and their consequences and the participants' interplay.

4.3.4 Presenting the research material

The idea of presenting the research material as individual (group) stories (in Chapter 6) was there all along. I had collected the material by conducting group discussions, and I wanted to hold on to these groups also in the presentation. Another way of presenting the material could have been, for example, focusing on themes/issues

around the sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university, but I felt that such an approach was too structural and 'clean'. Instead, I wanted to give voice to the university personnel, and I thought that 'stories from the field' would serve the purpose well. Furthermore, treating the material as individual stories enables 'doing justice' to the complexity of the phenomenon by drawing attention to the university personnel and the ways in which they are experiencing the entrepreneurial emphasis and transformation in the university.

In these stories, I have chosen to use narrative text, which is a typical way to display data in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman 1984). In that sense, the presentation of the research material is '*storying other people's stories*' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2019, p. 199), and I have become a narrator by retelling the stories of my study participants. The groups in my research consist of several participants, and again, to hold on to the personal level, instead of compressing their narrations and sensemaking as one in the group, I have purposely given room to the individuals. In each group, I have presented the participants by their names (pseudonyms) and brought forth their personalities in the sensemaking process. In fact, I would have liked to describe the participants in more detailed manner, but for the sake of anonymity, I could not. This has been a constant issue of concern in writing of the stories, as in how to balance thick and compelling description and respecting the anonymity of the participants. On the contrary, I have written myself tightly into the stories. There is no question about my involvement and influence in each of the stories, both at the time of the discussion, being not only the collector of the data but also one co-constructing the material (Holstein & Gubrium 2004; Neergaard & Leitch 2015), and afterwards, in interpreting the material in the analysis. By assigning myself an active role in these stories, I have wanted to draw attention to reflexivity. Furthermore, I have tried to write with passion and excitement (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016; Ellis 2004) and use captivating language to make the text more compelling for the reader. I have used rich illustrations, reflections, visualizations, dialogue and direct quotations in order to convey to the reader the 'look and feel' of the discussions, as if creating an experience of being there among us in the group discussions. The presentation has not been limited to the content of the discussion, but rather, I have given attention to social interaction too, which, apart from being an essential element of the act of sensemaking in the group setting, in my opinion also puts meat on the bones of the stories. While I have attempted to offer rich texture in the stories, I have been attentive to not being exhaustive in my writing but leaving room for the reader's interpretation and imagination, too (cf. Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016).

There were several choices to be made in terms of constructing the stories. The stories that I present in my study are shortened and condensed versions of the original discussions that lasted around three hours and amounted to dozens of pages of

transcriptions, respectively. In selecting the material to be presented, rather than tightly following the chronological order in the discussions, let alone presenting an overview of each, I have focused on certain encounters and interactions in the group discussions that are interesting and relevant from the point of view of my research question. Apart from similarities in the sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university between the groups, I was able to interpret some unique ways of making sense of the phenomenon, and those, obviously, are presented in each of the stories, too. There was also variation in the group discussions in terms of their content, structure, form and social interaction. Some of the group discussions were more focused and coherent in content and theme, whereas others were more sporadic and scattered with several loose ends. In some groups, the discussion was meandering and rambling, while in others it was short and scant. Furthermore, while all participants contributed to the discussions, there was variation in the level of involvement between the participants. I have tried to take into account all these in the presentation of the material in order to covey to the reader a feeling of participation and involvement.

In addition to the presentation of the actual stories, other ways of describing the outcome of this study are the central means of storytelling and story compositions (see chapter 5.4), the contents of the discussions from the perspective of critical themes in the sensemaking and construction of the entrepreneurial university (see chapter 5.5) and the metanarratives (see Chapter 7) that are based on all of the above. While the stories focus on each group individually, the storytelling means, themes and metanarratives have an aggregate view of the research material.

I have selected a partially symmetrical presentation form. This, I thought, helps the reader in capturing the main message of each story, yet it values the uniqueness of the group discussions. All stories begin with a similar description, which I call the 'setting of the story'. The idea is both to introduce the scene – the participants in the group, their interaction, my thoughts and involvement along the way – and to close the scene, and describe what happened after the 'official' part, when narratives were told and the tape recorder was turned off. The following sections of the discussions are more varied, and they unfold the different ways the participants explain and negotiate entrepreneurship in the university context and the sensemaking of the phenomenon in more detail.

Initially, when planning and scheduling the group discussions, I ended up with six groups, with an idea to bring forth heterogeneity of opinions and perceptions in terms of entrepreneurship in the university. The research design allowed me to collect more research material if needed, but after having conducted the initial six group discussions, the material felt rich and heterogeneous enough, and there was no need to collect additional material. In this study, I have chosen to present all six stories that I collected. I feel that each of these stories has a particular piece of narration to tell, thus adding to our understanding of the entrepreneurial university

from a new viewpoint. As I have discussed above, they contribute to the broader knowledge of the phenomenon by providing several views and interpretations.

4.4 Reflecting on my role as a researcher

This study focuses on a university organization and its personnel, particularly. I chose to conduct the study in my alma mater and home university, which puts me in the position of an insider researcher (Brannick & Coghlan 2007; Hellawell 2006; Trowler 2011). Insider research is considered beneficial in organizational contexts, especially when aiming at understanding multiple voices and subjectivities (Brannick & Coghlan 2007). I have reflected on my role as a researcher as well as my insider position throughout the pages of this study by adopting a reflexive mode of writing (Alvesson 2003; Mahadevan 2011); here, however, I focus more on the evaluation of the methodology and discuss possible disadvantages and limitations of insider research.

Researcher positioning in qualitative research has been an issue in several methodological discussions, and there is a debate regarding the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider or an outsider (Yakushko, Badiee & Mallory 2011; Burns, Fenwick & Schmied 2012; West, Stewart & Foster 2012; Saidin & Yaacob 2016). Recently, the role of the researcher has been understood as more fluid and flexible, thus reflecting the dynamic nature of people and contexts (Burns et al. 2012, West et al. 2012), and within this perspective, the elements of both the insider and outsider are seen to be present rather in all qualitative research (Dowling 2005). Indeed, I noticed that during the group discussions, my role fluctuated, and there was movement between my roles as insider and outsider. The notion or assumption of commonalities was one marker in this respect. For example, as a researcher in entrepreneurship, I was considered a peer and an insider among the entrepreneurship scholars in this study, whereas at times, I felt more like an outsider among those study participants who besides their academic careers worked as entrepreneurs. Similarly, cohesion was apparent with the university teachers, and it grew stronger when we exchanged our experiences of teaching over the years, whereas I had a concrete feeling of being an outsider when I organized a group discussion outside the main campus and visited one of the local university campuses for the first time. However, the fact that we all work in the same organization – in a university, which is often considered a distinct type of, even a peculiar, organization – makes us all members of the same community, and thus, regardless of the fluidity of the researcher position, I do carry the role of an insider to a certain degree.

Among the classic pitfalls of insider research is the development of rapport with the study participants (Kusow 2003); it is suggested that participants may find it difficult or uncomfortable to talk to a person who comes from the inside (Couture,

Zaidi & Maticka-Tyndale 2012). Obviously, I am somewhat biased to assess the rapport, and I can only speculate based on the general feeling of the group discussions that the participants seemed to be engaged in an open dialogue, which resulted in the creation of research material of greater depth than most likely would otherwise have been achieved (cf. Corbin Dwyer & Buckle 2009). In my opinion, the atmosphere during the sessions was good and relaxed, which unfolded as a cheerful, jovial and playful tone for the discussions. Everyone participated, and the subject matter was discussed vividly and from different angles, often even without my intervention, which indicate rapport and comfortable interaction. Furthermore, many participants expressed appreciation of an opportunity to talk with colleagues, and they felt pleased for having been invited to discuss such a hot potato – entrepreneurship in the university. Therefore, it can be assumed that in this study, my closeness to the research site and those researched had more advantages than disadvantages, as it seemed to contribute to a comfortable discussion atmosphere rather than precluding it.

Another frequently mentioned concern about insider research relates to the potential of presumptions (Couture et al. 2012; Blythe, Wilkes, Jackson & Halcomb 2013). For instance, due to the feeling of common affiliation, the study participants may assume that I already know what they know and thus, they unintentionally fail to provide sufficient detail in their accounts or open up the 'whole picture' when talking about entrepreneurship in the university. Similarly, I may be too close or 'inside' in the sense that I fail to ask provocative or challenging questions because I presume to understand the study participants and cannot see beyond the self-evident. These presumptions may lead to biased research material and preclude an in-depth analysis. Here again, I have tried to the best of my ability to be attentive to taken-for-granted assumptions and be reflexive along the way, thus attempting to avoid the pitfalls of presumptions – or at least, to bring them out into the open.

The matter of adequate and appropriate research material and the sampling techniques for acquiring it are often present in qualitative research (e.g. Oppong 2013). Indeed, the sampling method is one issue of careful consideration in this research, too, and thus discussed here. In the earlier pages of the thesis, I opened up my sampling strategy (see chapters 4.2.4 and 5.1) in order to provide justification for the identification and selection criteria used as well as to demonstrate a well-thought-out sampling procedure.

Purposive sampling applied in this study is a much-used method in qualitative research that groups study participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The basic idea is that the researcher selects a manageable and relevant group of individuals among whom the investigated phenomenon is relatively important and who have experience or knowledge of the issues that are being addressed (Berglund 2007). In this study, a critical issue in this

respect is the (assumed) relation to entrepreneurship; following the idea of purposive sampling, I sought university personnel among whom entrepreneurship is meaningful enough (cf. Berglund 2007), yet I also tried to find such university personnel to whom entrepreneurship plays a lesser role in order to reach all voices across the university, as the entrepreneurial commitment is said to concern the whole university. This, I admit, is balancing between the purpose and the outcome, because a focus on familiarity with entrepreneurship possibly improves the capacity to address the topic, but at the same time, it might exclude the outliers, thus standardizing research material. Furthermore, the sample being studied is not representative of the population, and as such, does not allow generalization across time and place (Neergaard 2007); however, it can be considered a choice rather than a weakness, as it is constructed to serve a specific need or purpose (Rai & Thapa 2015). In this study, for example, I am more concerned with what exists rather than how much, and I aim at understanding rather than explaining. Therefore, purposive sampling, with a focus on particular characteristics that are of interest, is well-grounded.

There is another possible pitfall that the purposive sampling method entails. It can be highly prone to researcher bias, because the interpretation of purposiveness is based on the researcher's subjective opinion (Sharma 2017; Rai & Thapa 2015). Thus, it is fair to admit that the stories and (meta)narratives presented in this study illustrating the researched phenomenon would likely be different had I applied a more randomized sampling in which any personnel across the university could have had an opportunity to be included in this research or had there been another researcher assessing the appropriateness of the study participants. However, despite the inherent researcher bias that the purposive sampling entails, deriving from the fact that the participants of this study are selected based on my subjective judgement, I daresay that my insider knowledge about the university in general, the organization researched particularly, and the personnel therein, as well as my theoretical understanding of both narrative sensemaking and the entrepreneurial university, has informed the selection criteria in such a way that it has improved the researchability of the phenomenon from the viewpoint of my research question. Thus, purposive sampling served its function well. Nevertheless, while the stories and (meta)narratives presented in this study are shedding light on the entrepreneurial university from a fresh perspective, from within the university, they are context-dependent and by no means should be understood as the whole nor the only possible picture of the phenomenon. Therefore, in terms of generalizability, I draw on Neergaard (2007), who talks about analogous generalization in which the likely application of the findings of the study to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions (Patton 1990) is assumed.

5 Introduction to storytelling

This chapter begins the empirical part of the thesis, serving as an introduction to storytelling and the stories of sensemaking that will be presented later, in Chapter 6. A revisit to the selection criteria and the forming of the groups starts the chapter, followed by contextual aspects of the storytelling, such as commitment to entrepreneurship, contextual framing of the researched university and the brainstorming method employed in the group discussions. The final part of the chapter focuses on the actual storytelling, and it discusses the various conversational means as well as the composition and content of the stories.

5.1 Revisiting the selection criteria and introducing the storytellers

The locus of the empirical part of my research is university personnel, among whom I organized six group discussions to collect research material. In the earlier pages of this study, I have discussed the identification and selection of study participants as well as the formation of the groups from a methodological point of view (see chapter 4.2.4). Initially, I had three criteria in forming the groups. Firstly, the focus on university personnel familiar with entrepreneurship stems from the perspective of relevance; I thought that there must be some correspondence with entrepreneurship so that there would be something to contribute regarding the subject matter (cf. Berglund 2007). Secondly, I was looking for variation, which I assumed to reflect the heterogeneity of opinions about entrepreneurship across the university, and therefore, I tried to reach out university personnel with different backgrounds, positions, experiences and stories to tell. Thirdly, a practical point was the study participants' anticipated ability to talk about and narrate their thoughts and perceptions. I trusted the third criterion to be covered by academics being used to giving lectures, talks and other linguistic activities and thus able to produce well their thoughts verbally. Moreover, I expected the group setting to support their contribution further. Consequently, I paid more attention to the two aforementioned criteria of the study participants' assumed familiarity with entrepreneurship and the heterogeneity of the participants. In so doing, I utilized both my knowledge and preconceptions as an employee of the university. Along the way, I had conversations

with my supervisor about the ways to identify and reach the study participants, about their 'appropriateness' with respect to their expected contribution, and in the end, about the final composition of the groups. In addition, I consulted a few colleagues in the university in identifying and reaching the study participants for some of the groups.

In the following paragraphs, I will introduce the groups that generated the research material by talking about their work in and thoughts about a university that has a commitment to becoming entrepreneurial. I will also demonstrate how I have put the above-discussed criteria regarding the study participants and groups into practice, that is; I explain my preferences and philosophy for reaching 'good informants' for the purposes of my study.

5.1.1 Focus on familiarity and scholarship on entrepreneurship

To get a good and comfortable start with my fieldwork, I decided to focus on university personnel with profound knowledge of entrepreneurship and with whom I was acquainted. I thought that they were easy to talk with, and it was convenient to test my approach of a group discussion that resembled more a conversation than an interview, which, as a technique, was a bit unfamiliar to me.

Recruiting this group was relatively easy; I contacted a good number of appropriate candidates, and everyone replied with complimentary comments. After a few withdrawals because of time constraints, the group was composed of five participants: Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry,[19] whom – based on their expertise in entrepreneurship and the consequent essential position in entrepreneurship promotion in the university – I characterize as the *academic insiders.* They are colleagues working in the same faculty; hence they know each other well and are used to working together. This group has a multidisciplinary educational background; they represent business studies, social sciences and education both on master's and doctoral levels. Their work includes all missions of a university: teaching, research and engaging with society, and there are abundant and diverse entrepreneurial elements in their work. The group seems to be well aware of the university's strategic initiative to be an entrepreneurial university, and some of them are actively involved in its development, too.

For several reasons, I consider the first group a pilot and as such, I take it as an important opportunity for reflection and learning in order to enhance the subsequent group discussions, if necessary. Firstly, the cumulative expertise in entrepreneurship

[19] To respect the study participants' anonymity, I use pseudonyms in all of the groups in my research.

among Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry is diverse and extensive, and thus I anticipate an insightful discussion and possibly new angles or perspectives to consider. Secondly, since they all are experienced in research, they may have some sharp and valuable methodological observations concerning the conduct and content of the group discussion and my role as a facilitator and a researcher. Finally, based on collegiality among us, I rely on their willingness to contribute to the group discussion and the reflection afterwards. To conclude, familiarity allows me to consider the session not only the first round of data collection, but also an experiment in running an informal, conversation-like open interview in a group setting, hence, decreasing my concern and insecurity on the brink of fieldwork and increasing my confidence in collecting proper research material. Consequently, the first group becomes somehow special and dear to me among my research material.

5.1.2 Focus on informal expertise in entrepreneurship

Next, I reached out to a newly established internal network in the university, which is composed of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons within the faculties and departments across the university. The network of liaisons, who are named as entrepreneurship champions and innovation scouts, works on a voluntary basis and is one concrete implementation of entrepreneurship promotion in the university. Each faculty at the university has several liaisons, but their roles and presence are not very well known in the university.[20]

I contacted all members of the network and invited them to take part in my research. Perhaps a bit unexpectedly, their attendance remained low and only four engaged. Consequently, Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison form the second group in my research. They have varied positions ranging from researcher to adjunct professor, and they work in different faculties at the university, with representation from engineering and technology, humanities and medicine. They all have relatively long careers at the university, and they are active in many sectors of academic work. Based on their shared characteristic of holding a designated (though not well-known) role in entrepreneurship advancement in their faculties, I call them the *entrepreneurial stimulators*, and I anticipate them to be able to reflect the entrepreneurship strategy implementation and the current situation when discussing entrepreneurship in the university.

[20] The network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons at the University of Turku was established at the early phase of the Entrepreneurial University declaration, with an objective of supporting entrepreneurship and innovation knowledge among university personnel and students as well as to foster entrepreneurialism across the university.

5.1.3 Allowing for serendipity

Compared to the two previous groups, in which the study participants were identified from predefined clusters of university personnel, the setting of the third group was very loose. Within another research project that I was involved in a while ago, some university personnel participated in a survey regarding entrepreneurship in the university, and they gave their consent to be contacted for the purpose of other similar studies. Having consulted my supervisor, I decided to take advantage of the randomness and unpredictability that this body represented – seeing it rather as serendipity – and I invited them to take part in my research. Many of the invitees expressed their willingness to participate, but in the end, only four were able to attend. However, I was expecting an interesting discussion, because I knew from the previous research in which they took part that they were willing to discuss and share their perceptions regarding entrepreneurship in the university. Furthermore, I was excited about the unfamiliarity and irregularity of the group; this time, I had neither presumptions nor expectations about their stance towards entrepreneurship in the university.

Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca form a group, which, by virtue of its criteria and composition, I describe with unpredictability – their unfamiliarity allows for surprises and disruption, thus I call them the *unpredictables*. In addition, the foursome is among the most heterogeneous groups in my research; they represent different fields of science (economics, medical science and humanities), their positions in academia range between junior and senior, and their exposure to entrepreneurship is varied.

5.1.4 Focus on geography

I wanted to take into consideration the university's organizational extent also from a geographic point of view; therefore, for the composition of the fourth group, I looked beyond the main campus and approached one of the local university campuses. With the help of my colleague, I was able to identify candidates for my research and organize a group discussion there. After a dozen invitations, I expected to meet four participants in the group discussion.

For the purposes of this study, the group, which is composed of Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector, seems like a good combination with heterogeneity on many levels. For instance, their jobs are diverse, including experience in research, teaching and administration, and their exposure to entrepreneurship in general and in the university context is varied. In addition, there is variation in the duration of their employment as well as in their stage of career.

Based on the distinct characteristic of their location outside the main campus, they are the *provincials* in my research, and I am keen to learn whether the

geographical location has an influence on how they perceive entrepreneurship in the university.

5.1.5 Focus on shallow exposure to entrepreneurship

As I had assumed, it was relatively easy to identify university personnel with expertise in entrepreneurship and willingness to participate in my research, whereas the involvement of those with less experience in entrepreneurship and who were willing to contribute was more uncertain. Therefore, I was delighted to notice, when I took part in an entrepreneurship education training afternoon targeted to the university teachers and lecturers in our university, that even though many of the participants had minor or negligible exposure to entrepreneurship, they were interested in the topic at hand. I realized that I had met a group of university personnel who could provide me with a perspective from the 'backwater' of the entrepreneurial university; being less involved in entrepreneurship and thus possibly inconspicuous in entrepreneurship promotion might bring forth new insights, perhaps even critical voices, hence advancing my knowledge about multiple interpretations of entrepreneurship within the university.

Recruiting this group was arduous; I invited several staff members whom I met on the training afternoon to take part in the group discussion but got only two acceptances. Unlike in most groups in my research, I was not familiar with many of the invitees, which might have affected their low level of interest in participating and scant willingness to contribute. In addition, perhaps the recruits' distant position regarding entrepreneurship resulted in a milder involvement in my study; then again, a number of invitees expressed their interest toward my research but declined because of time constraints, which might indicate that entrepreneurship in the university is also considered a relevant topic from a bit further perspective.

In the end, the fifth group of my research is composed of two university teachers, Esther and Priscilla. Compared to the other groups in my research, their exposure to entrepreneurship is minor and limited, and accordingly, I illustrate them as *the other half*.[21]

[21] The expression 'the other half' is used in the phrase 'how the other half lives', with a reference to a group of people who are not like others because they are either very rich or very poor. Here, the other half refers to university personnel aloof from entrepreneurship development, those regarded neither as obvious subjects nor as objects of the entrepreneurial university. In this sense, the other half complements my research material by providing the 'unsung' perspective alongside the views of the more self-evident participants: the academic insiders, the entrepreneurial stimulators and the entrepreneurial academics.

5.1.6 Focus on tangible experience in entrepreneurship

Lastly, I was looking for university personnel who had been involved in starting or running a business to form a group with concrete experience in entrepreneurship. I anticipated such a group to have an enhanced ability to discuss the subject matter in a distinct and perhaps more tangible way. A concrete knowledge of entrepreneurship might also bring more aspects to my research material. I consulted a few colleagues to identify appropriate candidates – and learned that, in fact, there are a great many university personnel who work both in the university and as entrepreneurs – and ended up inviting six persons with personal experience in entrepreneurship to the group discussion. From the six invitees, I got five acceptances, which supports my assumption of a more likely involvement of those engaged in the subject matter of the research.

After two last-minute cancellations, the final group of my research introduces Martha, Alex and Timothy, whose positions are twofold; they are engaged in their businesses whilst they work at the university. Besides their nascent entrepreneurial careers, they can be described as senior academics, holding managerial positions in the university. They have worked at the university for several years and have plenty of experience in collaborating with companies and working in multidisciplinary research and development projects, as well as publishing in scientific journals and in other academic publications. Considering the duality and preference of their roles and work, I refer to the group as the *entrepreneurial academics*. I am confident that their diverse backgrounds, history and roles in the university as well as their concrete experience in entrepreneurship provide an interesting basis for the group discussion.

5.1.7 Summary of the storytellers

In the following table (Table 1), I will briefly summarize the introduction of the six groups that are composed of the participants in this study. In the table, each group is given a name[22] and outlined by their characteristics, participants, representation of the fields of science, personnel categories, and age range.

To start with, the first column, *group,* encapsulates the gestalt of the groups and brings forth some distinct features characterizing each of the groups. Second, the column *characteristics of the group,* describes the groups a bit further. It includes both a general description and a critical, yet relatively vague, factor to address the exposure to entrepreneurship among the groups. Consequently, I have codified the concept in two dimensions; quantity of exposure (in the table: quantity), which

[22] The names of each group reflect my presumptions about the perspective from which the groups are assumed to contribute to my research.

signifies the volume of activities related to entrepreneurship that the study participants have experience or knowledge of, and it can vary between substantial and minor. Variation of exposure (in the table: variation) indicates the range of experience or knowledge in entrepreneurial activities of the study participants, such as being an entrepreneur, a lecturer, or a researcher in entrepreneurship, and it varies from broad to narrow.[23] Third, the column *participants* introduces the members of each group by their names, which, to respect their anonymity, are pseudonyms. The fourth column, *fields of science,* lists the participants' fields of expertise; here, I have applied a categorization which is commonly used in the university. Fifth, the column *personnel categories,* provides information about the study participants' roles and positions in the university. Finally, the column *age range* reports the maturity of the groups at the time of the group discussion by announcing both the youngest and the oldest participant of each group.

[23] For example, exposure to entrepreneurship is abundant among the academic insiders, because most of them have both substantial and broad exposure, signifying that they are strongly attached to entrepreneurship, and in varied ways: through research, teaching, etc. On the contrary, among the other half, exposure is less in both categories, indicating that they are less involved in entrepreneurship. Finally, the entrepreneurial academics are less consistent in their exposure to entrepreneurship, since they have plenty of experience in entrepreneurship, but mainly through their own businesses.

Table 1. The outline of the groups in my research.

GROUP	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUP	PARTICIPANTS (PSEUDONYMS)	FIELDS OF SCIENCE	PERSONNEL CATEGORIES	AGE RANGE*
THE ACADEMIC INSIDERS	• entrepreneurship scholars • colleagues at the same faculty • exposure to e-ship: mainly substantial (quantity) and broad (variation)	Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry	• business, administration and law • education • social sciences	• researchers • lecturers	30 – 50 years
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL STIMULATORS	• members of a network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons • work in different faculties • exposure to e-ship: from minor to substantial (quantity), narrow (variation)	Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison	• engineering and technology • humanities • medical sciences	• researchers • lecturers • other personnel	40 – 49 years
THE UNPREDICTABLES	• heterogeneous group • work in different faculties • exposure to e-ship: from minor to substantial (quantity), from narrow to broad (variation)	Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca	• business, administration and law • education • medical sciences	• researchers • lecturers	31 – 54 years

THE PROVINCIALS	• remote location from the main campus • work at the same faculty • exposure to e-ship: mainly minor (quantity), from narrow to broad (variation)	Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector	• business, administration and law	• researchers • lecturers • administrative and office personnel	37 – 64 years
THE OTHER HALF	• work in different faculties • exposure to e-ship: minor (quantity) and narrow (variation)	Esther and Priscilla	• business, administration and law • humanities	• lecturers	45 and 57 years
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ACADEMICS	• nascent entrepreneurs while working at the university • work in different faculties • exposure to e-ship: narrow (variation) but substantial (quantity)	Martha, Alex and Timothy	• engineering and technology • natural sciences • business, administration and law	• researchers • other personnel	41 – 46 years

* Participants' age is reported as per the time of the group discussions (October 2018-February 2019).

5.2 Contextual overview of storytelling

Below, I will set the scene for the storytelling and stories that I will present in Chapter 6. The following sections describe the conditions in which the university operates and the context in which the study participants discuss entrepreneurship in the university. The contextualization provides information that helps in understanding the ways in which the entrepreneurial university is negotiated and constructed from within the university.

5.2.1 The university committed to entrepreneurship

The research site, the *University of Turku* was established in 1920 with the ideology '*From a free people to free science*' as the first Finnish-language university. The university is internationally competitive, and provides higher education based on research. There are 3,400 staff and faculty members, as well as 20,000 degree students located on its three national university campuses. The university has eight faculties (education, humanities, law, medicine, science, social sciences, technology, and economics) and five independent units. Typically, the university is ranked among the top one or two percent of all the world's universities in university rankings such as the QS World University Ranking.

The university has a strategic commitment to entrepreneurship. Since 2016, it has promoted entrepreneurship under an operational programme '*The University as a catalyst for social well-being and the economy*', according to which '*The University is strengthening its capacity to meet the region's educational and economic needs, and its ability to respond to national and global challenges*' (UTU strategy 2016-2020). More concretely, the university has been branded as an *Entrepreneurial University* with an objective to promote entrepreneurial thinking and activities throughout the entire university. In this respect, means are many, and accordingly, the university has created and implemented a number of new support programmes and initiatives to enhance entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviour and culture, and as well has further developed and adjusted its already-existing support infrastructure for entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial university transformation is thus targeted to concern the university widely and on several levels; in this sense, there are similarities with both the Clarkian entrepreneurial university model and the Gibbian approach to the phenomenon (see chapter 2.2.2), which both consider entrepreneurship as a 'whole university' approach (cf. Gibb 2012).

Time wise, the university's official strategic commitment to entrepreneurship is relatively short. The beginning of the Entrepreneurial University seems intensive, based on the number of new initiatives and activities; however, many of those are still at their early phase, and both awareness and recognition of entrepreneurship are heterogeneous across the university. For example, while most study participants

seemed familiar with the Entrepreneurial University branding, its objective and activities were unclear and interpreted in various ways.

5.2.2 Other context-framing themes

Besides the university's strategic commitment to entrepreneurship, which provides an essential basis for this study, there were other issues and processes further framing the university and the context in which the study participants construct the entrepreneurial university.

One topical theme in this respect was the university's rector election. The election was ongoing at the same time as the empirical phase of my research; when I started with the first group, the first round of the election was running, and the shortlist of applicants was announced just before the second group discussion. By the time of the last discussion, the new rector had been elected, and his term of office was to begin in six months. The study participants brought up the issue of the rector election spontaneously; it was both a formal matter of speculation in several group discussions and the topic of an informal chat after the sessions. Even though the theme was addressed in a humorous manner, the rector election is a possible point of discontinuity, and I sensed tension: the study participants were worried about where the university is going and what will be different. The incumbent rector had been in office for years, and the university personnel were accustomed to his management; now, the rector-elect was a question mark in this respect, and his stance toward entrepreneurship which had been recently put up front in the university, was also speculated upon.

Preparations for the establishment of the new faculty of technology in the university were another notable process concurrent with my research. I had assumed I would hear commenting about the new faculty's planning process as well as speculations concerning key personnel and areas of focal points, because the absence of a technical faculty had been a matter of concern for years both at the university and in the region. In addition, technology is often considered a good springboard for entrepreneurship; hence, I thought that the new faculty could be an issue also from the perspective of entrepreneurship development in the university. However, contrary to my assumptions, the theme did not come up in any of the group discussions, though the future of the university with different scenarios was often hypothesized. I can only speculate why the theme was unspoken. It might reflect the study participants' interpretation of the university as a slow and tardy organization; in the group discussions, the university was typically described with terms like hierarchy and stability, and because the new faculty establishment is also a subject of national science policy, an additional layer of hierarchy might have been seen to bring even more inertia into the equation. Another viewpoint might be time; the

university was considered a traditional organization with a long time perspective, and hence, perhaps the study participants felt that speculation was irrelevant at this, relatively early, stage of the new faculty preparations.[24]

5.3 Orientation to storytelling: brainstorming

5.3.1 Invitation to informality

Group discussions can include different tasks in addition to the actual discussion (Edmunds 2000). In my study, each group discussion started with informal brainstorming, the idea of which was a light introduction to the subject matter of my research and familiarization with a conversation-like, relatively unstructured mode of communication among the study participants. The setting was similar every time: accessories for the brainstorming – a large, blank poster with *entrepreneurship* and *university* written on it, Post-it notes of different colours and some pens – were lying on the table, and I invited the study participants to talk about entrepreneurship and university, and at the same time, to generate words that they associated with the two constructs. The words were to be written down on Post-it notes, which were then to be placed on the poster around the two concepts, entrepreneurship and university. The conclusion of the brainstorming, a mind map of entrepreneurship and university, was then elaborated among the study participants. Even though the mind maps often included the very same words, their layout and interpretation were versatile. After the brainstorming session, the mind map was left on the table, and thus, it was accessible throughtout the group discussion.

In my opinion, the brainstorming served its purpose well; everyone got to contribute naturally, and the interaction among the study participants was informal and easygoing, which created a good and comfortable base for the group discussion. In addition, while the groups tuned in to the theme, the brainstorming provided me with a preliminary understanding about the ways in which entrepreneurship and the university were understood and interpreted.

5.3.2 Various ways of working and conclusions

I purposely chose not to give explicit instructions for the brainstorming; I simply asked the study participants to discuss their perceptions of entrepreneurship and university whilst writing down some keywords; otherwise, I let them choose their

[24] The eighth faculty of the university, the Faculty of Technology, started operating in early 2021, whereas the group discussions took place two years earlier (in October 2018-February 2019).

own ways to accomplish the task. Consequently, the groups had particular ways of working for brainstorming. For instance, collaboration was diverse; the *academic insiders* provided a collective mind map in the sense that they worked together both in generating the words and in elaborating the conclusion. An opposite approach was applied among the groups of *provincials* and *the other half*, as their members performed the task more independently, with less interaction. Another example of variation in ways of working is the manner in which the groups constructed entrepreneurship and university in the mind maps. In a *parallel reading*, entrepreneurship and university were treated through comparison. Within this practice, contraries were presented, and entrepreneurship was characterized by various dynamic attributes (e.g. fast, speedy, agile, proactive), while rigidity (e.g. bureaucratic, reactive, slow, traditional) was attached to the university. Other attributes addressing contraries, such as small/big, doing/thinking, and present/future were generated to further differentiate entrepreneurship and university. In addition to the separating method, similarities were also pointed out. For instance, the *other half* understood the works of a researcher and an entrepreneur through the very same elements, which were creativity, commitment and uncertainty. Entrepreneurship and university were also treated *according to their relation to each other*, and within this schema, the entrepreneurial university was understood as a combining element between the two.

Besides the different workings of the groups, the brainstorming had varied functions and appearances in the group discussions. As an example, for the *entrepreneurial academics,* the brainstorming was a method to position themselves with respect to the subject matter of my research. In their mind map, entrepreneurship and university were placed on a continuum, and the group positioned themselves closer to entrepreneurship than most working in the university because of their concrete experience in entrepreneurship and their entrepreneurial way of working in the university. This division was immanent during the group discussion, and it seemed to support group cohesion along the way. For the group of the *unpredictables*, the brainstorming provided an important impulse, as one of the participants constructed his personal entrepreneurial endeavour in the mind map. The others were affected by the story, which was thematically concurrent with the subject matter of the group discussion, and overall, it had an influence on the group discussion. Finally, the *academic insiders* had such a thorough and comprehensive communication during the brainstorming and reflection of the mind map afterwards that they managed to cover spontaneously many of the issues that I had prepared to ask about in the group discussion.

As the above addresses, in some groups, the brainstorming was an essential detail and a building block of the sensemaking of entrepreneurship in university whereas for others, it was merely a warm up or a task to be completed prior to the ‘real thing’,

that is, the group discussion. In the stories of sensemaking (in Chapter 6), the brainstorming is included in the story if it advanced my understanding of the groups' sensemaking process or if it was otherwise an interesting or a relevant part of the group's interaction. Correspondingly, the brainstorming is set aside in those stories where it played a less meaningful role in the group's sensemaking process.

5.4 Means of storytelling and story compositions

In the group discussions, each group provided unique stories about entrepreneurship in the university, which were also told in different ways. Prior to the discussions, I had expected to hear quite similarly proceeding conversations about entrepreneurship in the university. Certainly, I had envisioned the group setting – which I considered an interesting methodological experiment – to bring forth multiple meanings and perceptions of entrepreneurship, yet the multiplicity of expressions and story forming, the versatility in storytelling and story composition, came as a bit of a surprise to me.

My analysis revealed not only differences and similarities in the content of the stories, but also unique and particular ways of storytelling and story composition. These are discussed in the following paragraphs, and they address the 'how' in the groups' storytelling.

5.4.1 Varieties in intensity, contribution and cohesion

I had prepared a framework for group discussions (see Appendix 1), which I applied according to the course of each discussion. *Intensity* of conversation was one factor causing variation in the framework usage. Accordingly, in some groups, the telling was broad and rambling, and these included often lengthy accounts of personal experiences, while in others, the contributions were shorter and contained fewer private elements. As an example of the latter, the conversation between the *other half* was precise and scant. It followed closely the list of themes that I had prepared for the session; both Esther and Priscilla were receptive to my queries, but they did not initiate any conversation spontaneously. Actually, at times, the interaction resembled an interview, in which I was an active interviewer and they were responsive interviewees – and indeed, I did ask questions; in addition to the pre-written list of themes, I used all my complementary questions and posed new ones in order to keep the discussion going. The pace of the discussion was relatively slow and there were many silent moments between Esther and Priscilla's accounts, as if they were giving space for both their own and each other's thoughts. Luckily, at this stage of the empirical phase, I was getting used to facilitating group discussions and tolerated silence quite well. In two more verbose discussions, among the *academic*

insiders and the *entrepreneurial stimulators*, the study participants started the conversation so promptly and continued in a similar, spontaneous manner that I barely managed to pose my questions. Consequently, the stories within these groups were composed in a less predefined manner and without my active involvement.

In addition, individuals' participation was uneven, which resulted in heterogeneous *contribution* to the storytelling. The most balanced groups in this respect were the *academic insiders*, the *entrepreneurial academics* and the *other half*. Within the two former groups, the discussion was lively and extensive, and everyone participated quite equally. In the first group discussion (among the *academic insiders*), my freshness to the situation made me cautious of many issues. As an example, I was attentive to the conversational balance, and accordingly, at times my intervention was a targeted question to someone that I observed being quieter than the others (for instance, a nod and an invitation to participate: '*How about you, X?*'). As my experience in facilitating a group discussion grew, I became more self-confident and sensitive to the conditions, and hence, in the final session (among the *entrepreneurial academics*), having noticed their enthusiasm and verbosity, I let their lively discussion mostly go as it went and did not intervene easily. Between the *other half*, then, the more interview-like manner of interaction, which I applied in order to get Esther and Priscilla to participate, supported their balanced contribution, as did the low number of participants. In the three remaining groups, I detected an imbalance in contribution; however, everyone participated in storytelling. In the discussion among the *provincials*, one participant, Hector, was given a dominance in the conversation; the others gave him first say and asked for his opinions about entrepreneurship and other related topics. A similar asymmetry existed among the *unpredictables*, as one participant, Jake, dominated the discussion at times. His personal experience in entrepreneurship was distinct and certainly content to draw upon; in addition, reviewing his experience seemed cathartic to him. In contrast to Hector's dominant role, which was allowed him, Jake's dominance was more a consequence of his active participation. Finally, among the *entrepreneurial stimulators*, two participants, Kevin and Patrick, were more active and verbose discussants than their female counterparts, Taylor and Madison, were, and thus, they often ran the discussion. Apparently, they were more talkative by nature, and Kevin was especially excited to advance entrepreneurship through a newly established internal network, of which they were all members. A further examination of contribution in storytelling highlights the significance of authority; it unfolds as an amplifier for who gets to be heard in the discussions. Accordingly, the study participants in the two groups with balanced and extensive storytelling were all experts in entrepreneurship based on either academic or concrete experience, whereas the group with a balanced but scant storytelling consisted of participants with an evenly shallow knowledge in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, in

the three groups with an imbalance of contribution in storytelling, the dominant discussants were considered proficient in entrepreneurship, like an academic expert (Hector), a person with practical experience (Jake) and a knowledgeable enthusiast (Kevin).

Finally, there was variation in the *cohesion* in storytelling, which had an influence on the composition of stories, too. For instance, the *academic insiders* were rather homogeneous in their discussion. Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry brought their sceptical thoughts to the discussion, and the critical perspective was collectively maintained along the way. Such coherence in their storytelling provided a uniform 'grand story'[25] about the entrepreneurial university that is contradictory and tensed. Similarly, the *entrepreneurial academics* generated a unanimous story about a commercially oriented entrepreneurial university where they themselves were the active pioneers. Even though there was some heterogeneity in the storytelling, a general tone was in line with the underlying 'grand story'. In contrast to these stories, the discussion among the *unpredictables* was more polyphonic; their storytelling included a collection of parallel stories about entrepreneurship in the university without a collective theme. A distinctive storyline in their discussion was one study participant's personal story about his entrepreneurial endeavour. Their discussion included other stories too, but none of them evolved as one predominant or integrative story. The discussion among the *provincials* was even more fragmented and incoherent, and the story composition was rather a loose collection of parallel, yet separate, little stories.

5.4.2 Devices for storytelling

The study participants used different conversational elements and devices in their storytelling. Firstly, everyone highlighted the fact that we were all colleagues working in the same university – that we shared the experience of the academic environment in transition, moving towards being more enterprising and hence, we were able to relate to each other's storytelling. The uniformity was further underlined by casual, first-name references to people working at the university and by pointing to 'general' issues in the university only in a cursory manner, as if assuming that everyone knows them. *Stories* were one way to uphold the relation, and these were used to share the study participants' experiences and to support their argumentation

[25] Having referred to a 'grand story' as a uniform and unanimous story, I am familiar with Boje's (2001) antenarrative alternative of grand narrative analysis, in which he uses the terms *grandnarrative* and *local narrative* as counterparts, and is interested in their interplay. Here, I only want to address the variation in cohesion in storytelling with a specific terminology, without further references to the antenarrative perspective suggested by Boje.

with familiar and concrete elements. Some stories were short descriptions simply demonstrating or exemplifying what was said and by whom, whereas others were lengthier illustrations and a subject of continuous references. The real-life stories made the accounts more concrete and meaningful, and they engaged the others (including me) emotionally. Indeed, there were many little stories that I remembered afterwards and to which I could relate. *Recollection* is another conjunctive device in storytelling, which also reflects the retrospective nature of sensemaking (Weick 1995; Weick et al. 2005). Accordingly, when memorizing something, the study participants could invite others to participate, too. The *academic insiders* used this method in explaining how their understanding of entrepreneurship had advanced from the early days of their employment at the university until today (see chapter 6.1.2). At first, one started the recollection, then others joined, and in the end, there was a many-sided and rather detailed illustration of the development of the meaning of entrepreneurship. Sometimes, I found myself participating in their recollection, too.

Humour was present in all group discussions. The functions of humour are varied; for example, it can be used as a means of reinforcing solidarity, to express resistance and to challenge others, and it may be used to 'do power'. It is, however, suggested that humour is often multi-functional, serving several interpersonal functions simultaneously. (Schnurr 2010.) In this study, humour was used for different purposes. Often in the beginning of a session – sometimes even before introduction and presentations – one or two participant(s) made a humorous comment of some sort, which made others laugh. Such a playful start can be understood as an attempt to ease either a possible tension among the participants or in light of the subject matter, or as an invitation to contribute to the discussion in an informal manner. In this way, humour acts as '*a means of establishing and perpetuating shared values, as a kind of social cement*' (Barsoux 1993, p. 92) – it emphasizes similarity and contributes to solidarity among the study participants. Sometimes, *laughter* was used to point out the detected absurdness or to soften the message. An example of the latter is an encounter between Paul and myself in the discussion among the *unpredictables* in which I asked their opinion on whether entrepreneurship can be advanced in the university, and Paul replies, laughing, '*And I ask, why should we [advance entrepreneurship]?*' Here, Paul's provocative counter question with laughter can be interpreted as a humorous comment but also as a proposal, to reflect critically the ways in which entrepreneurship is promoted in the university. (For further studies of analysing humour as a response strategy, see e.g. Wåhlin 2001; Schnurr 2010.)

Irony, an effective means of dealing with controversies in organizations (Kwon, Clarke, Vaara, Mackay & Wodak 2020), was one distinctive device of storytelling. In the group discussions, irony was often used as a sophisticated way of making fun

of something, and it projected confidence. For instance, in the discussion among the *entrepreneurial academics*, Alex, having talked for quite some time, excuses the others by saying, '*For now, I spare you from further pearls of my thought*', indicating that he recognizes he has been a bit long-winded in his say, considers it mostly chit-chat, and gives a turn to others. Such playfulness also addresses his self-confidence; after all, we were discussing academic entrepreneurship, in which his proficiency was well recognized. Another example of irony, also among the *entrepreneurial academics*, is a conversation, in which Alex has been made fun of for not having been given a T-shirt to promote the entrepreneurial university. Here, it becomes evident that the ridicule about Alex not deserving a T-shirt indicates quite the opposite opinion, as he, just like the rest of the group, has not only been entrepreneurial for his academic career but he is also a nascent entrepreneur, which in the context of this discussion is considered an added value (for more, see chapter 6.6.6). A different appearance of irony is detected among the *provincials*; even though they refer to their location outside the main campus as a periphery and even joke about it, they do not want to be considered being on the outskirts of the university, and in this sense, they seem to feel overlooked and ignored. (For further studies of irony as a means to cope with controversy, see e.g. Hatch & Ehrlich 1993; Hatch 1997; Tracy, Myers & Scott 2006; Kwon et al. 2020.)

I appreciated the relaxed and playful atmosphere whilst conducting the group discussions, and many of the humorous comments made me laugh as well. However, the transcription and analysis phases opened my eyes to realize how much humour and sharp comments the discussions actually included, and I really enjoyed working with the material. Certainly, besides the above-explained devices of humour in storytelling, it was a light way to keep up the good spirit in the group discussions, and it was present in all the groups regardless of the degree of familiarity or number of participants.

5.5 Contents of storytelling

In the group discussions, entrepreneurship in the university was addressed from different perspectives and with varied emphases. Obviously, my framework for discussions (see Appendix 1) directed the interaction toward particular themes; however, the actual storytelling was often spontaneous and the study participants initiated several themes themselves, as I had hoped that they would.

In the following subchapters, I will introduce the central content of these discussions by describing the themes that were of paramount importance in the construction of an entrepreneurial university. Accordingly, I will present the themes that recurred in most group discussions, dominated one (or more) discussion(s), and were either consistent or contradictory in the sense that they brought forth either

consistency or heterogeneity of opinions and tensions in an interesting way. Obviously, these were not the only themes that emerged or were discussed, but in the analysis, they developed into ones that are more important in the groups' negotiation and construction of an entrepreneurial university. Furthermore, based on my pre-understanding and scholarly knowledge about the entrepreneurial university, I will speculate about the 'less pronounced themes', those that I assumed I would hear when the study participants talked about entrepreneurship in the university but that were left unspoken or treated only cursorily. These themes together form the 'what' in the groups' storytelling.

5.5.1 Ambiguity of entrepreneurship

Drawing attention to the issue of defining entrepreneurship was intentional and deliberate in my research. Because entrepreneurship was one of the key concepts underpinning this study, I found it important to understand from which angles the study participants viewed entrepreneurship. Therefore, all group discussions were set to begin with a question concerning the notion of entrepreneurship. I did not characterize entrepreneurship as a complex phenomenon (e.g. Gartner 1990), nor did I emphasize the ambiguity around it; I only posed a neutral question '*How do you perceive entrepreneurship?*' in the beginning of each group discussion. My apparently easy invitation to define entrepreneurship turned out to be a challenging task and a subject of vivid speculation among the study participants – indeed, the ambiguity of the notion of entrepreneurship evolved to be a prominent theme in the construction of an entrepreneurial university.

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted and interdisciplinary phenomenon – defining it may be difficult. The literature suggests alternative definitions of the notion of entrepreneurship. According to a classical perspective, entrepreneurship can be viewed as the emergence of something new, which creates value (see Bruyat & Julien 2001; Gartner 1988; 1990). Within this view, value creation is understood broadly; it includes not only the creation of economic value, which occurs by delivering to others something that they want or need, but further, other types of value, such as the creation of enjoyment value as in joy, fun and self-fulfilment (see Lackéus 2018). Another perspective distinguishes two alternative approaches in defining entrepreneurship. Of those, the first views entrepreneurship as a process of identification and exploitation of advantageous opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman 2000), whereas the second views it as a process of new venture formation (Gartner 1985).

The study participants suggested a variety of definitions in framing the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, which were then analysed and speculated on intensely – sometimes, my opinion was also asked for. The *academic insiders*,

particularly, had knowledge of broader meanings of entrepreneurship; these, however, seemed to confuse them occasionally. As an example, during one lengthy dialogue, Kimberly confessed that she had been baffled when she realized that entrepreneurship is not only about doing business, but it can basically be viewed as '*whatever*', and others in the group agreed (for more, see chapter 6.1.2). The *entrepreneurial stimulators* had a less arduous defining process, and they ended up with a mutually shared definition of entrepreneurship as '*an aspiration to commercialise one's knowledge or expertise*' (for more, see chapter 6.2.2). They found the definition attractive because it allows for viewing entrepreneurship as more than only becoming an entrepreneur, and thus, they thought, it becomes more relevant to university students, who in their opinion are a significant target group of the entrepreneurial university. For the *other half*, then, entrepreneurship signified small business and self-employment, started out of necessity (for more, see chapter 6.5.4). They said that their students (with a similar perception, perhaps?) do not consider entrepreneurship an attractive career option, but rather, they prefer paid employment, even though, as Priscilla mentioned, freelancing and other forms of self-employment are common livelihoods, especially in the field of humanities. The *entrepreneurial academics* talked about entrepreneurship from a completely different angle; in their narratives, entrepreneurship was opportunity-driven, productive activity (cf. Dawson & Henley 2012), and they were optimistic about the growth and scalability concerning their own ventures, too.

As I have demonstrated above, despite the ambiguity and complexity of the concept of entrepreneurship, the study participants generally constructed entrepreneurship from two perspectives: an economic activity (setting up and running a business) or a process of an individual becoming entrepreneurial (a non-economic activity/attitude). In the group of the *entrepreneurial stimulators*, Taylor's comment is a good example of how these perspectives were compounded in the study participants' accounts: '*In my opinion, there's [a] financial angle related to entrepreneurship; there are profits, losses, and suchlike, and then there is the attitude, too*.' In addition, a looser interpretation of entrepreneurship from the perspective of value creation was brought forth, especially among those with scholarship in entrepreneurship. Paul, for example, explained his understanding of entrepreneurship in the group of the *unpredictables* as '*the new value creation, not just added value, but new value, which then includes testing and failures, too*'.

5.5.2 Strategic commitments to entrepreneurship

As universities are increasingly expected to strengthen their role in society (e.g. Jarvis 2013), a reorientation of universities' strategies and policies to promote entrepreneurship and societal impact is widely suggested (Siegel & Wright 2015).

Following these trends, the University of Turku has a strategic commitment to entrepreneurship and recently declared itself an Entrepreneurial University. Indeed, these strategic preferences and their apt timing were among the reasons why I chose this particular university as the site of my research. Even so, I did not draw the study participants' attention to the issue; rather, as my open interview strategy indicates, I was interested in seeing which topics emerged in the discussions about entrepreneurship in the university.

In the group discussions, the university strategy was brought up frequently and spontaneously, and it played an important role in the study participants' construction of an entrepreneurial university. Certainly, the university's ongoing transformation process towards an entrepreneurial mode was considered a strategic matter, yet no one really seemed to know what the university strategy explicitly says. Instead, the study participants viewed the university strategy from afar; while everyone talked about it, they kept a certain distance (even those who briefly mentioned their (minor, as they emphasized) involvement in the strategy work) – in short, the strategy was somewhere 'out there' yet the university was active here and now. It became evident that the explicit content of the strategy was not an issue in entrepreneurship promotion; rather, the strategy was addressed from the perspective of authorization, and the following questions were then posed: What does it indicate that entrepreneurship is being put in the forefront? What kind of a university is one with an entrepreneurial emphasis?

Strategic positioning is argued to be an important device in universities' entrepreneurial process (Gibb et al. 2009; 2013). In my research, the entrepreneurship strategy had a particular authority, but depending on perspective, it was perceived as either an advantage or a disadvantage in entrepreneurship promotion. The *entrepreneurial academics*, for instance, considered the strategic emphasis '*good seed money*' – it indicated a public commitment to entrepreneurship; the entrepreneurship strategy was seen as permission to invest in academic entrepreneurship and to act entrepreneurially, which they themselves had been doing already for quite some time (for more, see chapter 6.6.4). In their few accounts concerning the strategy, the *entrepreneurial academics* talked about the university management being committed to advancing entrepreneurship, the university in profiling itself aptly as an entrepreneurial university, and the possibility of reallocation of resources based on entrepreneurial activity, all of which they assumed to have a positive influence in the university's entrepreneurial transformation. Similarly, the *provincials* considered the strategic commitment to entrepreneurship beneficial. They thought that it might accent the role of their local campus within the large university because there was relevant substance available.

For many, however, the entrepreneurship strategy (or perhaps, any strategy?) was more like '*empty talk'*; it was seen as an official declaration concerning the

whole university, yet it seemed to have only little resonance or relevance in the everyday lives of the university personnel. In the discussion among the *academic insiders*, for example, Terry argued that '*[---] the entrepreneurship strategy and the everyday do not meet very well in the university.*' Similarly, in the *other half* group, Priscilla speculated if most university personnel do not understand the strategy statement and what it means in their own work, it '*remains a dead paper and won't be long-lasting*'. The *entrepreneurial stimulators*, for their part, grinned when Taylor said sarcastically, '*Yep, it [entrepreneurship] is in the strategy …*' indicating that the idea has not really taken root yet. Sometimes, the strategic emphasis was seen as mainly an administrative project, which lessened its perceived attractiveness and acceptance. The top-down approach was criticized and contested: '*[---] it's [entrepreneurship] not in the grass roots yet*'. The big picture, however, is not that pessimistic; the entrepreneurship strategy can be considered a '*strategic opening'*, as was suggested in many group discussions. Furthermore, as Kevin from the *entrepreneurial stimulators* noted, the entrepreneurial transformation is only in the beginning, and while the groundwork (e.g. the strategy statement) has now been done, there is still a lot of (strategic) work to do.

Many speculated about where the entrepreneurial strategy takes the university. There was concern about the university turning into an enterprise in the sense that education would become fee-paying, or that the university would end up merely as a factory that produces entrepreneurs and new ventures. These apparently dystopian views were mentioned as the worst-case scenarios of the entrepreneurial university. Other assumptions were less dramatic: one pointing to the fact that, after all, the entrepreneurship strategy is only *one* among many strategic preferences in the university, and another suggesting that the entrepreneurial profile might be a fine differentiator for the university. Furthermore, some anticipated that such 'hype' around the entrepreneurial university may not last for long.

5.5.3 The entrepreneurial university – a contradiction in thoughts?

Traditionally, entrepreneurship has been viewed as antithetical to a university, and consequently, an entrepreneurial university is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. In recent years, however, entrepreneurial universities have become an important point of reference in higher education policy discussions as an ideal (?) of a modern university (Eriksson et al. 2021b). Despite this trend, combining entrepreneurship and the university is not without problems, as my research indicates.

The entrepreneurial university as a contradictory construct emerged repeatedly in the group discussions. There was a particular tension between the two concepts – namely, entrepreneurship and the university – which was brought up and supported

in the majority of the group discussions either explicitly or implicitly. As an example, in the brainstorming that commenced each group discussion, many treated the university and entrepreneurship as contraries; typically, then, the university was characterized as stagnant and hierarchical, whereas entrepreneurship was described with more dynamic attributes such as agile and proactive, and their different time perspectives were also mentioned (for more, see chapter 5.3.2). Certainly, this juxtaposition was to highlight a fundamental difference between these constructs – however, as Alex in the group of the *entrepreneurial academics*, mentioned '*[---] entrepreneurship and university, it's not a new combination at all, it is just brought forth as a new thought.'*

Furthermore, in many accounts that included contradicting views about the entrepreneurial university, the study participants' perceptions of an entrepreneurial university were compared to their experiences of working in a university. For example, in the group of the *provincials*, the entrepreneurial university was understood mainly as an attitude, as a shift in thinking towards an experimental culture, which was not considered typical in the university – they did not speculate further on its realization nor did they talk about its implementation; they only pointed out that the shift was unlikely on a larger scale. In a similar vein, the *academic insiders* took notice of the university's culture and system in the entrepreneurial transformation process – and indeed, they did speculate about the tensions therein. They contested the idea of an entrepreneurial university especially from the perspective of whether a university (or the people there, in fact) can essentially turn entrepreneurial or, whether the bureaucratic and hierarchical tradition was too strong to be shattered. Terry brought forth the notion of intrapreneurship[26] and asked provocatively '*Are we, ourselves, entrepreneurial enough*?' This led to a lengthy discussion about a paradox that they had noticed in entrepreneurship promotion; for them, the entrepreneurial university showed up as an administrative-led project, which conflicts with what they perceived as the essence of entrepreneurship, as in creativity, critical thinking, drive and courage. For *entrepreneurial academics*, the entrepreneurial university signified increased freedom, stability and reliability – that they were able to combine their academic and entrepreneurial careers without worry. Working both in the university and as entrepreneurs seemed to trouble the *entrepreneurial academics*, and much of their discussion included concern about a possible conflict of interest, speculation about practical and technical matters

[26] In general, intrapreneurship refers to entrepreneurship within an existing organization (Antoncic & Hisrich 2003). Intrapreneurship has been defined in several different ways (see e.g. Antoncic & Hisrich 2003; Parker 2011), out of which Terry here points to intrapreneurship as a spirit of entrepreneurship within an existing organization (Hisrich & Peters 1998).

avoiding it, and stories about how they had handled these issues so far. In their opinion, the entrepreneurial university should have explicit regulations and procedures in advancing personnel's entrepreneurial aspirations whilst they work in the university. Contradiction thus appears, because the university lacks such legislation, yet it is called an entrepreneurial university (for more, see chapter 6.6.4). Jake's accounts in the group the *unpredictables* revealed a similar ambivalence. Based on his personal experience, he pointed to the university's inadequate practices and regulation, which he considered the core competence of an entrepreneurial university (for more, see chapter 6.3.3). Though Jake's experience was not recent, he seemed sceptical whether such competence was even now available in the university.

Despite the ambivalence and a certain kind of tension that I have addressed above, the study participants generally accepted the idea of an entrepreneurial university, and they recognized that there is an entrepreneurial transformation taking place in the university. Its scope and relevance, however, were questioned – why and how should the entire university become entrepreneurial, and where does it leave the university, then? Many objected the interpretation of 'the' entrepreneurial university, as it seemed to indicate too radical and profound a change; perhaps a more neutral reading of an entrepreneurial university depicting it as one possible paradigm among many would be less provocative and pervasive, and thus, more acceptable. In addition, since many study participants recognized some entrepreneurial elements already existing here and there in the university, perhaps tooting a horn of the entrepreneurial transformation was seen as a bit artificial and unnecessary. Thus, it seems that the entrepreneurial university was constructed as neither an oxymoron nor a contradiction in terms, yet there are contradictions in the study participants' thoughts.

5.5.4 Working at the university

One thing in common among all the study participants was their employment at the same university. Therefore, that commonality might have felt like a comfortable and easy talking point in group discussions where an unstructured interview method was applied and some of the attendees were unfamiliar to each other. The study participants got to talk fairly freely, without me interrupting them too often, and indeed, much of their talk was about working at the university. Sometimes, it was just a casual conversation about the everyday: familiar people, processes and practices; issues that caused worry and trouble; or some funny coincidences that everyone had heard about. Oftentimes, however, these work-related narrations reflected the study participants' perceptions about entrepreneurship and the

entrepreneurial university and developed an important theme in the construction of an entrepreneurial university.

The *entrepreneurial academics'* accounts about work focused specifically on how they had been able to combine their work in the university and their nascent entrepreneurial careers. Each had a research-based venture with links to the university, which made them wary of a possible conflict of interest and disqualification as well as other clashes with the university's conventions and traditions. They talked less about their actual companies; rather, they focused on the period during which the companies were emerging, and each shared their own experiences of the research commercialization process. Regarding their work at the university, they pointed to their entrepreneurial way of working as uncommon compared to those of more mainstream university personnel, which they referred to as the '*median types*'. Their academic work included collaboration with companies, seeking research funding, and management of research groups and projects. Their differing work profile was further highlighted by a rough conclusion that the received research funding around the table was '*pretty reasonable*'. Even though their dual position was not without problems and tensions, and it was burdensome at times, none of them wanted to go back to mere academic careers, as Martha concluded '*[---] we're not that type of people.*' Instead, they enjoyed both the intellectual substance at the university and more practical activities as entrepreneurs. They anticipated that the university's entrepreneurial transformation might encourage some of their colleagues to follow their example.

The *entrepreneurial stimulators* talked broadly about their work. These accounts included issues such as academic publishing, teaching and students, and the network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons in entrepreneurship promotion. In comparison to the other groups, a specific issue among the *entrepreneurial stimulators* was academic publishing – and how it seemed to clash with research commercialization, which they considered the 'hardcore' academic entrepreneurship and the ultimate yet consciously attenuated objective of the entrepreneurial university. They pointed to the strong publish or perish pressure in academia: that a researcher needs to publish academic work in order to succeed in an academic career, and how in natural sciences particularly, it conflicts with the process of commercialization, in which the invention or idea needs to be protected with patent applications and by securing intellectual property rights. Patrick saw it as '*balancing between the interests of a researcher and the university*' and assumed that it was one critical obstacle to academic entrepreneurship in their discipline, as he concluded: '*Ninety percent of your career development is about publishing*'. Another work-related issue among the *entrepreneurial stimulators* was teaching and students. Entrepreneurship was recognized as relevant content in teaching, but instead of separate entrepreneurship courses provided by entrepreneurship scholars, they

preferred entrepreneurship topics to be embedded in regular teaching and to be taught by the respective teachers themselves – questions then arise, as in how and to what extent? They expressed their worry about students' reluctance and resistance and how to get across to students the relevance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurialism from the perspective of employability. Thirdly, they pointed to their newly appointed membership in the network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons, speculating how they could best promote entrepreneurship in their own faculties, both among students and colleagues. For the sake of credibility, they preferred promotion activities targeted to smaller groups, and there they considered the network to be of great benefit. Kevin, especially, was active and suggested different practices for their mutual collaboration. He also talked about his agenda to meet other personnel as a peer, as he said: *'I'm the faculty guy, not one of those in the administration'*, indicating that he was one of them and thus knew how things worked there.

In the discussion between the *other half* – the two lecturers – their work discourse was mostly about teaching. They talked about teaching in the university in general and in their own courses specifically. Neither had experience of teaching entrepreneurship explicitly, but they pondered whether they had had some entrepreneurial elements embedded in their courses, pointing then to projects with real-life problems and outside classroom learning. They also speculated about the increased amount and role of entrepreneurship education in the university from the perspective of relevance. On the one hand, they found it important to equip student with entrepreneurial skills, which in their opinion fell into a category of soft skills, together with the abilities to collaborate, communicate, and problem solve (cf. Chamorro-Premuzic, Arteche, Bremner, Greven & Furnham 2010). On the other hand, they were worried about the objective of increasing entrepreneurship education, expressing that surely the idea is not that every student become an entrepreneur.

5.5.5 Whom the entrepreneurial university concerns

The scope and coverage of an entrepreneurial university was one essential theme in the group discussions, and it was considered from different angles. Some speculated carefully about the breadth and depth of embedding entrepreneurship and entrepreneurialism in the university as well as whom the entrepreneurial university concerns or, rather, whom it should concern. In other accounts, the theme was discussed in a more implicit and lighter manner. Sometimes, it produced ambivalence and anxiety, whereas other times, the theme was taken less seriously.

As an example, the *academic insiders* – being among the most informed about the entrepreneurial emphasis in the university – accepted the idea that the

entrepreneurial university is a project that concerns the university entirely. They understood the broader meanings of entrepreneurship, but in their opinion, entrepreneurship as '*whatever*' was not without problems in promoting the entrepreneurial university. There were, for example, issues of relevance, purpose and importance, as Scarlet reminded them: '*[---] if it aims at something for everyone, it turns out to be nothing for anyone*' (see chapter 6.1.3). They then speculated about alternative foci of an entrepreneurial university, the most likely being '*the start-up scene*', which they soon found to be too limited and restrictive. Then again, they doubted whether the entrepreneurial university could actually take into account the wide array of meanings of entrepreneurship that exist across the university – and where would that then leave the entrepreneurial university, or the university, particularly?

The *entrepreneurial academics* had a more straightforward and concrete interpretation of whom the entrepreneurial university concerns. For them, the idea of an entrepreneurial university was mostly about advancing and supporting university personnel in their efforts in becoming entrepreneurs; thus it concerned those who had entrepreneurial aspirations. The paucity of entrepreneurial activities within the university was often pointed to in their accounts, such as in Timothy's comment, '*[---] and then there is the majority [of the personnel] that is further from entrepreneurship*'. Students with similar ambitions to entrepreneurship were also briefly mentioned, and they were seen as a likely target group of the entrepreneurial university.

For the *other half* then, the extent of the entrepreneurial university was a matter of discipline. They speculated on which disciplines were counted in and which were left aside, and Priscilla, particularly, criticized the entrepreneurial university for being exclusive: '*[---] in my opinion, it [entrepreneurial university] rules out some disciplines*'. According to her, in the end, only a few disciplines seemed to meet the criteria (for more, see chapter 6.5.7). In the group of the *unpredictables*, the matter of discipline also came up, and it was addressed both explicitly and implicitly. Helen and Rebecca worried that the entrepreneurial emphasis marginalizes social sciences, which in their opinion leads to a dysfunctional university. Jake had a strong natural science view in his accounts, and he drew on his personal experience as he talked about entrepreneurship in the university. At times, Paul was pushing the scope of the entrepreneurial university away from the matter of discipline, and his main concern was that entrepreneurship promotion as shallow and ill-defined might clash with the academic tradition and values and thus neglect many working in the university.

In the group of the *entrepreneurial stimulators*, the extent of the entrepreneurial university was brought forth from yet another angle. In their discussion, the entrepreneurial university concerned students and teachers alike – the former as those to be equipped appropriately to meet the requirements of future work life, in

which entrepreneurial skills are being increasingly put in the forefront, and the latter as those to provide these critical skills to their students. In their accounts, the *entrepreneurial stimulators* talked about how to advance students' entrepreneurialism, as in how to embed entrepreneurial content in teaching and increase students' awareness of the importance of entrepreneurial skills from the perspective of employability. Kevin, for example, told the others, how he had been able to meet both students and teachers in his appointments around the faculty: '*[---] I've paid visits mostly to the graduating classes, to talk about entrepreneurship, but at the same time, the staff gets to know these things, too.*'

Interestingly enough, the academic discipline played a less apparent role regarding whom the entrepreneurial university concerns than what it first looked like. When I started the analysis, it first seemed like the study participants perceived the entrepreneurial university as being mostly about what they understood as hardcore academic entrepreneurship, and thus concerning predominantly the STEM disciplines.[27] As the analysis proceeded, I noticed that the role of the discipline grew smaller and that there were other subject matters – as I have discussed above – which had an influence on whom the entrepreneurial university was seen to concern. In fact, the *other half* and the *unpredictables* were the only groups in which the discipline was clearly referred to in the speculations about the (too narrow a) scope of the entrepreneurial university. In the other groups, the matter was less explicit, yet it was lurking in the background. The *entrepreneurial academics,* for example, did not mention the discipline as they pointed to the role of the entrepreneurial university as an enabler of an entrepreneurial career for a university employee; however, they only spoke from the perspective of STEM disciplines. In their accounts, they reflected their own experiences of research commercialization and referred to some of their colleagues with similar knowledge and experience. The *academic insiders* talked about the incoherence that caused uncertainty and irritation; while the entrepreneurial university was argued to concern the university entirely, the prevalent promotion discourse and scheme were seen to have a focus on entrepreneurship as an economic activity, and thus overriding social sciences, for example.

[27] STEM stands for academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The science in STEM typically refers to two of the three major branches of science: natural sciences and formal sciences. The third major branch of science is social sciences.

5.5.6 Less pronounced themes

In addition to the above presented themes that emerged in the group discussions and developed to meaningful components in the construction of an entrepreneurial university, my analysis also revealed other kinds of themes, those that were less pronounced or were scant in the sense that in contrast to the extant literature, they had less of a role in the study participants' discussions as they negotiated and constructed the entrepreneurial university. These themes were unexpectedly absent or treated cursorily in the conversations about entrepreneurship and the university. These will be presented and discussed below.

The triple helix perspective

Entrepreneurial university literature has a strong emphasis on research commercialization, technology transfer and spin-off activity (Markman, Siegel & Wright 2008). Within this tenet, the entrepreneurial university is depicted as an engine for economic growth and regional development through its interaction between industry and government (Dooley & Kirk 2007; Etzkowitz et al. 2000). Notions such as innovation, licencing, patenting, and venture creation have dominated the discussion (Göktepe-Hultén 2008; Mathieu, Meyer & de la Potterie 2008), which further highlights academic involvement in technology transfer and firm formation. This side – let me call it a triple helix perspective (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 1997; Etzkowitz et al. 2000) – was almost ignored in most group discussions, which I found unexpected. Only in two groups was the triple helix perspective developed more as a theme, but from different angles. The group of the *entrepreneurial academics* talked about their experiences of being both academics and entrepreneurs and the tensions therein (for more, see chapter 6.6.4). In their accounts, the entrepreneurial university allowed for their dual positions, however, they were sceptical about such a practice expanding and taking root in the near future. Rather, they presented themselves as 'going against the grain', that they were entrepreneurial exceptions among the mainstream university personnel with more conventional academic careers and attitudes. Sometime during the discussion, it focused on the university's 'innovation pipeline', of which each had a piece of a story to tell (for more, see chapter 6.6.5). In these accounts, the triple helix perspective developed more into a meaningful theme; otherwise, it did not play a significant role in the *entrepreneurial academics'* construction of an entrepreneurial university.

In the group of the *unpredictables*, Jake shared a personal story about his research commercialization endeavour (for more, see chapter 6.3.3). In his opinion, such an experience would not have been possible in an entrepreneurial university. Even though his story was very much on topic and it was given plenty of room in

the discussion, it remained a single narrative, which did not develop into a critical or collective theme in the group's construction of an entrepreneurial university.

Besides the examples among the *entrepreneurial academics* and the *unpredictables* that I presented above, the triple helix perspective sometimes unfolded as a likely condition for a university being entrepreneurial. For one part, there was a concern that the entrepreneurial transformation would turn the university into one of those entrepreneurial universities with a focus on technology transfer, research commercialization and other 'hardcore' academic entrepreneurship activities. For another part, these same factors were used to point out the scarcity of entrepreneurship within the university, as comments regarding the low licensing activity and small number of patents in the university indicate. In both cases, thus, academic entrepreneurship was perceived as techno-economic activity.

Contrary to the extant entrepreneurial university literature, in which the triple helix perspective is abundant and seems to be dominant, its role remained relatively minor in my research. Sure, there were bits and pieces here and there including the triple helix perspective as the groups talked about entrepreneurship in the university, oftentimes however, these narratives were loose and terse so that they did not really develop into a proper theme, but rather remained fragmented and unconnected. Possible explanations for the paucity of the triple helix perspective in the construction of an entrepreneurial university are many. For example, the study participants come from a multidisciplinary university, in which the assortment of disciplines extends beyond the STEM disciplines that are traditionally regarded as a more likely seedbed for entrepreneurship. In the University of Turku, the representation of other disciplines such as humanities and education may have extended the understanding of academic entrepreneurship beyond techno-economic activity. In addition, the university has been actively highlighting the wider meanings of entrepreneurship in its entrepreneurship promotion, which may have had a broadening influence on the ways in which entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university are understood.

Entrepreneurship education

In recent years, entrepreneurship education has become an increasingly critical area of research, practice and policy (e.g. Kozlinska 2016). Because of the imperative of entrepreneurship in higher education policy and universities' entrepreneurial reorientation trend, there is significant growth in the number of entrepreneurship courses and programmes in academia. For these reasons, I found it surprising that entrepreneurship education did not ascend to greater importance in the construction of the entrepreneurial university among the study participants.

Many study participants were involved in teaching at the university, but only a few taught entrepreneurship. While teaching in general was discussed, for example, from the perspectives of pedagogy, curriculum, and learning, not many mentioned entrepreneurship education. The theme emerged among the *academic insiders* and the *unpredictables* as they debated the content and objectives of entrepreneurship education from the pedagogical and theoretical points of view. In these discussions, two main approaches to entrepreneurship education were detected: a narrow view with a focus on the education of students to become business owners, and a broader view aimed at helping students become entrepreneurial and utilize entrepreneurial competences more generally in order to create value (cf. Liguori, Corbin, Lackéus & Solomon 2019; Jones & English 2004; Gibb 2002). In addition, participants speculated about the sensibleness and purpose of the current trend of highly recommending entrepreneurship topics, even making them mandatory, for all university students irrespective of their discipline.

Apart from these conversations, entrepreneurship education did not really evolve to a critical component in any group discussion. It did, however, appear particularly in the accounts among those study participants who were engaged with entrepreneurship scholarship and/or those with pedagogical proficiency, yet other themes overrode entrepreneurship education in the construction of the entrepreneurial university. Nevertheless, those spontaneous speculations here and there about the pedagogics and theory-base of entrepreneurship education point to a growing concern between the tendency of adopting the broader definitions of entrepreneurship (as more than business activity) and wondering whether entrepreneurship education can then remain entrepreneurial (see Berglund & Verduijn 2018).

External stakeholders

In the literature, universities with an entrepreneurial emphasis are typically characterized as dynamic and collaborative (Etzkowitz et al. 2000), viewed as active contributors to innovation, technological development and economic growth (Zhang et al. 2016). The inclusion of the third task of social and economic development is seen as part of universities' entrepreneurial turn (Foss & Gibson 2015; 2017; Nelles & Vorley 2010), and such an expansion of their role and activities further highlights universities' engagement in the 'real world' (Zhang et al. 2016; Guerrero et al. 2016). No more are universities seen as '*isolated islands of knowledge, but rather, as institutions increasingly engaged with their environment*' (Zhang et al. 2016, p. 657).

Against this backdrop, the absence of external relations, resources, networks and the like in the accounts of the study participants was unexpected. Instead, there was a particular focus on the university inward, and the entrepreneurial university was

constructed as intramural. The study participants' accounts touched upon a wide community of actors and stakeholders in the university – e.g. researchers, teachers, students, administrators, and management – as well as an array of activities therein – e.g. research, teaching, the third task, management and administration, commercialization and other activities regarded as economic/entrepreneurial – whereas the world outside the university was mainly left aside. In my research, external stakeholders as a topic of discussion barely emerged, nor did it develop to a theme in the construction of an entrepreneurial university.

The group setting may have had an influence here. It is said that group discussions might generate more critical views than individuals alone would (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p. 178) because faults and sensitive topics seem to be easier to discuss in groups (Wilkinson 2004, p. 180). The absence of external stakeholders as a theme in the group discussions might thus indicate that it was not considered a concern in the university's entrepreneurial transformation. Instead, emphasis was put on themes perceived as more unsettling, and issues concerning the university personnel and their work, the entrepreneurship strategy, and its internal consequences – that is, issues within the organization – overrode those that were considered less worrisome – those of external concern. Furthermore, as the entrepreneurial university project is still in its early phase at the University of Turku, it might have focused the discussion on topics that seemed more familiar, as in those within the organization.

In light of my research, it should be restated that even though collaboration between the university and external stakeholders is emphasized in entrepreneurially oriented universities (Sam & van der Sidje 2014), the entrepreneurial transformation also involves internal development of the university (Etzkowitz et al. 2000; Gibb 2012, Gibb et al. 2009; 2013), thus the organization *inside* plays a significant role.

6 Six stories of sensemaking

In this chapter, voice is given to university personnel, and it centres on the group discussions presented in story format, in which the study participants discuss and negotiate entrepreneurship in the university context – that is, the sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university. Each story provides an individual setting among a company of university personnel who have been grouped together purposefully based on certain criteria (for details, see chapters 4.2.4 and 5.1). Now, let us meet the *academic insiders*, the *entrepreneurial stimulators*, the *unpredictables*, the *provincials*, the *other half*, and the *entrepreneurial academics* as they make sense of the entrepreneurial university.

6.1 The academic insiders

Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry compose the first group in my research.[28] Based on their profound knowledge and experience of entrepreneurship and the consequent central role regarding entrepreneurship in and across the university, I have named the group the *academic insiders* (for rationale and introduction of this group, see chapter 5.1.1).

6.1.1 Setting of the first story

I have arranged the group discussion to take place on the premises of the study participants' department. I show up with plenty of time, arrive at the meeting room that has been booked for us, and check that everything works – I have the recorder ready, paper, Post-it notes and pens for brainstorming, some extra paper, my list of themes and questions as well as an open, curious mind. I welcome Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry as they, almost together and laughing, enter the meeting room. I feel excited; after a lonely period of desk work, this is a delightfully social

[28] To respect the study participants' anonymity, I use pseudonyms in all of the groups in my research.

and concrete phase of the research project. Right now, when looking at familiar smiling faces, I am happy that I decided to start with people whom I know.

At first, we small-talk a bit and then I introduce the task – the purpose and objective of this group discussion, how it serves my research, and what I expect from their side. Obviously, I have presented my research already in the e-mail invitation earlier, but I think that a recap is a good introduction to the subject matter. The group is curious about the composition of the other groups and the ways in which I have identified the study participants. I tell them about the selection criteria for the study participants as well as the other group discussions yet to come. I also underline that this is the very first group discussion, and I am looking forward to any comments, feedback and suggestions regarding the session. With such remark, I hide neither my enthusiasm nor being new to the situation. Instead, I let everyone see my excitement and imperfection; after all, I am a PhD candidate taking her first steps in to fieldwork.

We start with brainstorming. I have all tools set on the table: a poster with the words *entrepreneurship* and *university* written on it, several packs of Post-it notes of different colours, and pens. I invite the group to discuss entrepreneurship and the university, and at the same time, to generate words that they associate with each construct on Post-it notes and place them appropriately on the poster. My idea of brainstorming is to have a light introduction to the topic at hand and an orientation to the conversational framework of the session. I have assumed that Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry are talkative; however, I really do not know how they play along in a research setting. Luckily, they start talking vividly and make casual jokes while performing the given task – I find the atmosphere relaxed and productive. As they finish the task, they have generated a mind-map with 34 Post-it notes associated with either entrepreneurship or university. We leave the mind-map on the table so that it can be referred to during the discussion if necessary.

Interaction is lively in the group, and everyone contributes. At times, there are differing, even opposing views and opinions, but they are discussed in a smooth, respectful and humorous manner. Compared to the other group discussions in my research, this is by far the lengthiest. Certainly, a relatively large group size has an influence on the duration of the discussion – it takes time for everyone to get a say – as has the dialogical and thorough manner of the conversation. In addition, Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry tend to look back at particular episodes and stories for reflection in their narration, and my occasional participation in their interaction further prolongs the duration of the group discussion.

Initially, when I contacted the study participants, I asked them to schedule three hours for the group discussion. I had assumed that such duration would give plenty of time for the brainstorming and the conversational discussion thereafter. Regarding this group, my estimation turned out to be incorrect; right from the beginning, the group delved into the brainstorming so thoroughly that it took a lot longer than I had

expected. However, as soon as I realized that they delivered exactly the kind of rich and storied material that I preferred, I relaxed and simply let them talk. In fact, while the group discussed the mind map, they addressed many of the themes that I had had in my mind. Hence, an important takeaway message from the first group discussion was to trust the process. For instance, this group was self-directive in the sense that independently they went further in their discussion than I thought they would without my intervention. Their urge to talk about the entrepreneurial university (even in the beginning, when I was only thinking about entrepreneurship in the university on a more general level) and their knowledgeable references to the University of Turku's recent profiling as one might indicate that they, having been informed beforehand about my research topic and objective, were well oriented to a discussion about the entrepreneurial university. Another interpretation is that they, having knowledge about the entrepreneurship promotion in the university, were keen on talking about the entrepreneurial emphasis and transformation. In either case, it seems that the subject matter is relevant and important to Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry, and it becomes obvious that they are willing to contribute to my research.

After the discussion, I get some feedback freshly, as I requested. Comments include general feelings about the session (conversation-like setting was good, broad yet interesting topic, it was nice to have an opportunity to talk with colleagues), remarks regarding my role (my occasional involvement did not bother them, I was easy to talk to/with), and some concrete tips for the next sessions (remember to take a photo of the mind-map, keep the timetable). I appreciated the feedback because I was unable to assess the group discussion clearly and objectively myself – all I felt was relief and happiness at having conducted the first group discussion, and at the same time, I was worried about how it went and how I got along with the group. Luckily, the next group discussion was not scheduled to take place for two weeks, which gave me enough time to reflect on both my experience and the feedback.

The transcription phase revealed that my involvement was greater than was my initial intention. Contrary to my aim to be merely a facilitator with a few topics of interest to be cast into the discussion, I did talk quite a lot, not just asking for more information, or leading the sometimes-rambling discussion back on track, but also contributing to the discussion with my own experiences and perceptions. Perhaps the familiarity of the group and the lonely days at the home office got me excited and talkative. My involvement did not seem to bother the group, but it causes me to think further about my role in the group discussion and its possible influence. Surely, I participated in the construction of the research material not only by posing questions but also by intervening in the discussion; my occasional nods, smiles, laughter, additional questions and comments all had an influence on the story's development and its outcome. Only later, after having conducted every group discussion and transcribing all the material, I realized that this very first group discussion was

actually a lot better than I first assumed, and it generated good-quality research material.

6.1.2 About complexities and tensions in entrepreneurship

The group is precise and thorough in their narration. In a similarly detailed manner, they pause around the notion of entrepreneurship in order to answer to my question about how they perceive it. Besides this particular episode, the complexity of entrepreneurship is a theme that carries all along the group discussion. The extract below, in which each shares a piece of story about their understanding of entrepreneurship and its advancement, illustrates the ambiguity of the concept and the group's uncertainty thereof.

Kimberly: [---] When I started [working] here, I had no idea about entrepreneurship; my dad had a company, there's been a succession, so perhaps it's that then, I thought. [---] Now, I've learnt that entrepreneurship is much more. I think that it can be whatever [laughter]; it can be one's own attitude, a way to act as a manager, a way of action within an organization, or it can be linked to businesses, to their creation or running – that is, whatever – and that's what confuses me, too.

Kitty: Yep, to me, it seems that there is an aspiration to widen the definition [of entrepreneurship] so that it can mean anything to anyone, but still, I've noticed that people don't buy it, and often it goes back to the definition of starting and running of a business. [---] I feel like we've learnt to use this specific rhetoric regarding entrepreneurship, but it hasn't really instilled in us.

[All laughing]

Sarah: Yeah, and sometimes you just slip a wrong answer. [laughter] [---] In my mind, entrepreneurship is attached to boldness; it's a new way to create value, which often concretises in monetary or material well-being.

Scarlet: Yeah, I've been pondering this a lot, too. To me, it [entrepreneurship] is about new creation and value creation in different contexts, and an own, unique way to act.

Terry: That was clear-cut. Initially, when I came here, I understood entrepreneurship only as business activity. Later, I've learned about

intrapreneurship; that is, attitude and activity on personal and group levels, being independent and entrepreneurial.

The dialogue above demonstrates that Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry recognize the complexity of the notion of entrepreneurship, and that there are many meanings attached to it. According to their interpretation, entrepreneurship can be viewed as an economic activity and further, as an entrepreneurial attitude towards all aspects of life – in fact, as Kimberly suggests, it can be '*whatever'*, and such ambiguity causes confusion, even resistance, among the group. Kimberly and Terry, particularly, communicate the idea of progress in their chronologically built accounts. Accordingly, in the beginning, they knew very little about entrepreneurship and understood it solely as an economic activity, but their later exposure to entrepreneurship in a scholarly context has advanced their knowledge in the sense that they now understand the broader meanings of entrepreneurship. Kitty's comment indicates the same, and it also addresses a tension between what is considered the informed and knowledgeable definition of entrepreneurship and that of a more mundane interpretation – the wrong one? – into which they still tend to '*slip sometimes*', as Sarah jokingly says. These together led to an observation of an *absent subject* in the group's sensemaking. Their speculation implies that somewhere is an authority giving guidance on how to interpret entrepreneurship correctly, and accordingly, the formal reading includes the broader meanings of entrepreneurship. Terry's later conclusion amplifies further the interpretation of the absent subject: '*It feels like, there are so many understandings of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university and what they mean in your own work that it feels like, is your perception wrong? That there is somewhere the right answer.*' Based on all these speculations concerning the notion of entrepreneurship, Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry seem to acknowledge the broader meanings of entrepreneurship but accept them only partially. While they talk about entrepreneurship in a broad manner, their interpretation includes ambiguity and uncertainty.

Besides the speculation about how they themselves perceive entrepreneurship, the group hypothesizes the ways in which entrepreneurship is understood across the university. Here, they point to its narrow, business-related understanding, which they assume to prevail in the university, and how that understanding affects its perceived relevance, as Kimberly concludes: '*It might be difficult to understand what's in it [entrepreneurship] for me.*' A wider interpretation of entrepreneurship seems thus necessary in entrepreneurship promotion; however, its relevance and applicability are also speculated on. In fact, the group's analysis of the complexity of the notion of entrepreneurship addresses the impasse that they perceive in entrepreneurship promotion in the university; a straightforward, business-related reading of

entrepreneurship is concrete, yet exclusive, and thus meaningless for many in the university. Similarly, a more receptive interpretation of entrepreneurship that recognizes the broader meanings of entrepreneurship (as more than an economic activity) is assumed to be more inclusive but is vague in its reading (how does entrepreneurship 'as more' translate in concrete terms?), and thus it too remains meaningless for many in the university. In the group's opinion, this calls for open discussion about the objective and purpose of the entrepreneurial university. However, they feel that challenging is not accepted: '*I'm not sure, it feels like, this [entrepreneurial university] is seen to bring only good for everyone, and it's not allowed to be analytical or critical.*'

In the discussion about the university's entrepreneurial transformation that follows the speculation concerning the notion of entrepreneurship, the group detects yet another aspect of entrepreneurship, and Terry poses a question: '*Are we, the organization [the university] and individuals, entrepreneurial? And what does it mean to us after all?*' As a response, they start giving illustrations of various everyday practices that address bureaucracy, uniformity and control across the university, including, for example, a lengthy and slow process of upgrading classroom facilities, rigid procurement procedure, and issues of management. These, seen as contradicting with entrepreneurship, in their opinion exemplify that despite the ongoing entrepreneurial transformation, the ethos of entrepreneurship has not taken root yet, nor has it been internalized in the university. And a question remains: will it ever?

6.1.3 A university for entrepreneurship?

Considering all the groups in my research, the *academic insiders* are, admittedly among the most informed about the entrepreneurial commitment in the university. Their familiarity with the entrepreneurial emphasis, and the entrepreneurial university particularly, unfolds in many of their accounts. For example, they list various entrepreneurship events and activities that they know of and/or have attended, they talk casually about the entrepreneurship strategy that underpins the university's entrepreneurial transformation, and they refer to the key personnel responsible for the entrepreneurship promotion familiarly by their first names. Furthermore, they start rating some of the entrepreneurship events based on their personal experience, and those who have been engaged with developing the entrepreneurship strategy in the university point to that work, too. Therefore, it is especially interesting that despite the group's distinctly above-average knowledge and involvement in the entrepreneurial university project, they comment that it is too abstract and ambiguous to be understood comprehensively. Sarah verbalizes their mutually shared confusion by arguing that '*It [entrepreneurial university] lacks a*

concrete objective – where is it aiming?' She continues that she is uncertain about the ways in which the entrepreneurial university turns into reality. The group is of the opinion that the undefined objective of the entrepreneurial university leaves the whole idea vague and insignificant, thus casting doubt on its relevance and suitability: '*If it aims at something for everyone, it turns out to be nothing for anyone.*' They then continue with speculating about the alternative objectives and scopes of the entrepreneurial university. Would a narrow focus on start-ups with a concrete objective setting (e.g. a certain number of new start-ups per year) be more relevant than a broader view that accepts '*entrepreneurship as anything*'? At the end of their speculation, they end up preferring the broader view, even though it reverts them back to wondering about the lack of a concrete objective. This paradox between the objective setting and a relevant centre of attention in the entrepreneurial university keeps emerging here and there during the discussion, and it seems to be one critical component of this group's sensemaking about the entrepreneurial university.

Another matter of vivid speculation on the university's entrepreneurial transformation concerns the university strategy. Scarlett, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry talk about the entrepreneurship strategy in a critical manner; however, they do not point to specific faults or flaws, nor do they discuss the content of the strategy. Rather, the critique is less specific in nature, and it concerns the rationale and motive of the selected emphasis on entrepreneurship. Furthermore, they wonder at the dissonance that they have noticed between the strategy statement and the everyday in the university.

> *I can say, the strategy and vision versus the everyday; in my opinion, they don't really meet here in the university. In fact, they are quite far away from one other. I mean, there is much talk about the entrepreneurial university and all that it involves, yet how much it really concerns us working in different faculties, subjects and groups? They seem to be quite far from each other. (Terry)*

Certainly, there is a strong experience of opposition concerning the entrepreneurial university; however, what exactly they oppose is not clearly stated. In the extract above, Terry points to the dissonance between the strategy and the everyday, but he neither explains the entrepreneurial content of the strategy nor how the everyday conflicts with it. Instead, by referring to this contradiction, Terry is opposing the entrepreneurial university; he asserts that in contrast to the university's official announcement, the entrepreneurial university is not here (at least yet). Similarly, with the frequent use of phrases such as '*administration-led*', '*administrative project*' and '*top-down approach*', the group points to the hierarchic and formal nature of the entrepreneurial transformation, which further conflicts with

what they perceive as entrepreneurial. This in their opinion also casts doubt on the idea of an entrepreneurial university.

Kitty: I don't know, there's something in the way in which entrepreneurship is promoted, is it very entrepreneurial? In my opinion, there is a clash in that sense that a bureaucratic and top-down activity is not entrepreneurial.

Kaisu: Yes, and does it encourage then…?

Kitty: If the objective is that the university personnel should be entrepreneurial, do they [the administration?] themselves act entrepreneurially?

Terry: True, there is a kind of confrontation here.

6.1.4 Drawing from scholarship of entrepreneurship

The group has a strong collective character of academic expertise in entrepreneurship. Certainly, one of the criteria in selecting this particular group in my research was their scholarship in entrepreneurship; however, in contrast to the other groups that also included some entrepreneurship scholars, the character is especially strong among Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry. The whole group with a similar knowledge profile might have been an amplifier to stress their expertise in entrepreneurship, as for instance Paul, being the only with such scholarship in the group of the *unpredictables*, neither emphasized his knowledge nor his involvement in the entrepreneurship strategy work during their discussion. He took the position of an entrepreneurship scholar and leaned noticeably on his expertise only when he challenged the others to see entrepreneurship in a broader manner. Furthermore, Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry consider me a peer entrepreneurship scholar, and thus knowledgeable in entrepreneurship, which again might have intensified the scholarly nature of the discussion.

The group's scholarship in entrepreneurship unfolds in their use of the established academic convention of referring to research and scientific discussion in their articulation. Most of those references are from the broad field of entrepreneurship, although there is an occasional representation of social sciences in their accounts, too. The three separate quotes below exemplify the group's preference for scientific rhetoric in their argumentation.

Based on research, I've been thinking [---]. (Kitty)

[---] I don't mean the Schumpeterian creative destruction, but rather [---]. (Terry)

It's kinda funny, that we talk about entrepreneurship education as something new and revolutionary though it bases on theories of the 19th and 20th centuries, on Foucault and others, so easily, one might look a bit silly, if one doesn't know the background and just hypes these. (Scarlet)

A casual reference to some of the commonly distinguished classical academic figures, such as Peter Schumpeter (economist) and Michel Foucault (philosopher), points to the group's collective-perceived academic expertise – surely, everyone (in the group, plus me) knows these classical texts that are referred to in the course of discussion. Furthermore, it indicates that it is assumed that we share the same professional vocabulary. Correspondingly, the group expects similar scholarly argumentation in addressing and promoting the entrepreneurial university, as Scarlet's query '*On which theoretical background is it [entrepreneurial university] supposed to draw?*' demonstrates. For the sake of credibility, they are looking for a decent theoretical support for the university's entrepreneurial transformation, which is too scarce in their opinion.

In addition to the science-based articulation, the group's knowledge of entrepreneurship is brought forth by comparison. As an example, Kitty's question '*Is it [entrepreneurial university] relevant to others [in the university], if it's not clear even for us?*' indicates their proficiency in entrepreneurship compared to many others in the university, thus giving more weight to their critique concerning the entrepreneurial university and entrepreneurship promotion more generally. This particular comment also points to the vagueness of the entrepreneurial university project, which is one of their main concerns and causes of criticism. Finally, their multidimensional and comprehensive consideration, together with an accurate communication manner, further illustrates their profound knowledge of entrepreneurship.

In their scholars' role, Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry keep a certain distance from the entrepreneurial university. With their thorough commenting and references to research, they speculate and problematize the entrepreneurial university in a precise and pedantic manner, which is a common convention in scientific debate, but at the same time, such argumentation is distant and 'clean', as if they look at the entrepreneurial university from an outside perspective. Similarly, instead of asking for concretization to the vague-perceived entrepreneurial university, they long for a science-based explanation of the objective setting and implementation of the entrepreneurial university. Such distancing is in line with the earlier observation concerning the group's speculation about their understanding of

entrepreneurship being learned, but sometimes forgotten, referring to an absent subject (see chapter 6.1.2).

6.1.5 Is there a future for the entrepreneurial university?

Towards the end of the discussion, we start talking about the future prospects of the entrepreneurial university. Heretofore, the discussion has included speculation about the entrepreneurship strategy, as well as the objectives, motives and outcomes of the entrepreneurial transformation. The critical tone in the discussion is apparent, and much of the criticism is directed at the implementation of the entrepreneurial university. Nevertheless, Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry admit that the entrepreneurial university is rather a new initiative, and it takes time to get things up and running and rooted across the university. Therefore, I ask them to imagine what the entrepreneurial university would look like ten years from now.

Sarah: [---] Well, in a big picture, I see the entrepreneurial university profiling within the University of Turku as one function to survive and to get more funding in the context of [the] recently reformed funding model of universities. I believe that in ten, twenty years or so, this idea is worn out, and we don't talk about entrepreneurial university anymore. Instead, we've come back to be solely a university, which hopefully includes many of the issues and ideas that we've been discussing now. [---] University, full stop; that should be enough, there's so much promise in the word.

Kitty: I don't believe either that this [entrepreneurial university] is a permanent thing. With a new rector and a strategy, it might change rapidly. Maybe we don't yet enter being a university, full stop; but maybe we turn out to be something else. Perhaps a Future University, or whatever, but I guess that the start-up fuss will calm down, and something new appears; there will be a shift to AI or other [innovations] that we don't know yet. They are those of their time.

Sarah: Yep, and they have their specific functions.

Kitty: Right. However, they won't last for long.

Terry: I don't believe that the term [entrepreneurial university] will be used anymore in ten years, but the question is: how much of it remains, or, has something in our operations changed in ten years? [---] Considering the current trend, I guess that in ten years neither the terminology nor activities exist. Ok, I'll put a question mark here; though I don't believe that the term stays alive,

instead, it fades away as one -ism, but we can still do something about our organizational activities and practices.

Scarlet: I hope that [entrepreneurial] activity remains and becomes more established in the university. I don't care whether we use certain terminology or not, but what matters is, how it [entrepreneurship] is embedded in the everyday life. I think that the university as well as the entrepreneurial university should adapt with the times.

Kitty: That is, being entrepreneurial.

Kimberly: Yes. I really hope that some of this transforms into permanent procedure, but there's no need to announce anything specifically. Also, I'd like to see, as Sarah said: a university, full stop; that a university is enough, without any additions or prefixes.

For Scarlet, Sarah, Kitty, Kimberly and Terry, the future of the entrepreneurial university seems uncertain, and its existence unlikely. None of them really anticipates the current terminology – entrepreneurship- and innovation- related vocabulary – to last for long in academia. Firstly, as the remark '*the university, full stop*' indicates, they consider the university such an established institution that it stands easily alone and does not need temporary prefixes, of which 'entrepreneurial' (university), in their opinion, is a topical example. They see academic entrepreneurship as a transient ideology, which reflects higher education policy discourse and the current values and objectives in the society more generally. Therefore, they do not expect the entrepreneurial university project to be sustainable. Rather, they suspect that new ideologies will continue to appear and disappear, and some of them are more sustainable than others. Secondly, the group has a firm belief in the university's brand and authority that it holds up the current, temporary-perceived ideology of entrepreneurship. They are of the opinion that academic entrepreneurship is important, but instead of putting it all under a single ambiguous label, such as the entrepreneurial university, they would rather see it as one possible paradigm among many in the university. Thirdly, though they are sceptical about the rationale and duration of the entrepreneurial university project, they appreciate many of the processes and practices that it has initiated and advanced in the university. Overall, entrepreneurship promotion has brought forth fresh thinking, which they hope to take root and intensify even if, as they assume, the emphasis on entrepreneurship eventually shifts elsewhere, to some new, emerging ideologies. In fact, they consider the content more important than the terminology; and hence, they are not worried about the likely disappearance of the label of the entrepreneurial

university. However, a critical question remains: can a university as an organization become and remain entrepreneurial?

6.2 The entrepreneurial stimulators

The second group in my research consists of Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison. They are members of a university-wide network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons in the university, and because of this role, I call the group the *entrepreneurial stimulators* (for rationale and introduction of this group, see chapter 5.1.2).

6.2.1 Setting of the second story

Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison arrive almost together at the meeting room in the department where I work. I have arranged the group discussion to take place there. Madison is new to me, but I am familiar with the three others, whom I have met around the topic of entrepreneurship across the university on different occasions.

As they sit down, Kevin takes a lead naturally; he introduces himself spontaneously and starts familiarizing himself with others by asking about their situation: who they are and where they come from. Taylor and Patrick are from the same faculty; otherwise, the group is unfamiliar to each other. During the discussion, Kevin shares willingly his experiences of advancing entrepreneurship in his department, and in so doing, he uses stories and rich illustrations. He also has a tendency to round up the sometimes-scattered and lengthy narration among the group as he summarizes their accounts and conceptualizes their ideas and thoughts. The others comply with Kevin and participate easily in the discussion, which results in a relaxing and talkative atmosphere. Everyone contributes, though Kevin and Patrick, who also has a tendency to storytelling, dominate the session at times. They have rather differing orientations; Kevin is an optimist and he thinks that entrepreneurship can bring new opportunities to the university, whereas Patrick, perhaps because of his earlier experience of a poorly run organizational change within their department, is more dubious about the university's ability to effect transformation. In the group discussion, these two views are in a dialogue and commingle with the more neutral views of Taylor and Madison, whom the occasional dominance of Kevin and Patrick seems not to bother, as they also get to share their thoughts, but they are briefer and milder in expressing those than their more verbose counterparts.

The lively discussion among the group is rich and all over the place; sometimes Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison even seem to forget what they are talking about, or at least, lose the plot in the narration. The group is very self-directed in their conversation, of which good examples are the following vignettes:

- I ask the group about how they perceive entrepreneurship. The discussion that follows my query is very rambling. Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison start pondering various definitions of entrepreneurship, move on to challenges of communicating it to their students and colleagues, then continue with issues regarding science policy and stock markets, after which Kevin pulls the far-gone discussion back on track by saying: '*Now, let me try to summarise these to Kaisu…*'
- On another occasion, after Patrick's longish, critical monologue about earlier rearrangements in their department, Taylor reminds him that we are here to talk about entrepreneurship in the university, not about structural changes within their department. Patrick argues that there is a connection between the two issues – it just takes some time for him to get there. But he also gives the others a say and, later on, refers more concisely to his experience with the organizational rearrangement.

Both examples point to the group's self-directedness and their ability to talk freely and openly about entrepreneurship in the university in the sense that the discussion did not require much of my intervention. In fact, despite the occasional rambling, the group discussion covered most of the issues that I had in mind without my guiding it much, and the study participants even directed the sometimes long-winded or beside the point discussion back in the right direction. Nevertheless, I have ambiguous feelings about the participants' talkativeness and active approach during the session. On the one hand, I like the chatty atmosphere and I am happy to notice that the interaction is easy and natural among the group. Indeed, I let them talk as much and as freely as possible. On the other hand, it seems that regardless of my questions Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison say what they want and consider important, and sometimes their verbosity takes such avenues that I feel I am not at all in charge of the discussion. This, however, leads to unexpected outcomes too, as the group takes up many issues spontaneously that I had not even thought about. For instance, they speculate about their roles as liaisons in their faculties in promoting entrepreneurship in the university, especially from the perspective of collaboration. They also toss out ideas about the ways in which to advance the work within the network of liaisons. At the end of the day, I notice that the group's active and self-directed way of contribution, which made me insecure at times, provides me with fresh, rich and many-sided material for the analysis.

The discussion is one of the lengthiest in my research. Obviously, the group's broad and abundant manner of communication and dedicated attitude towards entrepreneurship promotion through their liaison role were good grounds for such a thorough discussion. Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison seemed to realize that the

discussion was a good opportunity for networking and idea generating among a few members of the network of liaisons, which they consider a loose and unknown device in the sense that they have only limited knowledge about the other members – in fact, they have not even met most of them. The group had some good ideas for advancing entrepreneurship in the university, and regardless of their sometimes-sceptical thoughts, they saw entrepreneurship as relevant and topical content in the university and their role of liaisons as important in promoting entrepreneurship across the university, in their own faculties particularly.

After the group discussion, Kevin and Patrick are not in a hurry, and they stay for a while and reflect on their group discussion experience with me. Soon, we start talking about the upcoming rector election at the university. At the time of the group discussion, the results of the first round of the rector election have just been announced, and we speculate about the name of the rector-elect of the University of Turku. The current rector is known for favouring entrepreneurship, and it has gained a stronger toehold in the university during his term of office, but Kevin and Patrick think that there might be a change in emphasis as the new rector might prefer other issues to entrepreneurship in the new strategy of the university. They also speculate about the other strategic alternatives and whether those can really replace entrepreneurship, which has already been given such a central role in the university.

6.2.2 How to define entrepreneurship?

Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison have a wordy and many-sided discussion about the ways in which they understand entrepreneurship and interpret its various meanings. They construct entrepreneurship as both a commercial and an attitudinal phenomenon. In their discussion, the commercial side of entrepreneurship brings forth challenges regarding ideas, inventions and starting up a business, whereas the attitudinal side makes entrepreneurship more commonplace and mundane. In the end, Kevin summarizes their thoughts in the following way: '*Entrepreneurship is an aspiration to commercialise one's knowledge or expertise.*' Everyone in the group accepts the definition, as it seems to take into account their perceptions of entrepreneurship in a broader manner in the sense that it does not necessarily mean that one needs to become an entrepreneur. Accordingly, they highlight that in their interpretation, knowledge commercialization is not only about business activity but rather it is important when seeking a job of any kind and has a connection to career development, too. In fact, they consider commercialization, as they see it, a central (entrepreneurial) skill for university students of any subject.

In contrast to the definition of entrepreneurship that the group discusses and agrees upon, they argue that in general, entrepreneurship is understood too narrowly

in the university context, and it is mostly attached to the '*hard sciences*'[29] and innovation activities. In this way, entrepreneurship remains irrelevant for many, because students seem to think that '*If there's no invention, entrepreneurship is not for me.*' Madison's cynical argument, '*It's so easy to think that medicine and other [natural sciences] take care of business so that others [humanities] don't have to*', concludes the group's criticality and reveals a paradox in promoting entrepreneurship in the university: too narrow a focus (on natural sciences) is itself an antithesis to entrepreneurship. The group further reflects that the term *entrepreneurship* is challenging because it automatically assumes economic activity, which is scary for many students, especially in humanities.

6.2.3 The entrepreneurial university for students and teachers

Within the group's discussion, entrepreneurship is considered a natural part of the university. Patrick, for example, describes the work in their faculty by telling how '*we have to think entrepreneurially nowadays in order to get funding*'. Here, he refers to university personnel, researchers in the field of natural sciences particularly, and explains that such a trend challenges academic career development in the field because it creates conflicts and tensions between the traditional practice that focuses on academic publishing and the current practice that requires more innovations and inventions. He concludes that it is '*balancing between the interests of a researcher and the university*' and refers to this concern several times during the group discussion. Kevin, for his part, talks about a procedure which allows for dividing working hours between academic employment and entrepreneurship. He continues that he has many colleagues working partially in the university and at the same time, in their own companies. Apart from those conversations, the entrepreneurial university unfolds in the discussion among Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison mostly as an entrepreneurship educator in the sense that they see its role as a provider of entrepreneurial skills and attitude that are considered increasingly significant in the future work life. In this role, the entrepreneurial university concerns both students and teachers; it is seen to equip the former with the required skills and to provide the latter with sufficient knowledge so that they can promote and facilitate these skills. Therefore, in the group's narration, both students and teachers are particular target

[29] In colloquial terms, hard science is a counterpart to soft science and used to compare scientific fields based on perceived methodological rigor, exactitude and objectivity. Accordingly, in general, the natural sciences are considered hard, and the social sciences are described as soft.

groups of the entrepreneurial university, of which the following quotations are examples.

> *I have a student-oriented approach, and in my opinion, what it [the entrepreneurial university] can offer, is work life skills. In my field, many students are of the opinion that entrepreneurship doesn't concern them, but in reality, the situation is quite the opposite; in fact, many end up as self-employed, free-lancers, or they go into cooperative entrepreneurship. Because entrepreneurship seems so scary [a] word for them, I have tried to change it as work life skills. (Madison)*

> *When thinking about the future work life, we are encouraged to propose entrepreneurship and entrepreneurialism as one possibility for employment. (Taylor)*

> *After all, what we should be able to teach, or at least encourage students to see, is that as the university education doesn't prepare them to any occupation per se, they should learn to recognise their knowledge repertory in such a way that they can commercialise it. (Kevin)*

Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison speculate about the ways in which entrepreneurship content and topics could be embedded in teaching. Kevin points to the increased amount of entrepreneurship education in the university and says '*I'm pleased with the current supply of entrepreneurship courses*', whereas Madison is in favour of less clearly stated entrepreneurial content in teaching, such as the use of alumni networks to bring forth work life experiences, and thus also the relevance of entrepreneurial skills. She reminds the others that in their field, '*entrepreneurship is still often an unsuitable word, and it should be narrated differently*'.

From another angle, the group refers to entrepreneurship education as knowledge that helps the teachers in the university to advance and facilitate students' entrepreneurial skills. None of them has taught entrepreneurship, but they have varied experience about entrepreneurial content being embedded in their courses. Taylor gives an example of a study programme within their department in which there are specific courses that have entrepreneurship content, and in addition to these particular courses, they organize different events that have a more general focus on work life. For this purpose, they have invited alumni to come and talk about their careers. Furthermore, she points to plans concerning tandem teaching in a course, in which the teachers have different knowledge profiles, as in one with an emphasis on entrepreneurship and the other on specific substance in the field. Kevin likes the idea and says, '*In my opinion, it's important that students are taught entrepreneurship or*

entrepreneurial issues by their own teachers', continuing, '*The best way for students to get information about entrepreneurship is from their own teachers, and the best way for university personnel to get information about entrepreneurship is from their colleagues and peers – the reference group, that is.*' His viewpoint sets challenges, because the teachers then should have sufficient knowledge of entrepreneurship. He has, however, a suggestion: '*Could we think of an agile way to provide the teachers with entrepreneurship knowledge? Like, to provide them with appropriate material and by facilitating them along the way, based on their own interests and substance?*' Kevin's preference for agile and informal entrepreneurship support is in line with his thoughts about how the network of innovation and entrepreneurship liaisons can be utilized in entrepreneurship promotion across the university (for more, see the next chapter, 6.2.4).

6.2.4 How to promote entrepreneurship – about the network of liaisons

A specific theme in this group discussion is the recently established network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons in the university, and especially how the network could be utilized in entrepreneurship promotion across the university. Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison, each appointed as entrepreneurship liaison in their faculties, tell how they were selected. Everyone's story is different, and hence, they end up discussing what the criteria for a liaison are. Taylor is sceptical about the selection by pointing to the process in their department: '*Now that we have these entrepreneurship champions and innovation scouts, not many of those that were appointed in our department, actually associate with these issues, or even thinks what to do now.*' In her opinion, it should be first verified that the liaisons are willing to accept and competent enough for such a task. The group continues with speculation about the network's role and the liaisons' assignments. It turns out that apart from the network's objective of supporting entrepreneurship and innovation knowledge in the university, its function is unclear, and it seems that the majority of members are unfamiliar to each other.

Kevin is keen on developing the network of liaisons, and he suggests various collaboration activities to others: '*In my opinion, there's no need for heavy administrative structures or rector's order to build up a specific system. Rather, it could work out so that we [entrepreneurship champions and innovation scouts] start chatting in the social media on what has happened for us around the topic, and by the way, I paid a visit to, say, the department of geography and this is what came up there, what do you have?*' He is in favour of informality and openness, and he sees the network of liaisons as agile enough to promote entrepreneurship in the university

in an informal and open manner, each liaison '*among their peers*'. Kevin tells how he started his task as an entrepreneurship liaison:

> *In the beginning, I went to see the management of our department. [---] I was not pushing or anything, I just told them that if somewhere was a need [of information about entrepreneurship], I'd like to help. I said, "I can talk to students, I can talk to personnel, I can search for appropriate information, you don't have to be dependent on administration, because I am the designated man of this faculty." I think it went quite well, and afterwards, I got several requests to come and talk [about entrepreneurship].*

Since then, Kevin has paid visits to several classes in the university, and he regrets that he has only been invited to talk to graduating classes; in his opinion, entrepreneurship is equally relevant to first-year students. He suggests the others try a similar, relatively light activity in their departments, and offers the material that he has generated for the purpose of presentations: '*I can give you my slides, and if there's something that you find useful, you can utilise them.*' Even though Taylor, Patrick and Madison have not been as eager in their liaison's role as Kevin is, they have been active within their departments, too. For instance, Madison tells how she passes on information about various entrepreneurship events and activities, and Taylor mentions a few courses with entrepreneurial content in which she has been involved, as well some events that have been organized for colleagues in their department. They, however, look at the administration for some sort of common guidelines and material in order to promote the entrepreneurial university. Kevin objects to such instructions and sees the promotion largely as a voluntary activity based on liaisons' personal interest and enthusiasm.

6.3 The unpredictables

Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca represent randomness and unfamiliarity in my research in the sense that they were contacted and invited to participate in the group discussion based on their consent given in another study. Thus, all I knew about them was that they had participated in another study about entrepreneurship in university and that they seemed to have a positive attitude to such research in general; otherwise I did not know what to expect. Accordingly, I call the group the *unpredictables* (for rationale and introduction of this group, see chapter 5.1.3).

6.3.1 Setting of the third story

I have arrived at the meeting room with plenty of time, and while I wait for Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca to come, I check many times that everything is fine. This is the third group discussion in a row, and taking into account the good feeling from the two former sessions, my anxiety is a bit surprising. It is the randomness of the group, I then realize. While it is nice for a change to have a group of random study participants, in the sense that I am not familiar with them, I notice that it also concerns me a bit. This time I do not know what to expect, and further, I am worried about getting the unfamiliar study participants to talk in an open enough manner. Preparing myself seems to help me settle down, so I keep on checking that all works well – and thus, reassuring myself that all also goes well.

Within the group, I know only Paul, and as soon as we start with short introductions, I notice that Paul has experience working with Helen on a research project, who in turn is from the same faculty as Rebecca. Jake is new to everyone and knows no one in the group. However, it starts to look like, regarding the purpose of this session, the group gets along well. In any case, because of the reduced familiarity among the study participants, I pay particular attention to the social dynamics within the group – does it differ, for instance, from the first group, which is composed of colleagues working in the same faculty, or from the second group with a shared position and mission (though indefinite) with regards to entrepreneurship promotion in the university? It sure does, I notice right away during the session, and the details of the group's social dynamic become particularly observable when I transcribe and analyse the material. I notice that despite their apparent talkativeness, Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca talk in a formal and polite manner to each other, and somehow, the group remains distant from each other. There is less laughter and joking than in many other groups in my research, and the study participants focus on the task more seriously. Perhaps their different backgrounds and knowledge of entrepreneurship have an influence, too; at least they talk about entrepreneurship from distinctly different angles.

The session follows a customary schema: in the beginning, a brainstorming session with Post-it notes to form a mind map of entrepreneurship and the university, and afterwards, a relatively freely proceeding discussion around the subject matter. This time, the group works less together; for instance, in the brainstorming, each generates their own Post-it notes, which are then elaborated individually while the others are listening. Similarly, even though Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca discuss and exchange their opinions, each constructs the entrepreneurial university from their own point of view – it seems like there are four singular conceptions of the entrepreneurial university, which do not blend very well. These differing interpretations draw on the different backgrounds of the group. Jake's reading stems from his personal experience of research commercialization, Paul draws from both

his scholarly proficiency in entrepreneurship and a participant's knowledge about the entrepreneurial university, whereas Helen and Rebecca have less experience in entrepreneurship, but they seem otherwise relatively well informed about the entrepreneurial transformation in the university. The different conceptions in the group did not make the participants quarrel with each other; however, while they related at times, they still remained disconnected. This may have had an influence on my interpretation of a certain distance among the study participants; that despite the group setting, each seemed to construct their own understanding of an entrepreneurial university.

The discussion within the group is polite and calm, and even though Jake seems to dominate it at times, everyone gets a say. Sometimes, I pose questions directly to Rebecca who otherwise remains quite untalkative. She seems fine with her stillness, and she even jokes about it when I guide her to answer, after having proposed the group to imagine a situation in which they are to present the entrepreneurial university in their own words, and the others have already had their say. Rebecca then answers: '*I'm not sure what would I say. Nothing comes to my mind, which is quite hilarious, because we've been talking about the topic all the time.*' We all burst into laughter, after which she gives an example of her imaginary narration (for more, see chapter 6.3.6).

This time, I need to digest the group discussion a bit longer. Jake's entrepreneurial story affected me as well, and I recognize its influence in the group discussion, which, contrary to my objective of obtaining rich research material, I worry, might result in meagre and unilateral data. After the group discussion, all I can remember is Jake's story, and I feel like the session was all about his research commercialization experience and I become concerned – how can I utilize such biased material? Fortunately, a further analysis reveals that I was worrying for nothing, and my notion about the dominance of Jake's story is exaggerated in the big picture. Indeed, in this group there are many other interesting views in the construction of an entrepreneurial university, and contrary to my concern, these were not overridden by Jake's entrepreneurship story. For example, Paul, Helen and Rebecca bring forth the university's strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship, and in this vein, Paul criticizes the strategy implementation, Helen links the strategy statement to a broader education policy discussion, and in Rebecca's accounts, the 'old' university is contrasted to the entrepreneurial university.

6.3.2 Sceptics' view of the entrepreneurial university

Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca, each drawing on their own experience, discuss entrepreneurship in the university from different angles and by using a language distinctive to their backgrounds. Jake, for instance, talks about research

commercialization and natural sciences. He refers to intellectual property rights (IPR) issues repeatedly, which indicates that intellectual property and patent protection are critical issues in academic entrepreneurship in his field of science. He also talks about spin-offing, how challenging it is and how the process of research commercialization in the university could be improved. Certainly, Jake draws on his personal experience in research commercialization in his construction of an entrepreneurial university (for more, see chapter 6.3.3). Furthermore, his experience seems so holistic and significant that it has an effect on his stance on many levels, as in how he interprets entrepreneurship both in general and in university context, as well as how he interprets the entrepreneurial university and further, the whole university.

Paul's expertise in entrepreneurship is revealed gradually in the course of the discussion. In the beginning, he briefly mentions his scholarship on entrepreneurship; later, he says that he has been involved in the university's entrepreneurship strategy work, and even later, about his current commitments to the entrepreneurial university. Therefore, the others seem to anticipate an informed view from his side, and indeed, his opinions are often asked for and listened to carefully. Paul's language can be characterized as business economical, and in his accounts, he brings forth critical thinking regarding entrepreneurship as a phenomenon as well as the ongoing transformation towards the entrepreneurial university, particularly from the strategy implementation viewpoint. He points out several times that bringing entrepreneurship to the foreground in the university is a difficult, but not an impossible, task; it just requires further thinking. In a similar vein, Paul reminds the group that there is already a lot of 'entrepreneurial' in the university, which should be taken into consideration in the entrepreneurship promotion. At times, in a polite manner, he especially challenges Jake to widen his perspective on entrepreneurship beyond his personal experience. As an example, Paul argues that most entrepreneurship cases in the university are about self-employment rather than patenting or suchlike, that '*there's no IPR whatsoever involved, yet there are similar features about uncertainty*'. Furthermore, in contrast to seeing entrepreneurship as starting and running a business, which is clearly too narrow an interpretation, in his opinion, Paul suggests entrepreneurship to be regarded as '*new value creation*', which in his opinion opens up the phenomenon in a new and more acceptable way.

Helen and Rebecca define themselves as humanists.[30] They stress that their field of science is seen as an unlikely basis for entrepreneurship. Sometimes they

[30] Helen and Rebecca continually refer to humanities and social sciences as their academic reference group, and further, they call themselves humanists. With such positioning, they might want to underline their scholarly interest in human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects, and thus, highlight their perceived contrast to Jake, who represents natural sciences, and Paul, who is a senior entrepreneurship scholar.

challenge this view and criticize entrepreneurship promotion in the university for being too narrow and one-sided, and thus ignoring many interesting offerings that it might have. For most of the time, however, Helen and Rebecca accept the narrow reading of entrepreneurship in the university context, and in this way, they position themselves further away from the entrepreneurial university. In fact, they both highlight their lack of concrete experience in entrepreneurship, and Helen especially finds Jake's narration about his research-based business inspiring. She is attracted by the narration's concreteness and the '*real touch*' in becoming an entrepreneur.

Despite the apparent heterogeneity in the group's narration concerning entrepreneurship in the university, what Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca share in their sensemaking is a sceptical view of the entrepreneurial university. Their suspicion unfolds in their storytelling in different ways, as I have addressed above. For example, there is no entrepreneurial university whatsoever for Jake. Perhaps a bit paradoxically, based on his personal experience in research commercialization, the group considers him a textbook example of an academic entrepreneur, but he has not even heard about the university's entrepreneurial transformation (for more, see chapter 6.3.6). Furthermore, as they talk about the entrepreneurial university project and Jake learns about the university's strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship, he gets excited and wants to '*definitely hear more*', yet still, leaning on his own experience and thus seeing the entrepreneurial university as mostly a platform for research commercialization, Jake wonders whether the university could actually provide adequate support for such activities. In Paul's narration, then, there is no question about the entrepreneurial transformation; it is taking place in the university. However, he doubts its implementation and points especially to the '*lack of sensitivity to what the university is all about*' that he has detected. At the end of the group discussion, he reflects on his contribution and says that he recognizes the critical and sceptical tone in his speculation. He wants to explain it by saying that it annoys him that there is too much proclaiming and too little thinking in entrepreneurship promotion, and he suggests that '*we should try and understand the university*'. He then continues '*I want to underline all the good that we already have here [in the university], it should be taken first into consideration.*'

Both Helen and Rebecca have a sceptical stance towards the entrepreneurial university. In their accounts, they comment against the entrepreneurial transformation by using philosophical arguments and referring to the history of the university. In Helen's narration, she criticizes entrepreneurship in the university as a taken for granted ideology. It seems to have linkages to a wider entrepreneurship discourse in the education policy, which, in Helen's opinion, explains the current emphasis. Rebecca, in turn, is worried what good content advancing entrepreneurship might replace in the university and whether it is worthwhile, after all.

6.3.3 Jake's entrepreneurship story

We get to hear Jake's entrepreneurship story very early in the group discussion, as he opens up about his experience on research commercialization during the brainstorming that kick-starts the session. He has arranged the Post-it notes in such a manner that they constitute a storyline with a chronological order, and then he starts his storytelling. It is a long and emotional narration about a scientist and his brilliant-enough-perceived invention to be commercialized, about success that failed to materialize and about a dream that still remains.

Jake: I've been doing research at the university for years, published a lot, and at some point, I was told that 'Hey, you have such a great invention that you should start a business and start commercialising it.' I believed it and started a business with a few friends, and then I spun it off as a separate company, and only then, I started to realize that one needs knowledge and experience to run a business. [---] Spin-offing is hard, and many issues that I have written here [in the Post-it notes: R2B, patent, IPR, premises, funding] are related to it. For instance, R2B – when should the application be done, and what does it mean, actually? You see, it means that you give away the IPR; all that you've developed, you give it all to the university, and it kinda prevents the commercialisation until it is in a certain stage of development. Collaboration practices in university are undeveloped or nonexistent. If you make an invention or start doing something which is based on something that you have invented in university, in principle, the university has the IPR, but when you spin off, the question remains: what is the contract? Whether or not you pay for spinoff, or will [the] university take it so, that you've been doing research there and now you're stealing the idea, and kicks you out – that's what happened to me. [---]

Kaisu: When did you take part in R2B?

Jake: Well, we never did. We were supposed to, and we were on the home stretch [with the application], but one entrepreneur advised us not to attend, because then we would lose the IPR. I believed him, which was a total mistake, because in the R2B process we would have been able to get it [the idea] in better shape. Instead, we tried it by ourselves; we applied money elsewhere, thus not losing the IPR, but the funding we received was a loan, and when we applied for further funding, we didn't receive any. So, we had a loan, which was soon run out.

[---]

> *Jake: And the story continues. We spun off another company, thus, we focused on two issues: R&D and service. For two years, the service business did quite well, but then it rammed into competition. [---] At some point, a big international corporation bought all our customers, which killed our sales, and we had to finish the business. Meanwhile, in the other company, we had developed new IP, and we had one guy working for us, who had a new patent, and now we are here [pointing at IPR and patent Post-it notes].*

What Jake shares above is his personal human-interest story. Some years ago, he underwent a research commercialization process, during which he started a business, followed some instructions that turned out to be bad, made mistakes, and did not succeed with his business. There is also a sequel to his story, in which Jake starts and finishes another business, and currently the first business is on the brink of resurgence.

Jake constructs both entrepreneurship and university through his own tangible and admittedly difficult experience. In his accounts, he uses specific terminology inhering in research commercialization language, such as spin-offing, patenting, and intellectual property rights (IPR). In addition, he refers to the Research to Business (R2B) programme[31] that the university coordinates, which he never attended, and which causes ambivalence in his narration. According to Jake, the withdrawal might have been a mistake; however, participation in R2B would have given his IPR to the university, which he finds unfair. These distinct expressions of IPR and R2B and suchlike indicate that Jake constructs entrepreneurship (in the university context) mostly as academic entrepreneurship, and more specifically, as starting up and running a research-based business. His following comment addresses a consequent straightforward view on entrepreneurship '*…it is fairly easy, if you have an idea that you sell something. [---] kinda easy to understand, that hey, it can be used [for] this, I buy one.*'

Jake's experience has resulted in a pessimistic view about academic entrepreneurship: '*After the business is established, you start making one mistake after another – and you make all the same mistakes that the others have made before. You take into account all advice, "Don't do this, do that", but once you do as you were told to, you notice it wasn't right either, and that there is a third way, which is the right way, but you can't know it before you've first taken the wrong way. This is what starting a business is for a university researcher.*' In Jake's opinion, academia is an unconditional and challenging environment to start a business, university is an unfair and incompetent business associate, and successful spin-offing from a

[31] Research to Business (R2B) is a funding instrument of Business Finland. Funding aims to generate new research-based business (new start-ups or licences).

university is almost impossible with the current praxis, culture and funding options. The following, rather bleak, extract summarizes further Jake's thoughts about entrepreneurship in university, especially from the perspective of research commercialisation: '*What I've been thinking for the last five years is, that when you go to entrepreneurship, all of a sudden you become a competitor for the university. When you start to spin off, you are kicked out and told that now you have a business of your own, there's nothing for you here anymore, so take your pipettes and leave. Afterwards, you are told that the university is about to start a business that makes the very same things, and you compete with them.*'

To me, Jake's narration is so desperate that I feel like I want to give him an alternative view on academic entrepreneurship, a hopeful one, hence, I tell a story, which I heard in previous group discussion with Kevin, Taylor, Patrick and Madison. Kevin mentioned a practice that allows university personnel to divide their working hours between the university and their own businesses. Jake welcomes such a policy by saying, '*It surely sounds like an entrepreneurial university to me*', but continues in a more pessimistic tone by contrasting the example with his own experience: '*I wonder, how is it possible that there's a nest somewhere, in which people can make money with the work that they do in the university… I didn't even make money, instead, I lost all my savings, but still, they came and said to me that I've stolen from the university.'*

Nevertheless, after all the struggle that Jake has undergone and despite his dismal perception of academic entrepreneurship, he is still involved with a research-based business, and he is again in a situation in which patenting and IPR issues are topical. He contrasts success in research commercialization with a lottery win: '*It's a one per mill possibility, it's exactly the same why you fill in a lottery coupon [one] week after another'*; both are equally rare, but still, for the sake of wealth and success, one must continue trying. Later, he concludes '*[---] despite all the hardship, I still think that it's [entrepreneurship] worth trying*'.

The group discussion is influenced by Jake's entrepreneurship story. It seems that such rarely heard narration of academic entrepreneurship told by the entrepreneur himself captures everyone's attention. The concreteness of the story attracts the group, and because Jake's narration is so personal and private, including his dreams, adversities, and feelings along his entrepreneurial endeavour, we all seem to share something very intimate during the discussion. At times, Paul, by taking the distinct role of an entrepreneurship scholar, attempts to widen the narrow view of entrepreneurship that Jake has, whereas Helen and Rebecca react to his narration by stressing their limited experience in research-based entrepreneurship.

6.3.4 Alternative narrations about the entrepreneurial university

Besides the Post-it notes written and elaborated by Jake, there are also other interpretations about entrepreneurship and university in the mind map on the table in front of Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca, and similarly, the entrepreneurial university is constructed from different angles. Paul starts his reflection by leaning on Post-it notes that he has written:

> *I was thinking what entrepreneurship is, when you teach it or not. Luckily, it can be discussed not only as new business creation or as becoming an entrepreneur. It both makes it easy and difficult; because what is then left outside and what does it include, if it's considered more than those. And that's a bit challenging, because then we enter to an area dedicated to others, content-wise, I mean. Creativity, problem solving ability and suchlike, they don't concern only entrepreneurship, but others in the university, too. Yet, entrepreneurship discourse in university tries to take over some of the central activities of a traditional Humboldtian university; that is, criticalness – well, not criticalness, but – problem solving and new creation and creativity, those that belong to everyone in the university.*

Above, Paul speculates about the essence of both entrepreneurship and university, as well as their polemic relation. He argues that entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon and its meanings are controversial. University then, stands for some major human values such as civilization and learning in his narration. Furthermore, Paul's account implies doubt concerning the way in which entrepreneurship is communicated in the university. He criticizes the entrepreneurship discourse for taking some of the fundamental principles that describe the university, which he sees as confusing further the already-vague reading of entrepreneurship. In Paul's opinion, entrepreneurship should not be explained with critical thinking and problem solving, which are inherent elements of a university. Instead, he suggests that entrepreneurship should have its own distinctive contribution within the university and it should be articulated constructively in the entrepreneurship strategy: '*We should learn from the earlier and try to create something new from there, which could then look like the entrepreneurship strategy of the University of Turku*'.

Paul finds the current entrepreneurship discourse related to entrepreneurship promotion in the university incomplete in thinking and thus arrogant: '*Now that these two worlds [entrepreneurship and university] are being rapidly amalgamated, web page was booked and all that in the beginning, which is great, but still, what remains a bit unclear is where is this all leading to?*' Taken from another angle, despite the

critical tone in Paul's speculation, it might also indicate that there is already much entrepreneurial in the university, as Paul's comment suggests: '*Perhaps there's nothing terribly new cooked up – after all, what new can entrepreneurship really bring to the university?'* Therefore, he proposes that one should first take into account the university as an organization and examine what existing entrepreneurial activities could stem from the university research and activities more generally.

Unlike Paul and Jake, who draw on their knowledge of entrepreneurship in their narration – the former as an entrepreneurship scholar and the latter as an academic entrepreneur – Helen and Rebecca underline their lack of concrete experience in entrepreneurship, and they say that they look at the phenomenon from a further perspective. At first, I think that they feel like they do not have that much to say or that they stress their limited experience in entrepreneurship as a kind of a disclaimer to be taken into account in their speculations because of the others' obvious knowledge. Another interpretation assumes that with the references to their lesser experience in entrepreneurship, they position themselves as being outside the phenomenon, and thus their comments are more 'objective' than those of people who are more involved. Indeed, in their narration, they talk about the entrepreneurial university rather from the outside angle than from within. Accordingly, instead of a clear focus on the entrepreneurial transformation in the University of Turku that Paul has, or a speculation about the university's 'innovation pipeline' as Jake addresses, Helen and Rebecca construct the entrepreneurial university as one discursive device in higher education policy, and they rather speculate about the big picture concerning the wider entrepreneurial agenda that is brought to universities.

After Jake's entrepreneurship story, Helen comments that in general, academic entrepreneurship is predominantly understood as research commercialization; however, there are other interpretations '*brought on top of and beside it*' in the entrepreneurship promotion that is carried out in the University of Turku. She assumes that the broader meanings of entrepreneurship, as in entrepreneurial attitude and employability, are considered easier sells to the fields of humanities and social sciences. In this way, however, she regrets that '*the core of entrepreneurship*' fades out and the phenomenon remains nonspecific. As an example, she compares her interpretation of entrepreneurship as '*indefinite concept, question mark*' with Jake's tangible involvement in research commercialization by saying that at least his experience is concrete, though not easy at all. She finishes her speculation with the following comment: '*Whatever entrepreneurship means, why should we have only one principle that is lifted up and brought forth? It's confusing, because now it seems to be a problem that there are different views, and that we should find one harmonious view, but shouldn't a university be a diversified institution?*' Here, Helen articulates another perspective; she notes that the university is not a monolith and that the abundance of views should be respected, even when dealing with an

inherently complex phenomenon, such as entrepreneurship. Rebecca continues with a similar abstract manner to Helen's narration:

> *Without any hands-on experience on entrepreneurship [---], it just came to my mind; it is historically interesting that once philosophy studies were mandatory to all university students no matter the faculty, and what if entrepreneurship studies will replace that in the future?*

In her account above, Rebecca gives a hypothetical illustration of a university in which entrepreneurship carries a lot of weight. Within the image, she contrasts entrepreneurship studies with once-mandatory philosophy studies, and then she poses a provocative question: '*What does it tell about the meaning of a university and university education?*' It becomes clear that for Rebecca, entrepreneurship is a substitute for something – that is more philosophical and humane, perhaps? – which is already in the university, and therefore, she sees the emphasis on entrepreneurship in the university as a fundamental paradigm shift. However, she explicates neither the path nor her preference regarding the supposed shift. Based on her comments, though, one can assume her attitude toward the latter being at least sceptical.

6.3.5 A careful reading of the university strategy

There is a lot of talk about the university strategy in the group discussion. Paul, Helen and Rebecca mention entrepreneurship as one critical component of the university's current strategy. In fact, they point to the strategic underpinning of the university's entrepreneurial transformation, often in a critical and astonished manner. Only Jake is unaware of the strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship; however, despite the others' general awareness about the entrepreneurship strategy, the actual objective and related activities remain equally unfamiliar to them, too. Because none of us really know the content of the strategy, Paul takes his computer and starts browsing the university's intranet for the strategy statement, and as soon as he finds it, he starts reading it aloud to the rest of us. We learn that the university strategy is built on four main themes, namely effective research, responsible education, being a catalyst for social well-being and the economy, and community well-being. As Paul continues with his reading, we learn that the entrepreneurial university is one of the sixteen theme-specific policy programmes, which implement the strategy.

Paul's 'presentation' evokes debate, and while many of the bullet points in the strategy statement are concrete in the group's opinion, the content remains somehow undefined and distant to them. They also point out that the strategy statement includes activities and practices that have already been in use among many in the university, and only now are those being labelled as entrepreneurship and

entrepreneurial. They ponder the purpose of such renaming, and what, then, is actually unique and novel in the idea of an entrepreneurial university. On a larger scale, they speculate about the urge to give such an emphasis on entrepreneurship in the university. Quite soon, they link it to the higher education policy imperative on universities' objective setting, which they see stemming from a wider appreciation of entrepreneurship in the society.

> *Paul: [---] it's challenging that it [entrepreneurship] came, and it was assumed that everyone is aboard, but that's not the case, and now it's ok that there is an event every now and then in which all the same faces are involved [---]. I belong to those regular attendees, and it's nice to meet them, but we are, what, three and a half thousand working in the university, and it is considered fine, that there are twenty, thirty people involved.*
>
> *Helen: Yes, those that are interested, indeed.*
>
> *[---]*
>
> *Paul: Three thousand four hundred and eighty people do, most of them, totally brilliant things, which are in line with the strategy expectation. But only the twenty are considered the hardcore, the only ones doing something new. [---] What I try to say here is [---] how to connect these two words [entrepreneurship and university] so that all new creation that we do here in the university [is noticed], be it teaching methods, new research or whatever, in my opinion, it already is entrepreneurial.*

Above, Paul describes his dissatisfaction concerning the ignorance and carelessness that he has observed in entrepreneurship promotion. He points to the '*brilliant things*' carried out in the university and reminds the others that much of the academic work is about '*new creation*' that already resonates with entrepreneurship. He seems frustrated that this is not acknowledged in the entrepreneurship promotion and worries that such a narrow reading of entrepreneurship ignores the majority of the academic work in the university. Consequently, despite the strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship, it remains irrelevant to many, and it has only little endorsement among university personnel. Paul uses quantitative expressions to highlight his message, and indeed: such a low number (twenty or thirty entrepreneurship activists, considered the '*hardcore*', as he calls them, out of the personnel of three thousand five hundred) points out Paul's confusion about the rarity and randomness of entrepreneurship in a university that has been profiled as entrepreneurial. Paul's reflection relates to his speculation

elsewhere in the course of the discussion about what new entrepreneurship can bring to the university – and how (for more, see chapter 6.3.4), which points to his concern about what he sees as an underlying fault in entrepreneurship promotion: there is a lack of understanding of what entrepreneurship and the university essentially are.

6.3.6 The unseen entrepreneurial university

Because of the complexity and ambiguity of perceptions of entrepreneurship in the group, I illustrate an imaginary scene at a random scientific conference where Paul, Jake, Helen and Rebecca are given an opportunity to introduce the entrepreneurial university – what would they say? I hope that such an imaginary setting opens up their sensemaking in a more concrete manner.

Kaisu: What would you tell about the University of Turku as an entrepreneurial university?

Paul: I was recently somewhere as a speaker, and that was asked from me.

Kaisu: Well, what did you say?

Paul: I told [them] that my answer is so vague that I abstain from answering [laughter]. I did continue though, that it is strategic work that doesn't necessarily meet everyone. I also told [them] that it's challenging strategic work, because it has [grown] so quickly. I didn't continue further, I just mentioned that at this stage, it's more about strategy than concreteness. [---]

Helen: Well, I've been to some conferences, too, but I guess that I've [---] treated it more from the perspective of, well, policy, as an education policy phenomenon, and how it is a buzzword of today.

Jake: I'm sorry to say, but this is the first time that [I've heard] about the university [of Turku] being an entrepreneurial university.

[---]

Kaisu: How about, Rebecca, what would you say?

Rebecca: I'm not sure what would I say. Nothing comes to my mind, which is quite hilarious, because we've been talking about the topic all the time [all burst into laughter]. I would probably say something very vague, something like; there

are entrepreneurship courses available in our university, something like that. Most likely however, I would try to change the subject.

Here, the group distances themselves from the entrepreneurial university; they highlight that they do not know much about it and that their answers in such an imaginary situation would be vague. What is left unspoken is why they consider their knowledge of entrepreneurial university is so scant. Is it the lack of communication, their own attitude or that the entrepreneurial university is only emerging and thus not yet clearly constructed? Paul, for instance, who has told about his involvement in the entrepreneurship strategy work and being one of the regular attendees of entrepreneurship events in the university, refers to the strategy as an instrument of the entrepreneurial transformation and says '*at this stage, it's more about strategy than concreteness*'. His sentence reveals an anticipation; the idea of an entrepreneurial university may well be vague now, but he assumes that it will become more concrete over time, and thus, truer and more relevant, perhaps. Elsewhere in the discussion, Paul has expressed his concern about the implementation of the strategy, that entrepreneurship is understood too narrowly and thus the entrepreneurial university neglects many in the university. For Helen, the entrepreneurial university remains more distant and abstract; in her account, she refers to an intangible construct of education policy, which she sees directing and steering universities on a larger scope. Consequently, the entrepreneurial university, as Helen constructs it, is both a discursive device and an activity related to entrepreneurship promotion, which puts into practice the current national education policy. A bit ironically, Jake with personal experience in research commercialization in the university, and thus seen as a representative of 'true' entrepreneurship in this context, hears about the university's entrepreneurial transformation for the first time. Rebecca, in turn, highlights her experience of the externality of an entrepreneurial university by saying first that '*nothing comes to my mind*', which indicates that even the ongoing discussion about the entrepreneurial university has not increased her knowledge so that she could introduce it. She continues, however, by giving a vague example, as she stresses, about entrepreneurship courses being available in the university. Her feeling of externality is further emphasized in the final sentence '*I would try to change the subject.*'

In the discussion, the entrepreneurial university remains unseen and abstract in the sense that it unfolds as a remote and administrative '*project'*; it is something that is written in the strategy statement and policy documents. Its realization seems likely to them, but they do not know what kind of an entrepreneurial university there will be. Furthermore, there are different interpretations of its duration and permanence.

Paul: It looks like the entrepreneurial university is strategically superimposed. For time being, there is a lot of bustle, but it will be replaced with something else, with something more important, I don't know.

Helen: Yep, I find it interesting; you asked earlier, what has been accomplished in this respect? And I ask, have we reached the terminus? I mean, after all, [the] university is in a continual flux, it has also a very long tradition, and new flows come and go – is this just one more flow?

Rebecca: In the history of the university, there's been everything; a fancy trend that turns into something else. I too think that it [entrepreneurship] is now the thing, and I'm sure that there are good things in it too, and something will remain, but most likely, there will be a new trend, based on values of the society, and how the values change, perhaps something comes from the direction of the government, too.

6.4 The provincials

An outside location from the university's main campus served as a motive for the selection of this group. Following this particular characteristic of the group, which is composed of Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector, it was given the name the *provincials* (for rationale and introduction of this group, see chapter 5.1.4).

6.4.1 Setting of the fourth story

This time, I travelled a bit to meet with the study participants. Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector work on one of the local university campuses. With the help of a colleague, I have settled things remotely, and now, having arrived the campus, I am happy to find a surprisingly spacious and bright meeting room waiting for us. The brightness of the room is quite a contrast to the scenery outside; it is late December, but there is nothing Christmassy in the darkness and slush that can be detected from the window.

Hector has informed me beforehand about his time constraint and suggested meeting in private before the group discussion. He could take part in the group session only for a short while, and therefore, he volunteered to schedule 30 minutes of his time prior to the session. Even though my interest focuses on how the entrepreneurial university is made sense of collectively, and therefore, my methodological preference in data collection is a group setting, I agreed to meet Hector before the group session. We conduct a one-on-one interview in a casual manner and have a nice conversation following the same thematic issues that I had

prepared for the group discussion. I get to know Hector's stance toward entrepreneurship, and he talks about his personal experience in that respect, too; in his narration, entrepreneurship is both an economic activity and an attitude, and entrepreneurship in the university context appears as a subject for research and a third mission activity, which mostly unfolds in collaboration with companies. Despite those concrete appearances of entrepreneurship in the university, Hector considers the university mostly non-entrepreneurial, and says '*It's a public organization that lacks many entrepreneurial elements.*' In his opinion, the entrepreneurial university, at its best, could advance entrepreneurship on both local and national levels; however, the current situation in the university is not even close to that, he argues.

Hector and I are just about to finish our discussion, when there is a knock on the door, and the rest of the study participants – Rita, Leah and Janet, enter the meeting room. While they take seats around the table, I tell them that due to Hector's time constraints, we had a short preliminary discussion before this one together, which he can attend only partially. Janet then apologizes and says that she has a limited time for her participation, too. I suggest we get to work so that the four of them comprise the group for as long as possible. During a short introduction round, I learn that they are familiar to each other. Rita and Leah work as a pair in various research projects, and they all collaborate with Janet, who works in administration. I am familiar only with Rita; we have met here and there on different occasions related to entrepreneurship in the university.

There is an interesting feature in the group's social dynamics; as long as Hector is in attendance, he seems to dominate the discussion, but not necessarily entirely by his own will. Hector is considered an expert in the group, one to whom the others often give first say or ask for opinions. Issues of interest in this respect are, for instance, how Hector defines entrepreneurship and what his thoughts about entrepreneurial education are. He talks willingly about his own experience and perceptions regarding entrepreneurship and the university, which, based on his narration, are more plentiful than those of the other participants. Because Hector's attendance in the discussion is known to be limited, it might have had an influence on his occasional dominance in the conversation; perhaps the others wanted to give him the floor for as long as he was present.[32] After Hector's exit, the discussion becomes more balanced in the sense that there is more variation on who talks first and for how long. A bit later, after Janet's departure, the social dynamic in the

[32] Janet's attendance is also limited, but unlike Hector, she mentions her time constraint only briefly at the beginning of the discussion, and she does not compensate her early departure with a greater contribution. On the contrary, she is quieter than the others, on which her relatively new employment at the university might have an influence.

remaining group, between Rita and Leah, that is, takes yet a new form, as the discussion then becomes more of a dialogue between those two, resembling an everyday conversation with further informality and laughter (for more, see chapter 6.4.5). It becomes apparent that Rita and Leah have known each other for quite some time and that they work in close collaboration. In their narration, they draw on their mutual project experiences and refer to some articles that they have been writing together. Much of their discussion concerns how entrepreneurship is perceived in the university. Furthermore, they construct the entrepreneurial university collectively, by pondering the various points of views together and by asking for each other's opinions.

Compared to the other groups in my research, a distinct characteristic of this group is their geographically remote location from the university's main campus. During the session, it becomes evident that the further location is not only a determiner of the group, but also it is a specific theme in the group's discussion. Besides the apparent geographic distance, which they discuss too, their narration reveals another distance – an organizational distance. The group talks about how it seems that reforms (such as the entrepreneurial university) and other upgrades at the university arrive at their campus tardily. Furthermore, communication between the local and main campuses is described as slow at times. From another angle, the distance is considered an advantage, and the group describes how they can work on their own rather independently on the local campus, '*here, in the periphery*', as they playfully say.

Once we have finished with the discussion, Leah says that she must rush, because she has still some preparations for Christmas, which at the time of the group discussion is just around the corner. Rita is not in a hurry; instead, she stays for a while and we talk about our studies that have similar issues of interest, and entrepreneurship in university in general. She also gives me feedback about the session; in her opinion, an opportunity to discuss and reflect with colleagues was nice and valuable. After she has left, I start collecting my things, and I speculate about the group discussion. I end up with three main points, which are my fresh and immediate impressions (these first-hand interpretations, obviously, were deepened and amended later in the analysis):

- Remoteness (both geographical and content-wise): the group talked about university, entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university particularly, a bit at arm's length (for more, see chapter 6.4.2).
- Much discussion, but often a bit beside the point, and at times, I had to usher them to talk about entrepreneurship in the university. It seems – as Rita mentioned after the discussion – that the study participants valued

an opportunity to sit down and have a chat with colleagues, mainly about the everyday in the university.

- There was a general positivity regarding entrepreneurship in the university.

6.4.2 Followers' view to the entrepreneurial university

The remoteness that characterizes this group unfolds on yet another level, as it becomes evident that besides the geographically remote location that determines the group and the consequent specific theme in the group's discussion about being far from the university's main campus, they construct the entrepreneurial university from a further perspective. In their narration, Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector take a follower's view to the entrepreneurial university in the sense that they seem to monitor the entrepreneurial transformation from afar, as if it is not yet taking place there. Thus, while they discuss the entrepreneurial university, it unfolds in their accounts at arm's length; it seems to be somewhere 'out there' (on the university's main campus?). At the least, they do not talk about its objectives or execution, not to mention any concrete activities or practices. Instead, the discussion remains abstract and focuses more on the phenomenon in general. Much of their conversation concerns the various meanings of entrepreneurship and how entrepreneurship is perceived across the local university campus.

In comparison to many other groups in my research, there is less talk about the university strategy among Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector. Actually, none of them speculates about the strategy; only Rita points to the entrepreneurial university as '*one of the university's focuses*' and on another occasion, Leah briefly mentions the strategy and suggests that they should create their own local version of the entrepreneurial university, but otherwise, neither the objective nor the content of the strategy is discussed in the group. This might be an indication of the tardiness that was mentioned concerning upgrades and mission statements in reaching the local university campus – the idea of an entrepreneurial university might not have arrived there yet. Another interpretation is that the university strategy is not necessarily considered that important within the local university campus, and perhaps the strategy work is envisoned to be done elsewhere in the university.

Yet another characteristic in this group discussion indicating a follower's view to the entrepreneurial university is how they talk around the subject of an entrepreneurial university rather than about it. In fact, unlike the three previous groups in my research, in which the study participants seemed keen to talk about entrepreneurship in the university and the entrepreneurial university particularly, it feels like this group needs to be pushed towards the subject matter. Thus, at times, I provoke them with questions, especially concerning the entrepreneurial university.

Oftentimes, however, the conversation that follows my query is rambling and only loosely attached to the subject matter. Sparse references to the entrepreneurial university during the discussion remain abstract and distant, because Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector do not really talk about it, but rather, they distance themselves, pointing to the entrepreneurial university only cursorily and generally. In their narration, the group talks rather about the everyday in the university by drawing on their own work there and by pointing to particular characteristics of the local university campus. When they do talk about entrepreneurship, it is on a general level, but they do not talk much about entrepreneurship in the university per se. For instance, a conversation between Leah and Hector that begins with a focus on entrepreneurship in teaching soon changes and becomes a chat about course objectives and student feedback more generally. Furthermore, Hector, whose teaching is often referred to in the course of the discussion, does not teach entrepreneurship, and thus the narration remains relatively loose and abstract in this respect. He however, points to some extracurricular activities that he has been organizing, which he finds entrepreneurial. Similarly, when Rita and Leah refer to students and their narrow perception of entrepreneurship, their interpretation is not based on their experience in teaching, but on research that they are conducting on the local university campus. Janet, for her part, brings forth the perspective of the administration, and in her narration, entrepreneurship unfolds as an active and outward attitude in one's work. Finally, in other groups in which entrepreneurial education was an equally absent theme, entrepreneurial skills were brought forth as a significant means of employability, whereas by contrast, in this group, these issues were not discussed at all.

6.4.3 Interpreting entrepreneurship through different lenses

At the beginning of the group discussion, Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector work effectively in silence around the given task of brainstorming, and after they have finished, the mind map of entrepreneurship and university looks relatively compact to my eye. The group has been economical in the sense that they have written clusters of attributes on Post-it notes, which results in a lower number of notes on the poster than in the previous group discussions. However, when they start elaborating the mind map, I notice that despite the small number of Post-it notes, there is much content in them. As an example, entrepreneurship as a phenomenon is described with expressions such as: being an entrepreneur, intrapreneurship, attitude, behaviour and skills. Furthermore, there are attributes that are seen to be characteristics of entrepreneurship (e.g. risks, new ideas and old ideas in a novel way) and entrepreneurs (e.g. courage, enthusiasm, social, and persistence). Perhaps due to the subject matter of my research, the group has interpreted the university mainly in

relation to entrepreneurship. Accordingly, there are Post-it notes located around the word university with words such as *entrepreneurship pedagogy*, *research on entrepreneurship*, *teaching entrepreneurship*, and *intrapreneurship*. These issues, however, are not much elaborated in the discussion. University is further described with the words *rigid*, *hierarchical*, *scientific*, and *theories*.

We leave the mind map on the table, and I tell them that they can reflect on it throughtout the discussion. Then, I guide the group to talk about entrepreneurship by asking them how they perceive entrepreneurship. After a small pause, Leah gives Hector a say by telling us that earlier this week she and Rita wanted to ask him the very same question, and now that he is here, she would like to find out his thoughts. Hector gives a laugh at first but starts explaining his view, which is similar to his earlier narration face to face with me. In his opinion, there are two aspects to entrepreneurship, namely, economic and attitudinal. He sees the former as undesirable and impossible in the university context; however, he mentions that when it comes to the entrepreneurial university, an economically oriented university with market-based operations would be '*leading by example*'. Hector explains the latter aspect with an illustration: if students at the university, to whom he refers to as customers, are not satisfied with the supply, nothing really happens in the university, but '*if we [the university] were a company, we'd go bankrupt*'. He concludes that '*the attitudinal side is the most important*'. Hector's explanation is followed with a longish chat initiated by Leah about student feedback and course objectives. She is keen to know what Hector thinks students value in teaching and how he, as an experienced and respected teacher, takes into account entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial attitude in his own teaching. The discussion that begins with a focus on entrepreneurship starts rambling between Leah and Hector, until Janet gets the group back on track as she takes hold of the attitudinal aspect that Hector pointed out in his account earlier. Janet compares her experiences between her former and current jobs. She is of the same opinion as Hector about the lack of financial driver and says that, perhaps due to the relatively secured funding of universities, she has noticed in her work that the university personnel are not that motivated to market their work nor the university. She thinks that such low motivation signifies a low level of entrepreneurial attitude among university personnel.

Rita says that she has been pondering various meanings of entrepreneurship quite a lot. She lists different entrepreneurial activities, such as setting up a company, part-time entrepreneurship, and working co-operatively or in collaboration with other entrepreneurs. She concludes that defining entrepreneurship is a complex task, and she prefers the broader interpretations that, in addition to the economic activity, take into account the attitudinal side. Leah agrees and says, '*The more one thinks it [entrepreneurship], the readier one is to accept all kinds of definitions.*' Rita then

gives an example of people working in NGOs,[33] which in her opinion requires a particular entrepreneurial mindset: working for non-profits and also getting others to work pro bono demands great creativity. She sees there similarities to work in the university, which she describes as '*creating something new*'. She does not elaborate further, however, what she means by creativity in the university context. Leah concludes that now, after having heard Rita's narration about defining entrepreneurship, she realizes why she has always thought that entrepreneurship is not her cup of tea; it is because she links entrepreneurship to '*progress, advancement and a constant need of new ideas and development*'. She continues that she has never considered herself as imaginative or inventive enough.

Now, Hector's time is up; he stands up, apologizes and departs the discussion. I thank him, we all say goodbyes and the rest of the group continues the conversation. They move on to discussing what entrepreneurship means in the university context. Rita and Leah start drawing on their ongoing project, in which they have conducted interviews concerning entrepreneurship among university students and teachers. Based on the interviews, Rita argues that students' perceptions about entrepreneurship are '*traditional, narrow and negative*'. She says that students see entrepreneurship as a last alternative in a situation when there are no other career options available and as something in which one is always involved. Rita thinks that students' negative perceptions about entrepreneurship can be challenged by increasing the visibility of entrepreneurship in the university context and by bringing forth its diversity – that it is not only about starting and running a business, and even if one works as an entrepreneur, it does not have to be a 24/7 job. She then lists some activities that she considers a remedy in this respect: '*embedded teaching*' to attach entrepreneurial elements to non-entrepreneurship courses, establishment of a student-driven entrepreneurship society, firmer collaboration with companies, more events to meet entrepreneurs and to get familiar with companies. Leah agrees, and she too points to their research, as she underlines that most students and teachers understand entrepreneurship as starting a company. She then speculates about what would be a better expression than entrepreneurship but cannot find any. '*Yeah, we should stop talking about the e-word, shouldn't we?*' suggests Rita, and Leah complies. Again, Rita refers to their study and says: '*[---] it's a good point, which students brought up in the interviews, that maybe [entrepreneurship is possible] with someone with substance, if you're not entrepreneurial yourself, but you have friends with whom you'd have a great know-how combination, it could be possible. So, that*

[33] An NGO, a non-governmental organization, is an organization that is formed independently from government. NGOs are typically non-profit entities, and many of them are active in humanitarian activities or the social sciences; they can also include associations and clubs that provide services to their members and others.

you're not graduating from the university thinking you never ever become an entrepreneur.' Here, Rita points to an idea that she considers important in order to be able to promote entrepreneurship among students: contrary to students' narrow understanding, there are varied ways to carry out an entrepreneurial career, and those should be promoted.

Janet gets back to her observation about the lack of entrepreneurial attitude among the local university campus personnel, which unfolds in their minimal marketing efforts. Again, by comparing her previous job to the current one in the university, she expresses her astonishment about the reluctance to market the university and the academic work that is accomplished there. She says '*People don't see it as part of their work. If you work here, it's your job to communicate it outward and be active… that's been challenging here.*' In her opinion, social media is a powerful communication medium, and even though communication there might be challenging, it is the reality of the present-day. She admits that she herself is not inherently '*that type of a person*' who shares her thoughts on social media, yet she sees it as something that is everyone's duty, and an indication of an employee's entrepreneurial attitude.

6.4.4 About the 'periphery'

During the group discussion, Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector talk quite a lot about the everyday at the local campus of the university. They say that the campus had been a regional aspiration for a long time, and ever since its formation, it has been highly valued in the region. The city, local economic life in general and some companies are mentioned as collaborators of the university, which is seen as one manifestation of entrepreneurship in the university. In their accounts, the local university campus unfolds as an active, respected and vivid organization, and in that respect, they seem to enjoy working there.

In their narration, the group does not talk that much about the university's main campus; rather, their focus is on their own, local campus. None of the group members points to collaboration with any of the faculties or departments in the main university; only Rita and Leah mention some local colleagues with whom they have been working together. Otherwise, based on the discussion among Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector, it seems that the connection between the two campuses is relatively loose. The distant location is mentioned several times during the discussion, either briefly or with speculation that is more detailed. In addition, the interpretation of the distance is varied. For one part, it is seen to give freedom and independence, to which Hector points when he describes an approval process regarding new courses or study modules. Leah has an interest in teaching, and she has asked Hector, whom she values in this respect, about how a teacher can be adaptive in the sense that the

content of a course can be revised or new courses developed if needed. Hector says that the teacher has a lot of responsibility in that matter, and the university's local governmental body has final approval of the new content or course. Earlier, the process took longer and it was more bureaucratic, because '*We had to send the material to Turku for approval*', says Hector. In that sense, the distance gives them more independence, and an experience of rapidity and agility. Another positive marker of the distant location of the campus is the group's idea of promoting entrepreneurship there with local ingredients – that is, by taking into account the specialities of the region. Thus, instead of simply following the example of the university's main campus, they should try to find '*the best local interpretation of an entrepreneurial university to be promoted and executed here [on the local campus]*', as Leah suggests. They ponder the idea further and like it, because they consider the local business ecosystem vivid and vital.

For another part, the distant location in the group's narration signifies disconnectedness to the main university. Rita, for example says, '*We [refers to the group] know that the entrepreneurial university is in the focus of the university, but it's not well recognised here [in the local campus]*', and continues, '*People here are like, "a-ha, what's with that now, last time it was about innovations and now we are an entrepreneurial university, what does it mean?" They are a bit like, these things come and go*'. It seems that Rita does not believe that the university's strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship is generally understood or accepted on the local university campus. Her comment also indicates that she feels like these emphases change continuously. This time, however, Rita and Leah especially are pleased with this specific emphasis on entrepreneurship, because they see that there could be synergies with the university's main campus. The entrepreneurial university might thus mute some of the negative perceptions of the remoteness of the local university campus and the consequent low visibility within the large university organization – they are moving from the border towards the centre of the university. Furthermore, Rita and Leah assume the university's emphasis on entrepreneurship will also have a positive influence on their personal position within the local university campus.

Rita: Well, we are like, yes, entrepreneurship; it's wonderful if it is now in the focus.

Leah: Yep, and we're now trying to make friends here.

6.4.5 Change in social dynamics: a dialogue between Rita and Leah

Towards the end of the discussion, the group of four diminishes and becomes a pair, because only Rita and Leah are able to attend the entire session. After Hector's exit, the social dynamic in the group changes and the discussion among Rita, Leah and Janet becomes more balanced, because no one is respected over the others, instead, they all contribute quite evenly by drawing on their own experiences at the university. The threesome continues talking about entrepreneurship in the university until it is time for Janet to depart. After she leaves, I become worried about the session continuing with only two participants; however, I soon notice that Rita and Leah are firmly with me, and they continue their contribution notwithstanding the decrease of the group size. In fact, they both seem to grow in their role as study participants, and they are not only responsive to my questions but to each other. They talk broadly and openly about the subject matter and issues that they find important. The social dynamic within the remaining group thus changes again, and this time, the communication becomes more like a dialogue between Rita and Leah, resembling an informal everyday conversation with joking and laughter. I only pose some questions at times when directing the discussion towards the theme of the entrepreneurial university; otherwise, I focus on listening to their narration.

Rita says that the entrepreneurial university is '*an attitude, a state of mind*' and she continues by describing it as '*seizing an opportunity, testing things, and being open-minded*'. Thus for her, the entrepreneurial university unfolds as an abstract and attitudinal condition, which leads to a certain kind of behaviour. Leah agrees with Rita and concludes '*[---] failing should be acceptable [in the university]; it's ok if one [idea] out of [a] hundred goes forth*', by which she further highlights the importance of a particular attitude; entrepreneurship is inherently an uncertain activity, and she calls for a similar acceptance of failures in the (entrepreneurial) university. Regarding the University of Turku as an entrepreneurial university, Rita says that it is too difficult to assess the whole university and pauses for a while. Then she starts recalling what is written on the web pages of the entrepreneurial university: '*What was there… innovative, agile and something. I'm not sure, it [is] compose[d] of many things, but notably, research commercialization and all the infrastructure; how to do it, I mean.*'

The speculation about the entrepreneurial university remains abstract and distant in Rita and Leah's discussion. Even though they are familiar with the university's emphasis on entrepreneurship and they point to the entrepreneurial university in their narration – Rita even remembers some of the catchphrases on the web pages by heart – it feels like they construct the entrepreneurial university a bit at arm's length. I try to stimulate the discussion in a more concrete direction, and I ask how they see the role of entrepreneurship in the university in the future. Regarding the university

context, they answer tersely, and continue with a wider speculation about entrepreneurship and the future working life.

Kaisu: How do you see the role of entrepreneurship in university in the future?

Leah: Rita, you say first.

Rita: Well, if you think, for example, entrepreneurship policy in the EU, it is, as I've said, that entrepreneurship seems to be considered a cure to the whole world. I don't think its significance will wane; instead, I guess it will grow stronger.

Leah: I agree that it [entrepreneurship] will grow even stronger, quite a lot, actually.

Rita: Yep, and at the same time, if we think of social security and unemployment benefits, all that, so more and more will encounter self-employment at some point.

The dialogue above exemplifies how entrepreneurship in the university is treated cursorily in Rita and Leah's discussion. They bypass my question concerning the subject, and instead, they look at the phenomenon in a broader context of future working life. They anticipate the role of entrepreneurship to grow in both its quantity and significance. Leah sees adolescents as change agents, and she gives an example of a shift in attitude by describing her acquaintance's recent professional choices. After graduation from a university, she took a job for a short period, took a few months' break to travel abroad, and then came back for another short-term job. She is likely to continue in the same way. Leah expects such a formula, '*a portfolio career*', as she puts it, to become common especially among young people. Rita agrees, saying, '*[---] when you have kids, it won't work anymore*'. Rita and Leah see that the diversity in employment, of which Leah's narration about her acquaintance is an example, gives more room for entrepreneurship in the future working life.

6.5 The other half

Esther and Priscilla, two university teachers with no notable experience in entrepreneurship, form the smallest group in my research. In line with the aforementioned characteristics, I describe them as *the other half*, which points to their assumed perspective from the 'backwater' of the entrepreneurial university (for rationale and introduction of this group, see chapter 5.1.5).

6.5.1 Setting of the fifth story

I am sitting on a chair in one of the meeting rooms in our department and preparing myself for this fifth group discussion. The room is far too big for the purpose of this session and the large number of chairs around the table emphasizes the small number of attendees of this group. After the burdensome task of engaging participants, I am pleased to have reached Esther and Priscilla, the only two members of this group. But at the same time, I am a bit worried by the small size of the group – or is it a group at all? Can two people actually form a group or is a pair a more precise expression?[34] Despite the ambiguity of the definition, my concern about the small size rests on my experience in the previous group discussions, in which the number of participants has varied predominantly between four and five, and the flow of discussion has been very good.[35] I suspect that an open interview between two participants does not evolve into a fruitful and multifaceted conversation easily; instead, it might resemble a flat and reactive Q&A session. Therefore, I am prepared to engage myself more than I did in the previous group discussions; perhaps I need to ask the participants to elaborate their utterances more often or use the list of extra questions to encourage their contribution.

Neither Esther nor Priscilla, whom I met in an entrepreneurship education training that was organized a while ago in the university, has apparent experience in entrepreneurship (that indeed was the very intentional characteristic of this group). However, during the discussion, I learn that Priscilla's husband is an entrepreneur, which might have given her another angle on entrepreneurship besides her perspective of a university teacher whose students often end up as freelancers and whom she believes need to be equipped with an entrepreneurial attitude and skills in order to meet the working life requirements.

In the beginning of the session, Esther and Priscilla express their uncertainty about the subject matter, and whether they really have that much to say, but at the

[34] There are varied opinions on what constitutes a group; for some, a group stands for two or more people, whereas others see three as a minimum for a group. Even though I ponder the appropriate name for the entity that Esther and Priscilla form, a more critical question is how the small size affects the open interview and the social dynamics between the two (and myself). Therefore, to make it coherent with the rest of the research material, I decided to call the duo a group and in a similar way, I refer to their session as a group discussion. I problematize the consequences of the small group size in the main text of this chapter.

[35] As I have described in the previous group discussion with Rita, Leah, Janet and Hector, the latter two had to leave the discussion before its end, which resulted in a circumstance with only two study participants. Both remaining members contributed well within this new situation; however, it did not dispel my concern about social dynamics within a small group, such as with Esther and Priscilla.

end of the day, I notice that they had plenty of opinions and perceptions about entrepreneurship in the university. One distinctive feature in their discussion, obviously because of their backgrounds as teachers, is their focus on teaching; in many of their accounts, they talk about entrepreneurship in relation to teaching and pedagogy, and as the discussion moves forward, I find out that in their opinion, entrepreneurship education is an interesting and important topic.

Perhaps the small size of the group resulted in a faster pace. Even though I tried to enrich the discussion by going through all the questions on my list and even proposed new ones in the course of the session, it is shorter than the others. In addition, in contrast to the other groups with more participants, both Esther and Priscilla got plenty of room to express their perceptions and opinions, and they contributed relatively equally to the conversation.

Neither Esther nor Priscilla is particularly talkative, and one reason for their reticence might be their interpretation of their minor knowledge with the subject matter as well as the fact that they do not know each other so well. They respond to my queries and react to each other's accounts. Indeed, at times, their discussion is a dialogue, but it never really evolves into a lively conversation, let alone a rambling chitchat like many other discussions in my research, but rather, they both are quite curt in their talk. All this resulted in a bit distant and not so deep discussion about the subject matter. One possible interpretation is that due to their lack of experience and unfamiliarity with entrepreneurship, there was not so much personal history to draw on when Esther and Priscilla spoke; hence, their accounts remained short and included merely reactive responses to my questions regarding entrepreneurship in the university.

Afterwards, when Esther and Priscilla have left, I stay in my seat and reflect on the five group discussions so far. A specific note from this session is that the context really matters. Both Esther and Priscilla have little experience in entrepreneurship, and being teachers in the university, their accounts about entrepreneurship in the university include predominantly educational issues. Furthermore, neither of them talks about research commercialization, patenting or the like, which, for instance, were very much present in Jake's accounts in the *unpredictables* group.

6.5.2 Observers' view of the entrepreneurial university

Esther and Priscilla look at the entrepreneurial university from a perspective a bit far out; in fact, they highlight their little knowledge and experience in entrepreneurship right from the beginning of the discussion, as they both point to the fact that neither has taught entrepreneurship and that they do not know so much about the entrepreneurial transformation in the university. However, as they are here, taking part in my research, I reassure them that their perspective is valuable and important

– I am specifically interested in the different understandings and constructions of an entrepreneurial university widely across the university, not only among those with experience and knowledge in entrepreneurship but also among those with less involvement.

During the discussion, Esther and Priscilla maintain their aloof position relative to entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university by casual comments, which refer to their inexperience and unfamiliarity in entrepreneurship. It seems that they have positioned me on the opposite side, because from time to time, they ask questions about the entrepreneurial university from me. Furthermore, their accounts include expressions such as '*confuse'* and '*wonder'*, which indicate that they are uncertain in their sensemaking of an entrepreneurial university. Esther particularly, ponders her comments before saying anything. She either starts or finishes her utterances often with a mitigating '*I don't know*' or '*I haven't really thought [about] it much*', which reflects her experience of unfamiliarity with the subject matter – she does not know how things are, but here and now in the group discussion, when giving it a thought, this is what she thinks. Compared to Esther, Priscilla is more daring in her comments, and she contests the current state of affairs more often than Esther does. The extract below expresses their attitude in the discussion and points to the general difference between Esther and Priscilla's accounts.

> *Kaisu: In your opinion, do you think it is possible to advance entrepreneurship in university?*
>
> *Priscilla: I guess it can be advanced, because everything can be done, but a more essential question is: is it reasonable? [---] To me, all this hassle over entrepreneurship, it makes me wonder what if universities become only [---] servants of society. I do believe that the university has a greater mission than that.*
>
> *Esther: I am not sure if I can answer that [laughing].*

The distance to entrepreneurship that Esther and Priscilla keep during the discussion is revealed in their construction of an entrepreneurial university from the position of an observer. Esther is a bit hesitant in her observation; she seems to consider entrepreneurship not her cup of tea. The few examples that she brings up as her '*minor experience of entrepreneurship*' have only a weak tie to entrepreneurship, in her opinion. Firstly, in her story about a course that she co-runs with her colleague, she refers to the course as exceptional compared to the '*normal'* courses that she usually teaches. She explains the difference of this course by its entrepreneurial content. Esther concludes that it is difficult to assess, however, what can be counted

as an entrepreneurship topic or entrepreneurial content in teaching. She also points out that her colleague is the responsible lecturer of this course and an expert in entrepreneurship, and with these remarks, she underlines her minor role and little knowledge in this respect (for more, see chapter 6.5.6). Secondly, Esther constructs her work in the university as slightly entrepreneurial in the sense that the income is not self-evident '*If there's no project, there's no money and thus, no employment.*' The resemblance, however, remains uncertain, as she further reflects her experience in entrepreneurship in a doubtful manner: '*No more than in applying for research funding and similar; if that is considered entrepreneurship.*' Finally, Esther points out several times that she has not really thought about entrepreneurship in the university before the group discussion, which further implies that the topic is unfamiliar to her.

Priscilla's distant position has more nuances than Esther's fairly stable positioning. In the beginning of the discussion, when they both underline their negligible experience in entrepreneurship and disconnectedness to the entrepreneurial university, they compare themselves to those in the university who are generally assumed to be more experienced in entrepreneurship, and in so doing, they refer to personnel who teach entrepreneurship and/or are involved in knowledge transfer activities. They seem to think that the entrepreneurial university is more relevant to university personnel with such experience of entrepreneurship. During the discussion, Esther carries her position of an observer throughout, whereas Priscilla repositions herself, as she, being first among the group of unexperienced in entrepreneurship, compares herself to the others alike, and then, she is not anymore that far from the entrepreneurial university, but rather, she becomes above-average involved in entrepreneurship. This reflects the experience of expertise and knowledge as relative. Indeed, Priscilla relates that unlike most in her faculty, she has participated in some events concerning entrepreneurship education that have been organized at the university and that she has been disseminating information about the entrepreneurial university in her faculty. Her sentence '*I think that here [at our faculty] I am the one that has brought these things up*' exemplifies her activity concerning entrepreneurship.

> *Within the work community, I feel like being a messenger, I consider it's kind of my duty, I'm not in it out of passion [laughing], but rather I see it as my responsibility to feel like being a part of the entrepreneurial university. I forward the information that I receive regarding the entrepreneurial university in my department. [---] When I try to talk about entrepreneurship, I need to consider the situations where to bring it forth, because it provokes also negative feelings. (Priscilla)*

Both Priscilla's previous quotation and the above piece of her story address an ambivalence; she has (been given?) an active role concerning entrepreneurship promotion among her peers in the department, through which she considers herself involved in the university's entrepreneurial transformation, but she feels the need to underline that the role is involuntary, that she takes it as a responsibility. Regarding information about entrepreneurship, Priscilla seems to be a gatekeeper, and accordingly, she passes on information about the entrepreneurial university. Despite her criticality towards entrepreneurship promotion, she is concerned about how her colleagues perceive entrepreneurship. Perhaps she hopes to engage a few in her department in entrepreneurship, too. The same ambiguity appears in her critique about the entrepreneurial university's restrictedness; in her opinion, the entrepreneurial university concerns too few subjects in the university, and she calls for a more inclusive approach. However, while she would like to be counted in, she fails to see how that would happen, because she represents a branch of science that she sees as neither likely nor an appropriate associate with entrepreneurship (for more, see chapter 6.5.7).

6.5.3 University and entrepreneurship – not an obvious combination

The brainstorming that initiated the session works well as an introduction and a warm-up to a relaxed conversation; I notice that after a somewhat careful and akward beginning, both Esther and Priscilla start talking casually while they perform the task. When they are finished, I ask them to elaborate on their conclusion, a mind-map of entrepreneurship and university. It reveals that university is a more familiar concept to them; Esther and Priscilla have generated eighteen Post-it notes associated with university, whereas entrepreneurship receives only ten. The respective wordings in the Post-it notes are located closely around the two concepts, and Esther and Priscilla treat them separately, through comparison; at first, they look for differences between entrepreneurship and university, and they list counterparts, such as small/big, new ideas/knowledge, and enthusiasm/patience. In addition to the detected contraries, they characterize university with the words *freedom, internationalism*, *teaching*, *research*, and *science*, whereas they attach *money*, *creativity*, and *innovation* to entrepreneurship. Perhaps the brainstorming encourages looking at the two concepts as separate and concentrating on their differences; anyhow, based on the mind map it seems that Esther and Priscilla construct entrepreneurial university as contradictory, because they specifically focus on the opposites and differences between entrepreneurship and university. At the end of the brainstorming, however, they change their perspective and find some integrative

attributes too; they mention risks and tolerating uncertainty as being present in both entrepreneurship and university.

Esther: [---] now that I come to think of it, it [entrepreneurship] relates to the point, that basically everyone [in the university] needs to find one's own position and then apply for funding. There aren't that many jobs here, so one should be active in that sense, which is one way how it [entrepreneurship] relates to our work at the university.

Priscilla: Yes, and for quite some time, now that people are in temporary employment, it is kinda as being a freelancer, so in a sense an entrepreneur. [---] It is difficult to combine entrepreneurship to the traditional university, but it fits better with the current university [with temporary employment]. Most, especially in their early stage of career, must work as an entrepreneur.

Esther: And not only in the early stage, as it goes further. At worst, one must bear with uncertainty in every six months. In addition, no matter how well one works, if there's no money in the project, one must go and no one cares. It is considered a personal risk.

In general, entrepreneurship and university are neither an obvious nor a likely combination for Esther and Priscilla. In the above discussion, in which they liken these two concepts, they first speculate about the university: how it has changed over time and how the prevailing practice of temporary employment characterizes academia nowadays, and how the consequent uncertainty in employment resembles entrepreneurship. For Esther and Priscilla, such similarity between university and entrepreneurship, with the example of being a freelancer while working at the university, has a negative connotation. It also addresses the way Esther and Priscilla perceive entrepreneurship: it is risky, insecure and certainly not compelling for academics.

6.5.4 Entrepreneurship equals small, business and necessity

Priscilla: The first vision [of entrepreneurship] is small, as in a small and medium-sized enterprise, in which one must work hard, maybe employ a few.

Esther: Same here. At first, it [entrepreneurship] links to a company and business, only after a second thought, it can be something else, too, but that's what comes first to my mind.

The extract above points out the general way in which both Esther and Priscilla construct entrepreneurship, as in the setting up and running of a company. Priscilla particularly understands entrepreneurship as small business, though Esther too points to a similar definition elsewhere in the discussion, as she comments '*For some reason, what occurs to me about entrepreneurship is small.*' The smallness that they talk about unfolds in their accounts in different ways. For one part, it has a negative connotation, as the small size of a business equals hard work, low and uncertain income, loneliness and somehow, lesser importance. For another part, they attach dynamic attributes such as agility, swiftness and effectivity to entrepreneurship as small activity, which has a positive connotation, especially when they compare entrepreneurship and the university, which they consider less dynamic. Despite these positive attributes, it seems that entrepreneurship constructed as a small-scale economic activity appears as unattractive and unpleasant to both Esther and Priscilla.

The expressions '*the first vision*' and '*what comes first to mind*' in their accounts above indicate that there might be alternative interpretations of entrepreneurship; however, neither of them starts to speculate about these, rather, they stick with those that sprang to their mind first. This, in turn, is in line with their standpoint of being inexperienced in entrepreneurship that they carry through the discussion.

In another piece of conversation concerning entrepreneurship, Priscilla brings up students as one possible target group in entrepreneurship promotion. Here, she uses students in her discipline as a reference, and she points to a high rate of self-employment in the field of humanities.

> *We have woken up in our faculty to realize that a large number of our students have to, or get to, employ themselves. Therefore, we need to offer some transferable skills. [---] We should bring forth more of those skills, through teaching methods. It is somewhat a shared opinion that we should develop this side further. So, skills it is, but not specific entrepreneurship training or suchlike, because I guess that after all, the objective is paid employment. (Priscilla)*

In the account above, Priscilla acts as a spokesperson of students becoming self-employed in the field of humanities; at first, she points to a need of transferable (i.e. entrepreneurial) skills that she has noticed and makes a general request for an increase of such knowledge. Then, she informs us that self-employment is actually not what the students really aim at, but rather, that they are looking for more permanent and secure employment. Here, she constructs entrepreneurship as necessity-driven. Her lapse of using a phrase '*have to*', which she corrects as '*get to*' as well as the final sentence of the account '*[---] after all, the objective is paid employment*', further implies that in her opinion, entrepreneurship is a consequence of lacking options, whereas paid employment is more of an achievement. She does

not use the word entrepreneurship when she talks about students' employment possibilities, but instead, she uses the term *self-employment*, which seems even smaller in scope than entrepreneurship. Priscilla's use of the above-mentioned expressions reflects her perception of entrepreneurship as an undesirable, non-optional, and hopefully temporary career for academics, even though it seems to be reality for many of her students. In any case, she thinks that it is the university's responsibility to answer to changing employment circumstances, of which an example is the 'awakening' of her faculty to recognize the need of transferable skills. Consequently, Priscilla does not consider entrepreneurship education as such a priority; on the contrary, she sees that the detected need of transferable skills can be obtained through the developed teaching methods, including '*experimental thinking and creativity*', which she relates to entrepreneurship education. Hence, she sees entrepreneurship education merely as a facilitative tool, not as a substance in itself (for more, see chapter 6.5.6).

6.5.5 Strategy matters

At some point of the discussion, I prompt Esther and Priscilla to talk about entrepreneurship in our university. Before that, the discussion has focused on how they perceive entrepreneurship and the ways in which entrepreneurship contrasts with the university in such a thorough manner, as if they are trying to convince me about the impossibility of the entrepreneurial university. I find this observation interesting, because I purposely tried to pose as neutral an attitude to entrepreneurship as possible, but it seems that either I failed in my efforts or simply, based on my research topic, Esther and Priscilla assume my stand on entrepreneurship in the university to be positive. As a response to my query about entrepreneurship in our university, the discussion takes a new direction, and they start pondering the university's strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship, though on a very general level. They refer to the underpinning of the entrepreneurship strategy in the university's entrepreneurship promotion, but neither really talks about the content of the strategy. Instead, Esther and Priscilla speculate as to why entrepreneurship has been put in the foreground in the university's strategy and what its purpose is. They also speculate about the other strategic emphases in the strategy statement, but again, they do not talk about them in detail. These references to the university's strategy with cursory knowledge about its content are very similar to those in the other groups, in which both the emphasis on entrepreneurship and the strategy's minimal correspondence with the everyday are brought forth in a critical manner.

Priscilla: I think that a common understanding is that it [entrepreneurship] is merely empty talk, and frankly speaking, it can be found here and there in the strategy documents, it has been brought forth here and there, but I guess that in the grassroots level it is fairly invisible.

Esther: Are there similar [strategic efforts] in other Finnish universities? Or are we pioneers in this respect?

[---]

Priscilla: It would be good to know, where this need comes from. For sure, it doesn't come from the grass roots, I don't think there has been much need there. So, to put it in a metaphor, we have a top-down approach.

Esther: Then again, it is good that we try to differentiate from the others; we need that. Nevertheless, what are the other strategic objectives? Perhaps entrepreneurship is the most concrete component there, even though I am not sure if we know how to put it into practice in our work.

The extract above addresses Esther and Priscilla's questions about the entrepreneurship strategy: what is its purpose and where does it come from? Priscilla refers to the entrepreneurial emphasis with phrases such as '*empty talk*', '*fairly invisible*' and '*top-down approach*', and in this way, she points to the one-sidedness of the strategy work. She calls for the missing view, that from the '*grassroots*'. She then herself provides this missing view, as she considers herself a representative of the grass roots, and thus speaks on their behalf, when she casts doubt on the relevance of the entrepreneurial emphasis. Esther, in turn, has a more optimistic stance. She talks about entrepreneurship promotion as a convincing and legitimate strategic choice for the university to seek distinction within Finnish academia. An opposing tone in her account includes doubt about whether the strategy can be adopted in the everyday of the university. Priscilla too accepts the strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship as an objective for the university to differentiate from the other universities, but again, an anxious character appears, as she is worried whether it happens at the cost of scientific merit, and she asks a bit sarcastically '*Will the university end up only as a production line of entrepreneurs?*' Consequently, another critical concern regarding academic credibility arises, and again, Priscilla poses a question: '*Will the University of Helsinki remain the only scientific university?*' These reflect the neoliberal perspective that underpins her understanding of the entrepreneurial university, highlighting that entrepreneurship and university are contradicting constructs to Priscilla.

6.5.6 A glance at (entrepreneurship) education

A natural way for Esther and Pricilla to approach entrepreneurship in the university is to talk about teaching. Even though neither of them has taught entrepreneurship as such, they both mention that they have noticed that there is a distinct need of entrepreneurial skills in higher education. In their accounts, these skills generally fall under the category of soft skills, pointing to a personal attribute that supports situational awareness and enhances an individual's ability to get a job done. Hence, unlike hard skills, which are tangible evidence of a person's experience and knowledge to perform specific tasks, both Esther and Priscilla consider entrepreneurial skills less concrete. This interpretation of entrepreneurial skills as general and intangible affects their stance on how entrepreneurship topics can be taught or adopted in other subjects. In addition, they ponder whether there is much point to teaching entrepreneurship as such, because they consider entrepreneurship as mainly intrinsic:

> *Priscilla: Entrepreneurship is about a will to do something and make one's own living by doing what one knows, based on an idea. It can't be taught as such, though tools can be provided, but it all starts from the inside.*

> *Esther: [---] I am not sure if we can teach it [entrepreneurship] to anybody, but maybe [a] certain mindset can be endorsed, though business school graduates never start a company [laughing], because it seems too challenging, I don't know.*

Their relatively conventional understanding of entrepreneurship limits, for them, its perceived applicability and existence in the university context. Indeed, in their narration, neither Esther nor Priscilla combines entrepreneurship with their daily work at the university; they do not really see an easy link. Esther, however, gives an example of a course that she runs with a colleague, in which the students work in teams solving real business problems of real companies. She then pauses for a while to speculate whether the course really is about entrepreneurship; on the one hand, entrepreneurship is not explicitly mentioned, so it can hardly be labelled as an entrepreneurship course, but on the other hand, the course includes a specific way of working, collaboration with companies and outside classroom learning, so maybe it is entrepreneurial then, she thinks. Then she makes a comparison to the rest of her courses and the other in the university that she calls '*normal'*, which indicates that she sees non-entrepreneurship content in teaching as a default arrangement, whereas courses with entrepreneurial content are rare and exceptional. She concludes that '*[---] entrepreneurship is a distinct issue in business school, but I'm not sure how many actually include entrepreneurship content in their teaching or have thought it over.*'

Apart from a few commentaries, the most positive undertone regarding the entrepreneurial university can be detected in the accounts about education. Both Esther and Priscilla recognize the entrepreneurial university's positive influence on teaching, as they talk about what new skills it has brought to the university in this respect.

> *There's much good here [in entrepreneurial university], for example we've started to think concretely, what kinds of skills and knowledge our students need in the future work life, so, it has brought a new mind set, which in my opinion is very good. (Priscilla)*

> *In the entrepreneurial university, it is especially good that there are these soft skills available, that one will get along in work and in life more general, too. (Esther)*

In their narration about teaching, Esther and Priscilla ignore entrepreneurship courses and training; they argue that such content (teaching to become an entrepreneur) is only irrelevant to most students in the university. Instead, they focus on the attitudinal aspect (teaching to become entrepreneurial), which in their opinion contributes to working life skills and can (and also should) be adopted by a large number of courses across a wide range of subjects in the university. They do not speculate any further about the ways in which entrepreneurial content can be added to other courses. However, it can be assumed that it relates to teaching methods, because Esther earlier pointed to a specific course as entrepreneurial based on its method of teaching with real-life cases and in collaboration with companies. These concrete references reveal that in the construction of an entrepreneurial university, education is the most concrete and understandable subject to which both Esther and Priscilla can relate. In their interpretation, the purpose and meaning of the entrepreneurial university thus unfolds in teaching.

6.5.7 The unknown and restricted entrepreneurial university

During the discussion, the entrepreneurial university provokes different thoughts and commentaries, and several questions, too, perhaps the most critical being Priscilla's query, '*What's the point in promoting entrepreneurship in university?*' Esther says that because there seem to be so many possible interpretations and assumptions about the entrepreneurial university, she finds it '*a bit confusing*', and Priscilla agrees. Indeed, their talk about the entrepreneurial university is terse and unclear at times, which reflects the general vagueness of the phenomenon. Besides the uncertainty that can be detected in their narration, both Esther and Priscilla talk about the

entrepreneurial university in a sceptical and doubtful manner. It seems as if they do not really believe in the idea of an entrepreneurial university, or the scepticism might stem from their observation that the reality conflicts with the formal narrative of the entrepreneurial university – that notwithstanding the entrepreneurial university declaration, it is not here (at least not yet). In any case, they seem reluctant to scrutinize the entrepreneurial university, and therefore, I invite them to take part in an imaginary scenario. Accordingly, I ask them to envision a situation in which they are asked to describe in their own words the University of Turku as an entrepreneurial university to someone who is unfamiliar with the strategic emphasis.

[Pause]

Esther: This is not based on any facts [laughing]. I would probably start by telling that somehow, it [entrepreneurial university] relates to companies, and another thing is entrepreneurial activity, which we now try to emphasize in teaching, as is stated in the university's strategy. Only I wonder, is everyone aware of the strategic objectives, and even if they are, do they really know what it means in their work, if it means anything, I don't know.

[Long pause]

Priscilla [laughing]: I can't give you any better answer. For example, if I were to tell my husband who is an entrepreneur, about the entrepreneurial university, he would start laughing before my start; I wouldn't even dare to explain. [---] I would be busted, so better not even try.

I notice that both Esther and Priscilla are hesitant to play along with portraying the University of Turku as an entrepreneurial university – they might think that such imaginative play is foolish, or they just do not know what and how to portray it. At first, there is a long silence after my invitation following with an outburst of laughter. Then Esther, who is less reluctant, starts, and provides a short and halting description about a university becoming entrepreneurial. She brings forth two aspects of an entrepreneurial university, namely, economic and attitudinal. She then moves forward to speculate about the university's strategic emphasis and awareness of it across the university. According to her understanding, the strategic objectives are poorly recognized and deployed among the university personnel. At the end of the day, her imaginary illustration includes more speculation about the university's strategy than narration about the entrepreneurial university, which underlines her concern about the university's strategic preference and its implementation as well as

her limited knowledge of entrepreneurship and low involvement in entrepreneurship promotion.

There is an even longer pause after Esther's portrayal. Finally, Priscilla cuts the silence with a laugh to express her opinion about such an impossible task of giving a description of the University of Turku as an entrepreneurial university. She then pictures an imaginary scene with her husband, who is an entrepreneur, and concludes that she would not dare to explain the existence of an entrepreneurial university to him, hence addressing her equivocal thoughts regarding entrepreneurship in the university. Firstly, she seems not to believe that the idea of the entrepreneurial university is credible in the eyes of an entrepreneur. Secondly, her sentence '*I would be busted*' indicates that she finds the entrepreneurial university too vague and her knowledge too thin to be able to explain what it is all about, which is why she will not even start to.

The projection discloses that the entrepreneurial university remains unknown to Esther and Priscilla. In her account, Esther mostly leans on a strategic reading, which leaves the entrepreneurial university distant and administrative, as something that is difficult to understand or explain. For Priscilla, the entrepreneurial university seems too implausible and ambivalent to be discussed and related to.

Heretofore, the discussion about the entrepreneurial university has been relatively abstract; while Esther and Priscilla have talked about the university strategy and speculated about entrepreneurship education, there has been a certain kind of distance in the narration. The discussion takes a more concrete level and it has a personal touch when Priscilla starts pondering whom the entrepreneurial university concerns. Quite soon, she argues that the entrepreneurial university is restricted and exclusive, that it leaves many out. She uses the academic discipline as a criterion, even though she does not explicate how. In any case, as she counts out herself and many others, it becomes clear that she constructs the entrepreneurial university as a seedbed for academic entrepreneurship that concerns only those who are likely to become entrepreneurs. Accordingly, she is worried that the entrepreneurial university ideology drives the university into a dichotomy, in which the university is composed of a small, respected elite – those who match with the accepted values and ethos of entrepreneurship – and all the remaining – the proletariat, that is.

6.6 The entrepreneurial academics

Martha, Alex and Timothy compose the group of the *entrepreneurial academics*, characterized by their dual tasks as senior academics in the university and nascent entrepreneurs committed to their own businesses (for rationale and introduction of this group, see chapter 5.1.6).

6.6.1 Setting of the sixth story

On the morning of this group discussion, I received two cancellations due to health issues. All of a sudden, the group of five grew smaller, which made me anxious: how would it all go? Therefore, I was relieved, to say the least, when I recognized Martha, Alex and Timothy arriving at the meeting room, as was agreed. We are all familiar with each other and I knew about their business commitments, so I felt confident that despite the relatively small size of the group, they could provide me with good and rich material for the analysis. I was also looking forward to hearing their stories about how they have been able to work both in the university and as entrepreneurs, which is a relevant topic concerning my research interest.

Again, the discussion follows the loose framework of questions that I had prepared for, as I invite the group to discuss around a broad theme of entrepreneurship in university with a few open-ended questions, otherwise, I let them talk openly and bring forth issues that they find relevant and worth talking. Martha, Alex and Timothy are, as I had assumed, willing to talk, and after a short introduction to the subject matter, they covered spontaneously most of the issues that I had had in my mind.

Contrary to the previous group discussion a week ago with Esther and Priscilla, who emphasized their limited experience in entrepreneurship and certainly did not consider themselves experts in entrepreneurship, the starting point for this discussion is different. In fact, this group is differentiated from all the other groups because of their concurrent twofold experience: they are all engaged in their businesses while they work at the university. This particular feature characterizes this group discussion on many levels. Firstly, there is a strong us-versus-them setting in the discussion, which unfolds in comparisons between Martha, Alex and Timothy as one group, and the majority working in the university as another group. Secondly, interaction in the group is cohesive and the narration is unanimous most of the time, with dominance by practical issues concerning the combining of entrepreneurship and academic work. Martha, Alex and Timothy draw on their personal experiences in entrepreneurship, which results in similar opinions and views regarding entrepreneurship in the university, and their mutual perception of themselves as being among the minority of the university personnel further increases their feeling of similarity and the consequent group cohesion.

At the beginning of the group discussion, I tell Martha, Alex and Timothy that they are the last group in my research and they start immediately asking about my feelings and experiences so far. I am happy that I am asked about my research, and I start talking about the group discussions and my satisfaction concerning the variety and richness of the research material, perhaps even in a bit too detailed a manner. That is, they might have figured out that they are the ‘complementary part’ in my material: those with tangible experience in entrepreneurship. In any case, right from

the beginning of the session, the group positions themselves as being '*closer to entrepreneurship*' because of their business commitments whilst working in the university and their academic careers with entrepreneurial elements. Based on these characteristics, the group portrays the three of them as alike (and thus unlike most university personnel).

> *In a way, now that we are here, around this table, we are the ones that, even when working in the university, are closer to companies and entrepreneurship. Moreover, well, I've been in many units at the university, and I see that in the end, it is a small group that shares this spirit or way of acting, and a larger group [in the university] is further away from the companies. (Timothy)*

During the discussion, Martha, Alex and Timothy use the term '*median types*' regularly when they point to the majority working in the university. Another continuously used definition with a similar meaning is '*the mainstream*'. The repeated use of these expressions becomes as a kind of inside joke in the group and a powerful source of group cohesion. In this way, they also emphasize the perceived rarity of entrepreneurship in the university and their exceptionality as being representatives of such scarcity.

Martha, Alex and Timothy are talkative and playful in their narration. Everyone gives others a say, which is often quite lengthy and includes examples of their choices and preferences when working in the university, and at the same time, advancing their entrepreneurial aspirations. Even though their stories contain descriptions of challenges that they have met in their dual role as entrepreneurs and academics, there are also examples of how they have overcome those, and the general tone of the group's narration is constructive and positive.

Both Alex and Timothy have another appointment right after the group discussion, so they leave quickly once we have finished. Martha is not in a hurry, and while she is packing her things, we discuss my research project. Martha asks whether I also have a group that represents '*the other extreme*' in my research. In her query, the imaginary other extreme is positioned in the opposite end of the same line segment, along which Martha and the others see themselves as being '*closer to companies and entrepreneurship*'. I tell Martha that the study participants are heterogeneous in many ways, including, for example, varied experience and knowledge of entrepreneurship, which seems to be the key factor in the group's reasoning about university personnel being closer to or further from companies.

After having conducted all the group discussions, I feel excited; I have taken a big and critical step forward in my research process, and I trust that I have interesting material to delve into.

6.6.2 Pioneers' view of the entrepreneurial university

The group discussion indicates that Martha, Alex and Timothy see themselves as archetypes and examples of the entrepreneurial university. Their accounts often entail a depiction of their attitude and mindset as well as the content and objectives of their work in the university as exceedingly entrepreneurial, which in their opinion differentiates them from the '*mainstream university personnel*' with fewer entrepreneurial ingredients in their work. Their business commitments differentiate them even further; it seems that they do not know many like them in the university. At some point, I began to speculate whether the entrepreneurial character in their work is highlighted so strongly because of the focus of my research; perhaps Martha, Alex and Timothy want to draw attention to their above-average exposure to entrepreneurship in order to ensure that they are suitable participants in my research.

The continuous comparison between the trio as those '*taking the most positive attitude*' toward entrepreneurship, and the '*mainstream university personnel*' with less involvement in entrepreneurship, groups Martha, Alex and Timothy together as those '*being closer to entrepreneurship*' (for more, see chapter 6.6.1). Such positioning unfolds in their construction of an entrepreneurial university from a front-line perspective; compared to many in the university, Martha, Alex and Timothy consider themselves pioneers concerning entrepreneurship in the university. Each has experience of research commercialization, they are entrepreneurs whilst working in the university, and they are involved in entrepreneurship promotion activities in the university.

Even though Martha, Alex and Timothy underline their pioneering position, it is ambivalent in many respects. The ambiguity unfolds in their accounts about the university becoming entrepreneurial, in which they reposition themselves in their pioneers' role. For most of the time, they construct the entrepreneurial university from the viewpoint of a respected minority. Even though they are the minority, they are among a small number of academic entrepreneurs in the university, and thus they feel confident and appreciated enough to joke about themselves with nicknames '*mannequins of the entrepreneurial university*' and '*cherry on the cake*' (for more, see chapter 6.6.6). The group makes it clear that they respect their opportunity to work on '*both sides of the fence*'. Even though such unusual work requires a different attitude and mindset, takes more working hours and is clearly not the easiest way to make one's living, none of them really questions it. Instead, they keep up with their entrepreneurial work, which means that they plan to continue doing things differently, not simply following what they consider conventional. Furthermore, because of the university's recent emphasis on entrepreneurship, they assume that their way of working is becoming more acceptable across the university. Only Alex mentions that sometimes he ponders whether to go in entrepreneurship full-time. Then again, he continues, he is not really ready to lose his academic benefits, as in

being close to the academic research and research commercialization that he finds intellectually inspiring. He rather prefers, as he says, '*hanging around, creating new crazy ideas and applying for funding*' instead of putting it all under one label, namely entrepreneurship, which he characterizes as '*burn rates*' steering the way in which one lives. Martha thinks that the situation would be very different if one spun off the university, losing then all the supporting facilities from which one can benefit. She then observes that indeed there are others in the university, mainly in the field of humanities, who start their businesses and then leave the university. For Martha, this is not an option; instead, combining the two is. In this respect, they all think that they are privileged.

Sometimes, in their pioneers' role, Martha, Alex and Timothy discard the perspective of the respected minority. Then, the positive aspects of being among the few credible academic entrepreneurs fade and are replaced by negative dimensions, which unfold as the burden of being on the front line. They are no longer respected and celebrated examples of the entrepreneurial university, but a minority whose preferences and motives are questioned and who need to explain their entrepreneurial way of working, as opposed to the traditional, the '*right way*', of working in the university. In the end, though valued by some, Martha, Alex and Timothy remain a group that is neither fully understood nor appreciated by the majority of the university (or by people outside academia, for that matter). Timothy gives an example of his personal experience: a while ago, he applied for a new position at the university, and to his surprise and disappointment, there was only a minor paragraph in the application documents to explicate his project activities and external funding efforts, or third mission activities in general. For publications, there was plenty of space as well as detailed instructions. Thus, the preference was clear to him: '*It [entrepreneurship] is not appreciated*', concludes Timothy. The others agree; however, Alex gives a differing account of a recent professorship application, in which the reviewers provided two alternative profiles emphasizing either the academic tradition, i.e. a large number of high-level publications, or a more collaborative perspective including fewer publications but emphasizing an ability to cooperate as well as a number of appropriate contacts with the surrounding society. Then, Martha points out a dissonance between the perceived academic and entrepreneurial values and poses the question of whether, after all, the university is the right environment for people like them. The others are not provoked by Martha's question; instead, they move on to speculate about the organizations that regulate universities. On a larger scale, the group suspects the Ministry of Education might not really understand and value the way universities work today, which in their opinion can be seen by the metrics that rate universities. They conclude that such a system is outdated in many ways, because entrepreneurial activities, successfully applied project funding and the third mission activities are both underrepresented

and underrated in the Ministry's evaluation. Why bother doing these, if they are not recognized and appreciated?

Later, the group goes back to a more positive passage, towards the position of the respected minority, as Martha concludes her earlier speculations: '*Indeed, there is a certain instinct, I mean, of course we could live a normal, a median life – if only we wanted – but we're not that type of people. It is not interesting just to go to work, switch on the computer, sit beside the desk, eat and leave [for] home at four o'clock. Maybe it is reality for someone.*' After all, a '*median life*' of a mainstream academic is not for them; rather, a combination of entrepreneurship and university is. In this way, they get to work in a satisfying and productive manner and benefit simultaneously from both worlds that they find interesting.

Finally, the quote below addresses the ambiguity of the pioneer position that Martha, Alex and Timothy occupy while they discuss the entrepreneurial university. Martha's comment includes the same negotiation between positive and negative, between the respected and belittled minority, that is present in their construction of the entrepreneurial university all along.

> *Perhaps we are, in a way, in our own bubble, in which all this [entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial attitude] is very natural and almost the only way to think of being in the university. Nevertheless, indeed, there are, outside of this bubble, there are many, and even strong, opinions about our neutrality and other. (Martha)*

6.6.3 Entrepreneurship and university – not one without the other

Martha, Alex and Timothy are talkative, and luckily, much of their narration focuses on those issues that I wanted to hear about. At some point in the discussion, however, I draw their attention to the notion of entrepreneurship, and I pose a question about how they perceive entrepreneurship.

> *Alex: Entrepreneurship is a production of new solutions to problems that are identified in the markets, and at the same time, finding a model through which it can be executed in [a] financially and economically feasible way. [---] [In university] entrepreneurial behaviour is that one seeks a solution to a problem, but the revenue logic is different.*
>
> *Martha: I, on the other hand, look it from such an economical perspective that in entrepreneurship, if you have expenses, you must have money to cover it otherwise it goes wrong. Actually, in the context of my weekdays, I need to*

consider very smartly how to cover all the expenses; in that sense, there are many similarities [with entrepreneurship].

Timothy: I, in a way, consider it [entrepreneurship] as a mindset. Entrepreneurship, clearly, there is a commercial starting point that you need to provide things for which others are ready to pay. In a way, [the] university's projects are close to that: we do things for which others are ready to give funding. But, like me; when collaborating with companies and there are also other stakeholders involved, not just the investor, so maybe it is about solving real problems, those not only a researcher finds interesting.

When Martha, Alex and Timothy talk about entrepreneurship, they link it easily and spontaneously to the university, in fact, the two constructs are intertwined in their accounts similarly to how they are intertwined in their work, too. In their narration, the group draws on their work experience from two perspectives: first, their academic work in the university, which they characterize as entrepreneurially oriented, and second, the nascent entrepreneurship, to which they are committed alongside their academic careers. In other words, they construct entrepreneurship through their work as both an entrepreneurial academic and an academic entrepreneur.[36] Martha says that entrepreneurship and the university are also amalgamated in her work concretely, and she explains how the university facilities are continuously available to her entrepreneurial endeavour. She remarks that such a valuable advantage would not be possible without her employment at the university.

In the group's narration, entrepreneurship is viewed as an economic activity; there is a transaction involved, resulting in a solved problem or delivered goods. Even Timothy, who first refers to '*a mindset*', when elaborating on entrepreneurship, explains it from an economic perspective. He talks about funding and sees it as equally important in academic projects, but based on his experience, collaboration with companies highlights '*real problems*' over those with a bare academic interest. Furthermore, in their discussion, entrepreneurship unfolds mainly as academic entrepreneurship and concerns predominantly university personnel, researchers particularly, whereas students are mentioned rarely and they are cursorily pointed to

[36] Here, I make a contrast between *an academic entrepreneur* and *an entrepreneurial academic* on purpose. In so doing, I refer to the former as an academic engaging in more formal entrepreneurial activities (e.g. technology commercialization or other formal modes of engagement that capitalise on specific market opportunities) and the latter as an academic adopting an entrepreneurial outlook and engaging with commercial partners in less formal ways (cf. Miller, Alexander, Cunningham & Albats 2018).

as a possible target group of the entrepreneurial university. Martha mentions that students at the final stage of their studies could benefit from entrepreneurship education, noting bootcamps and pitching competitions as good examples for raising awareness of entrepreneurship among students. Timothy too believes that even simple actions can make an effective difference in students' attitudes and tells that they have promoted entrepreneurship successfully among their students, whereas Alex argues that due to a good employment rate, their students do not value entrepreneurship.

Martha, Alex and Timothy hope that entrepreneurship becomes generally more acceptable in the university. Timothy recalls that earlier many of his colleagues kept their companies out of sight on purpose, because it was easier not to mention any business commitments in the university context. He speculates whether the reasons for such secrecy were mostly fear or convenience. Timothy himself, like Martha and Alex too, has chosen a different path; they are open about their business commitments, which sometimes causes frustration and ambivalence, as Martha's comment below demonstrates.

> *What we had to consider a lot is the branch of business [---] what if the same person works 50% in a company and another 50% in the university, and then there [in the university] is some sort of a project – the situations can be very tricky sometimes. I understand that, for instance, in our department, it is often considered good that there are people who are only on one side of the fence, because it makes many things much clearer. [---] Sometimes it is difficult to define, on which chair am I sitting; is it the university's or is it that of the company?*

6.6.4 The entrepreneurial university combines entrepreneurship and university

Martha, Alex and Timothy are familiar with the university's emphasis on entrepreneurship, and they have also been involved in some of the promotion activities. In their discussion, they refer often to the concept of the entrepreneurial university, and sometimes, they use the word university as a synonym for the entrepreneurial university, which indicates that they have accepted and assimilated the concept. For them, the university is an entrepreneurial university, or at least, becoming one. Of course, as the focus of this discussion is the entrepreneurial university, it might have had an effect on their use of vocabulary.

Contrary to most group discussions in my research, in which the entrepreneurship strategy of the university is largely discussed, the *entrepreneurial academics* speculate less about the strategy and its authorization. Instead, they talk

about entrepreneurship in a more concrete manner, and the entrepreneurial university appears on a mundane level in their accounts. For instance, they bring forth their concern about the following practical and technical matters in combining entrepreneurship and academic work: how to avoid possible conflicts of interest, how to make it clear which hat one is wearing at each time and how to divide working hours between the university and their own business.

In their narration, Martha, Alex and Timothy construct the entrepreneurial university as an enabler to combine both academic and entrepreneurial aspirations. In this respect, they see that the entrepreneurial university embodies exactly where they see themselves operating: at the interface of entrepreneurship and university, which is an atypical convention in academia. They seem pleased to be able to work in the university and at the same time, be engaged in their existing or nascent companies. In their opinion, it widens their perspective at work, as they are able to '*do science*' in the university, while for more practical, applied and business-like activities, they can work through their own businesses. However, the dual role creates challenges and insecurity, too, as the above presented issues of concern related to the university's legislation, practices and HRM demonstrate. On a larger scale, they see the entrepreneurial university as a platform to support and advance academic entrepreneurship and other formal knowledge transfer activities, which in their opinion should become more common and acceptable across the university.

Just like the other study participants, Martha, Alex and Timothy also consider the group discussion a good opportunity to meet and discuss with others working in the university. Clearly, they utilize the session to have a chat with like-minded colleagues engaged in entrepreneurship and to share their worries with others having similar experiences. The excerpt below exemplifies how the entrepreneurial university unfolds in their narratives concerning everyday work in the university; Timothy's concern relates to a current research project, in which he is involved as head of the research group at the university and through his own business.

Timothy: I tell you, I have a fresh and concrete example, which might be interesting. We have now a project in an evaluation process, in which the company has its own projects and we have ours.

Alex: And 'ours' refers to what?

Timothy: To the university. There is a project under evaluation, and surely, the company is not involved, but the participating companies are also customers of our company, and they can, in the context of this project and according to their budget, buy things from us. I got to the bottom of this and asked both from the director of the department and the financier, and I am not disqualified; I can act

as the head of the research group in the university. In a way, this was the first time...

Alex: Thanks a lot!

Timothy: ...that it came so close. I decided that this is it; I will check the cards now. In their opinion, since the university is not directly buying and can't directly influence from whom the participant companies buy, there's no conflict of interest.

[---]

Timothy: This is relevant to consider from the perspective of the entrepreneurial university, because I have thought, I mean, through research, I know also research groups from other universities, and I was wondering would it be easier if a company has an idea, to approach another university in order to avoid the conflict of interest? In my opinion, it is a loss for the university specifically, and this is why I have worked hard to find a solution to keep spin-off companies involved in the university's research, but at some point, disqualification will appear.

Timothy's story about being prepared for a conflict of interest reveals that he is an advocate of transparency. He wants to be open about his business commitments, which he sees as key to avoiding conflicts of interest when operating concurrently in the university and as an entrepreneur, and sometimes, representing both parties within the same project. In Timothy's opinion, transparent and consistent regulation is a necessity in knowledge transfer activities, and because the university lacks clear guidelines regarding entrepreneurship, Timothy himself has been proactive in this respect, whereas the university remains reactive, only acting upon his request. By continuing to be open, Timothy believes that he contributes to a collective regulation concerning entrepreneurship, which he considers one characteristic of an entrepreneurial university. In Timothy's opinion, the combination of entrepreneurship and the university is advantageous for the university, too, which is why he has been going against the grain, though he anticipates problems in the future, as his conclusion '*[---] at some point, disqualification will appear*' denotes. His prediction points to the group's common concern about the university's indefinite practices and guidelines regarding personnel's entrepreneurship. These indicate that the entrepreneurial university as they construct it is yet emerging, and its objective of advancing entrepreneurship is not fully realized and exploited.

Considering the above, Martha, Alex and Timothy share a fairly narrow yet concrete reading of an entrepreneurial university. According to their telling, they construct the entrepreneurial university as a platform to combine entrepreneurship and academia, and it unfolds in their accounts about their everyday work. Hence, they see themselves strongly enacting the very entrepreneurial university that they construct. However, as they were entrepreneurially oriented even before the university's entrepreneurial transformation, they only hope that the current emphasis and promotion will ease their everyday work and stimulate others to combine entrepreneurship and the university, too.

6.6.5 Stories about research commercialization

A specific example of how the entrepreneurial university unfolds on a concrete level in the group's discussion is their narration about their experiences of research commercialization in the university. The University of Turku is coordinating a national Business Finland funding, Research to Business[37] (R2B), for which purpose the university has a systematic method to search, screen and upgrade innovation proposals. I notice that Martha, Alex and Timothy are familiar with the university's R2B process; at least they refer to it casually when they talk about the university's support of entrepreneurship. In their opinion, R2B is a critical instrument for a university that is called an entrepreneurial university. Their narration about R2B reminds me of Jake's story about his entrepreneurial endeavour few weeks ago. He criticized the R2B process and the university for its lack of support on technology transfer. I become interested in whether Martha, Alex and Timothy have similar or differing understandings, and therefore, I draw their attention to the issue of R2B.

Alex begins with his story. R2B is topical for him; this is the second time he has participated, and he starts pondering whether the first one some time ago was a success or a failure. On the one hand, the team fell out and they never made it to market, but on the other hand, the situation could have been worse; had a malfunctioning team gone to market with an incomplete and infeasible idea, there would have been great financial losses, among other issues. Alex concludes that the participation of that time can be considered successful risk management, but as a downside, the intellectual property rights (IPR) remain with the university. He seems unwilling to unwrap this case further, and he moves on to his second participation with R2B. He speculates about the differences between these two; the team, for example, is stronger now, and he has a firm belief in their research idea. He also

[37] Research to Business (R2B) is a funding instrument of Business Finland. Funding aims to generate new research-based business (new start-ups or licences).

believes that he can benefit from the earlier experiences (both R2B and commercialization) and in general, he is very optimistic about the situation now.

Martha's R2B story goes back several years. She tells that at that time, the university's entrepreneurial infrastructure was undeveloped compared to the current situation. She considers the R2B experience valuable, though she speculates the process might have weakened their interest in starting a business; indeed, they learned a lot, but they also got plenty of advice from various experts to proceed slowly and carefully, and a specific emphasis was given to different risks in entrepreneurship. She, however, reminisces about R2B on a positive note.

Timothy has no personal experience of R2B; he only mentions that it did not fit their purposes (the invention was not about patenting), but he does not elaborate further. However, he mentions that he knows many who have run through the R2B process, and he has heard contradictory views about its applicability.

The R2B narrative has similar elements in everyone's accounts. On a general level, R2B is constructed as a learning process and is seen to have improved since its early days. The discussion, however, reveals other perspectives, too. First, as Alex's narration points out, regardless of the conclusion of the R2B process, the university owns the innovation proposal's IPR, which causes ambiguity among the trio. Second, Martha's comments about the slow pace and wariness in R2B addresses the rigidity of the process. Customization is not an option; instead, the path is similar for everyone. Third, Timothy mentions contradicting views that he has heard from his colleagues, thus bringing forth some of the perceived discontent from the field. To conclude, Martha, Alex and Timothy see R2B primarily as a learning journey for an academic entrepreneur-to-be; in their opinion, it is relatively risk-free yet a bit dull and too regulated an environment to learn about research commercialization. In addition, the outcome of the process seems of less importance; Martha says that she has not heard of anyone actually starting a business through the R2B process. In comparison to Jake's narration few weeks back, in which he mostly criticized the university and R2B but did not analyse it in detail (see 6.3.3), Martha, Alex and Timothy provide a more thorough reflection. In addition, while there is ambivalence in their accounts, at the end of the day, they see R2B as one – limitedly suitable – alternative to support research commercialization in the university context.

Martha, Alex and Timothy construct the entrepreneurial university as sympathetic to business in the sense that it has a focus on advancing research commercialization. They talk about the entrepreneurial university as an enabler and a supporter of entrepreneurship; there are processes and programmes (R2B as one example) advancing research commercialization. The same construction, however, unfolds in their accounts also from another angle. In these narrations, the university is protective of its interests; there are regulation, legislation and authoritative processes. Consequently, it turns out that there are two sides of the coin: the

university, while being sympathetic to business, is supportive to researchers in their efforts in research commercialization, whereas the many legal and contractual issues draw a picture of an entrepreneurial university as a tough business partner. Apart from the research commercialization regulation, in general, the university is seen to lack guidelines concerning entrepreneurship (for more, see chapter 6.6.4).

6.6.6 Playfulness and confidence in narration

Martha: Ok, were we the last group?

Kaisu: Yes, now I have six stories altogether. I believe this will do.

Martha: We are the cherry on the cake, the mannequins of the entrepreneurial university [laughing].

Alex: Well, indeed you are in many places [promoting the entrepreneurial university].

Martha: I have all the T-shirts that they have printed. I have them all.

Alex: Do you use them too?

Martha: Well, every now and then, depending on the role that I have.

Alex: Do you have a shirt?

Timothy: Yep, but I haven't bought them, I've got them from somewhere, and when going to a fair, the communications usually give me one.

Martha: Yep, exactly, it is the activity, you know.

Alex: I neither have received nor bought one. I haven't deserved any.

Martha: You haven't been active enough if you haven't received any.

[All laughing]

The dialogue above, which ends up as a cheerful frolic about T-shirt ranking, is an example of the general atmosphere of the group discussion: even though the group is earnest in their conversation and contribution, they are playful. Humour and jokes

are constantly present in their accounts. They laugh often and loud, and their laughter is contagious; I notice that I too laugh a lot during the discussion.

Besides the playfulness in the group, the dialogue addresses an ambivalence concerning entrepreneurship promotion in the university. Firstly, Martha, Alex and Timothy nickname themselves the '*mannequins of the entrepreneurial university*' and the '*cherry on the cake*', and even though they laugh at their nicknames, they cherish the underlying cause; in their understanding, they carry out the very idea of the entrepreneurial university, as they work at the interface of entrepreneurship and academia. For this reason, they assume that they are invited to participate in entrepreneurship events, given T-shirts and photographed for the purposes of promoting the entrepreneurial university. Consequently, Martha's concluding sentence about Alex not deserving a T-shirt is ironic; surely, Alex too is a manifestation of the idea of the entrepreneurial university and deserves a T-shirt, though he has been ignored in this respect. In the end, it is not about the T-shirt or other extrinsic symbols – rather, what they represent matters: the recognition of being entrepreneurial. Secondly, while Martha, Alex and Timothy seem pleased for being recognized and, in general, are happy to participate in entrepreneurship promotion, they find it a bit silly and awkward. Perhaps, they think that the promotion is useless or irrelevant – after all, they note that entrepreneurship is about doing, not about promoting, as Alex points out when he compares the University of Turku and the LUT University in this respect. The latter has an assertive slogan '*Because we can*', which in his opinion reflects the entrepreneurial attitude well and at the same time, reveals his scepticism regarding the interpretation of the entrepreneurial university initiative at the University of Turku: it is all talk and less action.

Other examples of the group's humour and self-confidence are their casual jokes about traditional academic symbols, such as (not getting) the Nobel Prize and the importance of lengthy lists of publications in high-impact journals. These accounts are also used to validate the group members' academic competence. Indeed, they all work according to the publish-or-perish-principle, but at the same time, joking about it makes them somehow less involved and serious. Similarly, though they satirize the T-shirts, they still wear them because they symbolize their pioneering role regarding the entrepreneurial university. Joking might also be a way to achieve some distance; even though they consider themselves to be enacting the entrepreneurial university in their daily work, they do not want to be involved in it too closely, but rather, just keep on doing what they like, as in working both in the university and as entrepreneurs.

7 Interpreting the stories: local entrepreneurial university metanarratives

In two previous main chapters, I have focused on *entrepreneurial university sensemaking* by describing how the study participants talk about entrepreneurship in the university and make sense of the entrepreneurial university – first, by presenting the means and components of their storytelling and sensemaking, including the composition and content of these narrations (chapters 5.4 and 5.5), and second, by presenting stories of sensemaking from a university that has a commitment to becoming entrepreneurial (Chapter 6). Next, I will further analyse these stories, by exhibiting and discussing four meta-level narratives that I was able to detect in the study participants' storytelling. I call these constructions *local entrepreneurial university metanarratives* in order to reflect the patterns and structures beyond the sensemaking process and to point out that even though they explain these stories on a more abstract level, they are not all-encompassing, universal truths but rather, contextual and local interpretations.[38] These metanarratives can also be seen as an outcome of the study participants' sensemaking process, illustrating their interpretations of the entrepreneurial university. Here, I took inspiration from MacNeil et al. (2021) who followed Calás, Smircich & Bourne (2009) in '*demonstrating how problematic it could be to codify and institutionalize narrow understandings of entrepreneurship*' (ibid, p. 564) in their study on a university that has been noted as Canada's most '*famously entrepreneurial university*' (MacNeil et

[38] In using the term metanarrative, I understand it as '*a story about a story*' and see it to '*assemble the "little stories" into a whole*' (Stephens & McCallum 1998, p. 6), in the sense that the metanarratives detected in this study are derived from the stories I presented in Chapter 6, and they go beyond these in explaining their structures and patterns. My view thus differs from Lyotard (1984), who sees metanarratives as totalizing and universalizing, yet I abstain from further speculation about critical theory and the postmodernist critics towards metanarratives, relying on the original general meaning of the prefix *meta* (beyond, transcending). Sometimes the terms *master narrative* and *grandnarrative* are used interchangeably with *metanarrative* (Bamberg 2005).

al. 2021, p. 83; see also Spigel 2015; 2017). The detected metanarratives in this study demonstrate the abundance and dynamics of coexisting interpretations of both entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university. They also mirror the diversity of accounts and perceptions concerning both entrepreneurship and the university, thus addressing the sensemaking process of the entrepreneurial university as well as the multifacetedness of the phenomenon itself; that instead of one, there are many understandings of the entrepreneurial university that coexist concurrently within the university.

Certainly, these were not the only narratives about the entrepreneurial university, but during the analysis, these started emerging to further explain and assemble the sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university. In addition, I found these metanarratives particularly relevant and interesting, because each unfolded the phenomenon from a different angle and opened up the variegated interpretations, thus, contributing to the plurivocality and polysemy of an entrepreneurial university. Next, let us move on to these four metanarratives through which the entrepreneurial university is simultaneously constructed as '*much ado about nothing*', '*members' club*', '*progress*' and '*illusion*'. Each will be presented and articulated separately in the following subchapters.

It should be noted that the entrepreneurial university metanarratives are not group-specific in the sense that each would have existed in one group only, but rather, the same narratives were identified in several groups. There was however, variation in the strength and intensity of their appearances. In a similar vein, more than one metanarrative coexisted in the discussions of each group.

7.1 Light and little – much ado about nothing

Prior to the group discussions, I familiarized myself with the official documentation and communication concerning the entrepreneurial university initiative in the University of Turku. These included the university's strategy statement and the web pages of the entrepreneurial university, as well as leaflets and brochures from various entrepreneurship events, trainings and programmes that were organized in the university and elsewhere under the entrepreneurial university project. All these drew a picture of an active and effective university, which has a clear blueprint and a strategy for its entrepreneurial activity and transformation. Some of the activities and practices were already up and running, and according to the entrepreneurship agenda, there was more to come. Furthermore, I had taken part in some of the entrepreneurship events myself as well as having been involved in the entrepreneurship promotion to some extent. These further amplified my pre-understanding of the university: it was committed to entrepreneurship and considered the objective important. Plainly, it seemed that there was a lot going on

in entrepreneurship. Therefore, contradicting voices and opposing narration caught my attention in the group discussions; they challenged the '*grandnarrative*' of the entrepreneurial university (cf. Boje 1995; Boje, Luhman & Baack 1999; Boje 2001) – the official 'happy entrepreneurship story' that was provided in various university documents and statements in a very positive manner. This opposing narrative protests the entrepreneurial university as a collective and central university-wide project, and furthermore, it minimizes its meaning and importance. Consequently, I named the narrative '*much ado about nothing*'.[39] Boje (2001) calls such narratives '*local stories*' and proposes turning towards these, because they are '*not simply as interesting "other voices", but as embedded in and sometimes resisting grandnarratives*' (ibid, p. 35).

The general tone in the *much ado about nothing* metanarrative is that there is too great a fuss about entrepreneurship, which at the end of the day is considered neither that significant nor a very novel issue in the university. In contrast to what was publicly announced on the university's web pages and the strategy statement, the entrepreneurial university in this narrative was constructed as more trivial and meaningless – and certainly, it was not considered permanent and pervasive. Instead, entrepreneurship in the university context was seen as one of '*those ideologies*' that come and go, and its current central position in the university strategy was considered to reflect the present spirit in higher education and education policy, in which entrepreneurship has been widely put in the foreground. Combining entrepreneurship and the university was not seen as without problems, and here the study participants pointed to the perceived differences between the two constructs and likely ideological clashes. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial emphasis was not necessarily assumed to be long-lasting, but rather, it was anticipated that eventually, '*something new will arrive*' that replaces entrepreneurship, and it is the university that will remain. Therefore, there is no need to make so much noise about the (likely evanescent) entrepreneurial university.

Another 'great fuss' was the university's strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship. While many study participants mentioned the entrepreneurship strategy when they talked about the increasing role of entrepreneurship in the university, it was often referred to as '*empty talk*' and a '*dead paper*'. These indicated its more symbolic meaning and little correspondence with the '*grassroots*', and thus, the

[39] In naming the narrative, I took inspiration from William Shakespeare and his comedy '*Much Ado About Nothing*' from the late 16th century, the title of which indicates that there is nothing at the core of the play. Taken literally, the title implies that a great fuss (much ado) is made of something, which is insignificant (nothing), and the wordplay describes aptly the very core of this detected metanarrative of the entrepreneurial university.

entrepreneurial university, no matter its strategic mandate, did not unfold as an important and meaningful initiative. In effect, the university's entrepreneurial transformation was not seen to have an evident influence on the everyday work at the university, but rather, in this metanarrative, the entrepreneurial university was highlighted as more of an administrative project and a fuss thereof. The third 'much ado' in this minimizing narrative pointed to the assumed novelty and originality of the entrepreneurial university. Innovativeness and creativity that were mentioned as important catchwords of the entrepreneurial university promotion were seen not only as characteristics of entrepreneurship, but as essential components of the university, too. In fact, many of the activities in the university were already considered to be resonating with entrepreneurship, which refers to an interpretation of the university being entrepreneurial even without the particular label of an entrepreneurial university – therefore, an all-encompassing term *university*, without any prefixes pointing to entrepreneurship, should be enough.

The *much ado about nothing* mindset was relatively noticeable in the study participants' storytelling, and it captured my interest early in the analysis. In many group discussions, I was able to recognize '*local stories*' (Boje 2001) – certain elements, bits and pieces that were minimizing the central role and meaning of the entrepreneurial university, and thus, resisting its 'grandnarrative'. The strongest presence, however, was among the groups of the *academic insiders*, the *unpredictables* and the *other half*. For these groups, especially, the entrepreneurial university was of less significance than how they had saw it been promoted in the university. It should be noted, though, that the *much ado about nothing* metanarrative does not indicate that the entrepreneurial university was totally rejected or disclaimed. Rather, the entrepreneurial university was well acknowledged, but it was seen to be given an unnecessarily significant role in the university and in public, because after all, entrepreneurship was considered just *one* among many paradigms within the multidisciplinary university, and thus, there was no need nor a desire for it to concern the university *entirely*.

7.2 Restricted and exclusive – a members' club

It became evident from the study participants' narration that the entrepreneurial university is not considered to concern the university equally; instead, it was seen as limited and restricted, concerning only a few, and therefore, the metanarrative that indicates such partiality in the entrepreneurial university was named '*members' club*'. Here and there, stated phrases such as '*a bit upstairs and downstairs*' or '*restricted attendance*' and provocative questions about '*whom it [entrepreneurial university] really concerns*' in the course of group discussions pointed to the

perceived narrowness and limitedness of the entrepreneurial university – simply put, its character as a restricted association.

The interpretation of who were seen as the insiders of the entrepreneurial university and who as those left aside varied among the study participants. One essential determinant in this respect was the academic discipline, which came forth in most group discussions. Accordingly, the STEM disciplines were assumed to be considered a natural counterpart to the entrepreneurial university, which de facto was one central cause of criticism of the entrepreneurial university: that it excluded many disciplines, in fact most of them, within the multidisciplinary university. In addition, the various meanings of entrepreneurship had an influence on the perceived coverage and extent of the entrepreneurial university, in such a way that a narrow reading (entrepreneurship as economic activity) was related to a narrow scope of the entrepreneurial university, whereas a broader interpretation (entrepreneurship as more) opened it up to wider acceptance. Sometimes, the study participants were trying to push the limit of the entrepreneurial university beyond what was considered a norm, and here they pointed to the unsung importance of humanities and the overemphasized role of medicine, for example.

An interesting manifestation of the entrepreneurial university as *members' club* was the study participants' subjective positioning concerning the entrepreneurial university. These positions were not static but rather fluctuated in the course of discussions; however, a general orientation could be recognized. Accordingly, the study participants provided me with views to the entrepreneurial university in which some saw themselves as insiders of the entrepreneurial university (i.e. 'members of the club'), whereas others positioned themselves outside of the university's entrepreneurial focus. For example, the *entrepreneurial academics* positioned themselves at the core of the entrepreneurial university, and in their opinion, they were carrying out the very idea of the entrepreneurial university, working both in the university and as entrepreneurs. The *entrepreneurial stimulators*, as members of the network of entrepreneurship and innovation liaisons, also positioned themselves in the core of the entrepreneurial university, and thus they too had a view from within. Much of their narration included speculations about how they, as liaisons of an entrepreneurial university, could better promote entrepreneurship in the university. The *other half* provided an opposite view, that from outside of the 'members' club', and the experience of non-involvement in and externality of the entrepreneurial university were underlined in their accounts. The group of the *provincials* had a similar yet milder experience of disconnectedness; while their geographically further location from the main campus had an influence on their reading of the entrepreneurial university as remote, they did not really consider themselves outsiders. There was more variation in positions among the group of the *unpredictables*. Some looked at the entrepreneurial university from afar, whereas

others had a more central position in negotiating the institution. Finally, I noticed an interesting tension in the group of the *academic insiders*; based on their scholarship in entrepreneurship and involvement in entrepreneurial activities within the university, they were generally considered the cognoscenti, and thus insiders of the entrepreneurial university. While they had adopted the central position in the group discussion, their stance was ambivalent. Oftentimes, they had a view from within as they talked about entrepreneurship in the university; sometimes, however, they seemed to reject such authority.

The restrictive nature of the entrepreneurial university was noticeable and distinct in all group discussions, yet its interpretation varied. In some groups, the uneven scope of the entrepreneurial university was merely a matter-of-fact condition, whereas in other groups, it caused more speculation and anxiety. The *other half* for example, had a critical stance on the (too narrow-perceived) limit of the entrepreneurial university, whereas the same limit was seen as self-evident and natural among the *entrepreneurial academics* and the *entrepreneurial stimulators*.

7.3 A university upgraded – progress

The tone of the third entrepreneurial university metanarrative is distinctly optimistic and forward-looking, and the university is seen to be advancing in the entrepreneurial transformation, thus the narrative was given the name '*progress*'. In these narrations, the higher education policy was often used as a point of reference, in the sense that it was seen to inform universities' strategic preferences, and further, that the entrepreneurial university signified a modern, active university in the knowledge-based society – as a kind of an ideal of a university.

The idea of development was brought forth through comparisons, in which the traditional university and the entrepreneurial university were contrasted with each other. Often in these comparisons, the traditional university was seen to be outdated and the entrepreneurial university was assumed to upgrade many of its ill-perceived practices and processes. In fact, while entrepreneurship was interpreted as a transitory ideology in the '*much ado about nothing*' metanarrative, here it was seen as not necessarily abiding, but for the time being, its progressive character was highlighted. Some of the attributes that were earlier used in describing entrepreneurship were now attached to the entrepreneurial university, as in agile, flexible and proactive. Furthermore, the study participants with experience of research commercialization within the university pointed to the advancement of the process and the increased number of internal experts. Some even anticipated that there might be growth in the number of patents, too. Clearly, the university's 'innovation pipeline', though not completed yet, was seen to be improving, and the entrepreneurial university as a supporter of techno-economic activity particularly

was expected to flourish. From another perspective, the emphasis on entrepreneurship was assumed to have increased both the awareness of and the interest in entrepreneurship as a critical component in the students' skill set for future work life among teachers in the university. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial university was considered to have brought a '*new mindset*' and a '*fresh way of thinking*' to the university, which, even though seen as a critical provider of new knowledge and in that sense understood as forward-looking, was sometimes interpreted as stagnant and outmoded as an organization. Finally, the entrepreneurial university was considered a well-thought-of strategic device to secure the university's future funding as well as a clever way to stand out in the increasing competition within academia.

The period of the inspection was relatively long and forward-looking in the *progress* narrative, and the entrepreneurial university was understood as a work-in-progress rather than a conclusion. Hence, there was still room for enhancement and improvement. The experience that the entrepreneurial transformation was only at the beginning was highlighted – certainly, it takes time to create a new culture and to adopt it. Similarly, some of the faults, defects and inconsistencies of the entrepreneurial university were not considered that problematic, but rather, as something that could be dealt with in the course of time. In another temporal speculation, the entrepreneurial university, as it was currently perceived as a concept and an objective, was not necessarily expected to be long-lasting, at least in the sense that the university would be called the entrepreneurial university any longer in the future. However, there was a desire to implant in the university at least some of the perceived entrepreneurialism that was seen to be seeded through the entrepreneurial transformation process. Even though the entrepreneurial university was by no means considered flawless or perfect, it was seen as progressive, and indeed, there was a distinct positive undertone behind this metanarrative.

The character of advancement in the construction of an entrepreneurial university was not that apparent in the group discussions; in fact, it took a while for me to notice it. However, as the analysis proceeded, I began to notice such telling here and there, pointing to a more optimistic side of the entrepreneurial university and the idea of improvement in particular. Even though the narration was terse and sporadic in this respect, once I had noticed it, I could not ignore the matter of progress any longer and gradually, it grew as a separate metanarrative, describing the entrepreneurial university from a specific angle. In the end, the *progress* within the entrepreneurial university was existent, yet scant in character in all group discussions. It had the strongest presence among the groups of the *entrepreneurial stimulators* and the *entrepreneurial academics*.

7.4 Improbable to achieve – an illusion

The fourth entrepreneurial university metanarrative is especially interesting in the sense that it contests the existence of the researched phenomenon – this counter narrative that includes several '*local stories*' (cf. Boje 2001), in which the entrepreneurial university unfolded as a fictional organization, was named '*illusion*'. In these narrations, much of the university's official discourse concerning the entrepreneurial transformation, and the entrepreneurial university particularly, was commented on in a critical manner, and the formal story, the '*grandnarrative*' of the University of Turku as an entrepreneurial university, was challenged, even rejected.

In the *illusion* metanarrative, the fictitious character of an entrepreneurial university unravelled in the critique about how the entrepreneurial university – despite the strategy statement and active promotion – has not really materialized in the university. Instead, its low-perceived attractiveness, relevance and recognition were addressed, and entrepreneurship in the university was seen to be in the focus of only a small group of people, whereas for the majority of the university personnel, the entrepreneurial university remained unseen and minuscule. Certainly, such a loose and random appearance of entrepreneurship across the university was not considered to entitle the university to be called an entrepreneurial university, nor was it really expected to become one. In some narrations, the realization of the entrepreneurial university was opposed because the university organization was not considered very entrepreneurial; there was hierarchy, bureaucracy and tradition, which were seen to hinder, even prevent the entrepreneurial transformation. Finally, references to the university's emphasis on entrepreneurship as merely administration objective setting, pointed to the fictional appearance of the entrepreneurial university; it is an administrative project, not one of ours, communicated the study participants. Such an interpretation was further strengthened by the view in which the entrepreneurial transformation was not seen to have had an effect on the everyday at the university, nor had it been seen to change the university in any way – in that sense, the entrepreneurial university remained unseen, and thus, an illusion.

The *illusion* metanarrative of the entrepreneurial university was somehow in the background in the group discussions, and therefore it first almost got mixed with the *much ado about nothing* narrative, which had quite a similar reading of the entrepreneurial university, that of doubt. It was only a more detailed analysis that revealed the differing nuances between these two narratives. The *illusion* focused on the invisibility and improbability of the entrepreneurial university, whereas the *much ado about nothing* metanarrative was more about the unnecessary attention around such a trivial and unoriginal matter as the entrepreneurial university, and that even without the current fuss, there is already much that is entrepreneurial in the university. In this study, the illusory character was most effortlessly observed among the groups of the *unpredictables* and the *academic insiders*. A temporal orientation

in this metanarrative was the present time; contrary to, for example, the *progress* narrative, in which the perspective was forward-looking, the opposition of the entrepreneurial university in the *illusion* metanarrative concerned the current conditions in the university.

8 Conclusions and discussion

This is the point where all the threads of this study come together and loose ends are being tied up, and I should provide a reflection on the research process from its beginning to the end and on to the conclusions. In a sense, this final chapter is about closures and openings at the same time, because I will both conclude this research by discussing its conduct and contribution and suggest future research avenues by reflecting on those findings.

This chapter begins with a brief revisit to the aim and objectives of the study, followed by a summary of the main findings. Next, by drawing from the findings of this study, I will present my main contribution and discuss the sensemaking process and various ways of constructing the entrepreneurial university from the perspectives of theoretical, methodological and practical implications. Evaluation of the study and suggestions for future research will conclude this chapter.

8.1 Revisiting the research aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to add to our understanding of the entrepreneurial university by changing gears of exploration, and therefore, I have investigated the entrepreneurial university *from within and individually*. By adopting a social constructionist view, I have examined how university personnel perceive the entrepreneurial transformation and the university's strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship. Furthermore, I have studied the ways in which entrepreneurship is interpreted in the university context. My research question was '*How is an entrepreneurial university constructed from within the university?*' Accordingly, my objective has been to have a look at the university in its entrepreneurial transformation and to gain an understanding about entrepreneurship in university based on the view from those within, and further, by drawing from their narrative sensemaking, to provide stories about becoming an entrepreneurial university. For these purposes, I have conducted six group discussions in a university committed to becoming entrepreneurial. The groups were composed of university personnel coming from different faculties, with diverse educational backgrounds and representing various fields of science and personnel categories in the university. My intention thus was to produce heterogeneity in the stories about entrepreneurship in

university that were narrated in the group discussions. The focus in the analysis has been on what is said and what kinds of meanings are connected to entrepreneurship in university context (the content of stories), the ways of narration (the structure and story formats) and the use of language (the way the stories were generated in group discussions), as well as the social interaction in the groups (the social dynamic of the groups, roles and patterns of interaction).

In this study, I have applied sensemaking approach and analysed the intertwinement of storytelling and sensemaking in the study participants' narration. Narrative approach has been applied in the collection, analysis and presentation of the research data.

8.2 Summarizing the main findings

The underlying motivation of this study was my ambition to gain a broader and more pluralistic view of the entrepreneurial university in order to generate new insights and fresh perspective on the phenomenon. Therefore, I zoomed in to the university and gave voice to human actors, the university personnel, in understanding and shaping the entrepreneurial university. The findings of this study indicate that individuals and groups working in the university do provide rich, layered and in-depth stories about the entrepreneurial university. Furthermore, understanding the entrepreneurial university as a social construction and focusing on the university personnel's narrative sensemaking process, in which priority is given to the intertwinement of storytelling and sensemaking, adds a relatively unexplored perspective on the phenomenon – that from inside an organization with individual and contextual nuances.

The *sensemaking processes* of the entrepreneurial university, as described in the stories of this study (Chapter 6), illustrate *the entrepreneurial university as a contested field with multiple tensions*. These tensions arise as a reaction to the unknown, as none of us really knows what combining entrepreneurship and university means, yet many possess a lot of assumptions and prejudices. The university is a very established organization: an institution with distinctive characteristics, now pushed towards entrepreneurship, which carries strong preconceptions – no wonder the university personnel problematize the relationship between entrepreneurship and university whilst they construct their understanding about an entrepreneurial university, which is tightly interwoven with their perceptions about entrepreneurship and a university.

In the study participants' narration, *entrepreneurship unfolds as a complex and ambivalent phenomenon*, yet its interpretation, from an economic viewpoint, tends to be stationary and stereotypical, which appears reciprocally exclusionary and two-dimensional to the university. Entrepreneurship, understood mainly as techno-

economic activity, concerns only a few in the university, and the (entrepreneurial) university's role is then seen to be a supporter of research commercialization and other knowledge transfer activities. This interpretation resonates with the triple helix model (Etzkowitz 2013; 2014), and it leaves the entrepreneurial university distant to a majority of the university personnel. According to the other reading that reflects the Gibbian approach (Gibb et al. 2013; Gibb & Hannon 2006) to the entrepreneurial university, entrepreneurship in the university context is about an attempt to equip students with appropriate knowledge and skills for future work life. Many study participants consider entrepreneurship relevant to their students. They talk about entrepreneurship as an attitude and liken entrepreneurial skills to soft skills such as the ability to collaborate, communicate and problem solve (cf. Chamorro-Premuzic et al. 2010); they refer to different kinds of self-employment, such as the roles of a free-lancer and a cooperative entrepreneur, yet the economic perspective, albeit attenuated, is still there. The prevailing narrow definition of entrepreneurship as an economic activity does appear concrete and thus easier to understand, yet it seems to clash with what is perceived as valued academic tradition and the core of the university (e.g. scientific integrity and autonomy). Similarly, while the broader meanings of entrepreneurship (as more than economic activity) seem more acceptable in the university context, confusion often follows this acceptability on what concrete activities such a definition might entail and whether they then really can be labelled entrepreneurship anymore, and how these should be applied across the university.

The *varied interpretations of entrepreneurship in this study flow from the study participants' personal experience of entrepreneurship* (or lack thereof). These have a profound influence on whether entrepreneurship is considered conceptually relevant and meaningful in the university context and to what extent it can be applied there. This can be, as human experience inherently often is, ambiguous, messy and even seemingly contradictory. The *entrepreneurial academics* (in chapter 6.6), for example, understand entrepreneurship as an opportunity for the university to broaden its funding options and to increase its impact and relevance in the society. On a personal level, their engagement with entrepreneurship is both a critical cause for their high work satisfaction and, slightly paradoxically, a matter of concern in terms of possible liability. The *other half* (in chapter 6.5) with less exposure to and experience of entrepreneurship, is sceptical. They are worried whether the relevance and priority of disciplines in the entrepreneurial university will be assessed based on their perceived applicability to entrepreneurship, which they assume can lead, for example, to inequality in terms of the recognition and resource allocation of disciplines – reflecting, again, an assumed techno-economic keyhole through which they are assessed. For the *academic insiders* (in chapter 6.1), the attitude towards entrepreneurship is more ambivalent, and their sensemaking includes several

contradictions concerning entrepreneurship and the university, and, particularly, combining these.

The *entrepreneurial university sensemaking includes negotiation about the university*, too, and in these negotiations, the university and the entrepreneurial university are typically contrasted against each other. Contrary to the entrepreneurial university that includes several coexisting meanings and readings, the interpretation of the university seems more monolithic, fixed, stable and shared. The study participants portray the university as traditional and long-standing. It is characterized with expressions projecting immutability, such as hierarchy, bureaucracy, and administration, thus highlighting the perceived difficulty, even absurdity, of the entrepreneurial university project. In general, the university is considered a rigidly regulated and top-down controlled environment, which typically leaves little room for surprises and unpredictability (which are considered inherent elements of entrepreneurship). Another view, however, regards the university as inherently innovative and creative; the organization may be hierarchical and bureaucratic, but the substance in the university – education and research, particularly – are seen as continuously creating new value, and in this way, contributing greatly to society. From this perspective, the entrepreneurial emphasis and especially the fuss around it are considered rather irrelevant and artificial. The traditional character of a university unfolds also as an institutional stability: the university is considered such an established institution that it can contain different ideologies simultaneously. In fact, as the university consists of several faculties, it is assumed that there are different paradigms as well as ongoing and emerging discussions, and the study participants suggest that perhaps the entrepreneurial university could be seen as one such discussion among many paradigms within the all-encompassing university.

The participants' *sensemaking draws from the everyday*, as they talk about their work and weekdays at the university. For some, entrepreneurship is a common element in work, whereas for others, it is less familiar. Nevertheless, in the sensemaking process, the experiences, perceptions and assumptions about entrepreneurship are tightly interwoven in their narration about the work at the university, both in general and their own, particularly. Some of these narratives contain tensions, pointing to the strained relationship between entrepreneurship and the university. The *entrepreneurial academics* (in chapter 6.6), for example, refer to various clashes between entrepreneurship and the traditions and conventions of a university. They also bring forth their concern about the possibility of conflicts of interest as they work concurrently in the university and as entrepreneurs. They call for clear regulation concerning entrepreneurship and research commercialization, yet they also characterize the university as too regulatory an environment for a nascent entrepreneur. The group of the *entrepreneurial stimulators* (in chapter 6.2) addresses another tension between the work in the university and entrepreneurship;

they contrast the well-known principle of 'publish or perish' in academia – a continuous pressure for academic publishing – and the opposing praxis applied in research commercialization, in which the idea or invention needs to be protected. They see these conflicting practices as one obstacle to academic entrepreneurship.

In light of this study, *strategy plays an important role* in the entrepreneurial transformation. Foremost, the strategic commitment has a symbolic value, as it communicates the university's official priority and preference. The study participants' narrations reveal various interpretations about the meaning of strategy; for one part, it is seen to give a permission for being/becoming entrepreneurial, thus officially validating and supporting entrepreneurship, whereas for another part, it is considered a '*dead paper*' and thus an implication of an administrative project that has no bearing on or value to the everyday at the university. These opposing interpretations have varied outcomes, and in the sensemaking of the university personnel, the strategic commitment leads to (at least) two potential trajectories. Accordingly, the entrepreneurial university is seen to implement the pervading entrepreneurial society, which is perpetuated through neoliberalism (Berglund, Lindgren & Packendorff 2017). Consequently, the university becomes an entrepreneurship factory, in which '*everyone and everything is to be made more entrepreneurial*' (cf. Berglund et al. 2021). The traditional missions of a university become subsidiaries of the entrepreneurial project, and the dystopian view is that the university loses its scientific identity. In another trajectory, the hype around the entrepreneurial university is anticipated to calm down and the idea to fade as one reflecting the times, eventually being subsumed by other emerging ideologies. As such, the entrepreneurial university is at the same time both normative and emergent, both overinflated hype and self-evident reality.

The entrepreneurial university metanarratives (Chapter 7) elicited in this study reflect *the outcome of the sensemaking process* – the interpretations of the phenomenon. The coexistence of these metanarratives – *much ado about nothing*, *members' club*, *progress*, and *illusion* – points to the plurivocality of the entrepreneurial university, that the entrepreneurial emphasis is interpreted and understood in different ways. In a similar vein, in their study MacNeil et al. (2021) identified four alternative narratives (community, factory, crowd and cult) that highlighted the multiplicity of interpretations of an entrepreneurial context in a Canadian university. In their case, the identified narratives resisted one another, whereas in my study, the entrepreneurial university narratives are not considered alternatives to each other, even though they are partially overlapping and opposing, but rather their coexistence reflects the multifacetedness and plurivocality of the phenomenon as well as the interpretations thereof. The metanarratives in this study also imply that the entrepreneurial university is emerging rather than established in the researched university, and it is yet in search of meaning. In this sense, the process

of 'becoming entrepreneurial' can be considered to be at an early phase. The entrepreneurial emphasis, albeit controversial, is largely recognized among the study participants, yet it remains unclear what the entrepreneurial university really is, to whom it is and how it is actualized.

Based on the entrepreneurial university metanarratives, *the understanding of the entrepreneurial university is dynamic and relational, and it is constructed in relation to the interpretation of a university and its renegotiation concerning entrepreneurship*. This study illustrates the relationship between entrepreneurship and the university as constrained and uneasy, which has an influence on the construction of the entrepreneurial university. The strained relationship draws from the traditions of a university and the stereotypical interpretations of entrepreneurship, along with the varied assumptions and prejudices that combining these two includes.

The '*much ado about nothing*' metanarrative (in chapter 7.1) reflects the relationship between the university and entrepreneurship from two different perspectives. Firstly, the university is likened to entrepreneurship, because innovation and new creation are seen as essential elements for both, and therefore, the entrepreneurial university, or rather, its promotion and the recent fuss thereof, are considered unnecessary. The university, as it is, is already entrepreneurial enough – and indeed, it has been so for a long time. From another angle, the much ado about nothing metanarrative emphasizes the established position of a university in the sense that different ideologies, such as entrepreneurship, come and go, so there is no need to organize the university according to the entrepreneurial emphasis. There will be other ideologies, as there have always been.

The '*members' club'* narration (in chapter 7.2) is contradictory in the sense that the perception about who is counted in and who is left aside varies. The interpretation is based on the study participants' perceptions about entrepreneurship, and the narrow reading typically results in a more excluded understanding of the entrepreneurial university. Here, the entrepreneurial university is contrasted against the university, which – as the concept implies – is considered encompassing and inclusive, yet in terms of entrepreneurship, the interpretation is conflicting.

The stagnation of the university is present in the '*progress*' narration (in chapter 7.3), which highlights the entrepreneurial transformation from the perspectives of development and improvement. In these lines of thought, the university is seen to be in a need of a shake, and the entrepreneurial transformation is considered a good initiative in this respect. There are also other speculations, in which the university is called – perhaps a bit provocatively – the future university, the innovation university and even an AI university. In most considerations, however, the university, in accordance with its etymology, is understood as a representation of 'the whole', and in this respect, there is no need for additions or prefixes, but rather, '*the university, full stop*' will do, as some study participants suggested. Furthermore, since the

university is understood as an integral part of the society, it is expected to be adaptive and reactive to environmental and societal changes. Thus it should take emerging ideologies into account. Such adaptation is not seen to threaten the university, but rather, it makes the university more relevant. Nevertheless, according to the participants in this study, there is no need to add a new prefix to every emerging ideology. So, the winds of change are expected to blow in academia, but not necessarily in the form of an entrepreneurial university. There is, however, a sense of desire to hold on to some of the new initiatives launched under the entrepreneurial university project.

Finally, the '*illusion*' metanarrative (in chapter 7.4) brings forth an incongruity between entrepreneurship and the university and the consequent interpretation of the university with only scant entrepreneurial elements. The university is seen to be able to support entrepreneurship and entrepreneurialism to a certain extent, but there is a suspicion as to whether the university itself can ever become entrepreneurial – as in an institutional entrepreneur (cf. Maguire, Hardy & Lawrence 2004) in the sense that, for example, Clark (1998) suggested – and therefore, whether the entrepreneurial university should be considered merely fictional.

8.3 Contribution of the research

Let me start this chapter with an ancient Indian parable about blind men and an elephant.[40] According to the tale, a group of blind men came across an elephant for the first time, so they did not know what it was. In their exploration, all blind men, each individually, feel a different part of the animal. They then describe the elephant based on their limited experience, and all descriptions and perceptions are different from each other and in the end, their understanding of an elephant remains insufficient. The moral of the parable is that we tend to claim a truth based on our limited, subjective experience and ignore those of others, which might be equally true. In addition, should the blind men combine their experiences, instead of random observations of an elephant that remained meaningless, they could have taken steps towards identifying the elephant, and thus advance their understanding about the creature that was new to them.

In a similar vein, one of the objectives of my research has been to gain a wider and more pluralistic understanding of the entrepreneurial university (cf. Gartner 2001). Therefore, in this study, I have not settled with one view of the entrepreneurial

[40] The blind men and the elephant is an ancient parable from India, which has been adapted by many religions (e.g. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sufism), and published in various stories for adults and children. John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) poem is one of the most famous versions of the parable.

university, but rather, I have sought many. Accordingly, I have explored the entrepreneurial university from its different 'parts' by conducting group discussions among university personnel across the university, as in the blind men each feeling the side, tusk, trunk, knee, ear and tail of an elephant. Each discussion with distinctive storytelling provided me with varied interpretations of entrepreneurship in a university and created different versions of the entrepreneurial university. In contrast to the blind men in the tale, who only described parts of the elephant separately without 'seeing' the entity, I advance the knowledge of the entrepreneurial university by building on those multiple versions simultaneously, so that the understanding consists of not just one, but several coexisting interpretations of the entrepreneurial university. These together, I claim, contribute to the broader and more nuanced knowledge of the phenomenon – a 'truer' knowledge, that is.

8.3.1 Theoretical implications of the research

This study centres on individuals and groups working in the university, thus pointing out that the entrepreneurial transformation concerns not only the structures and functions of an organization, but the people within it, too. Consequently, the adopted individual perspective of this study makes several contributions to the entrepreneurial university discussion by *providing a new, alternative perspective to the entrepreneurial university conceptualization, which is more nuanced and aligned with the internal and contextual aspects of the phenomenon* and critical in the sense that it is *attentive to the prevailing, rather stagnant and dualistic, interpretations of an entrepreneurial university* (see, Eriksson et al. 2021b). In this way, the stories and metanarratives elicited in this study combine the polarized views of the entrepreneurial university, which in the previous literature are typically discussed in isolation (cf. Hytti 2021a). More importantly, the stories and metanarratives centre on the interpretations between utopia and dystopia, addressing all that is interesting in between, which has tended to be a neglected perspective in previous discussions. For instance, the 'classics' in the field (Clark 1998; Etzkowitz 2013; 2014; Gibb et al. 2013), as well as many successors that depict either pathways or (ideal) models for an entrepreneurial university, illustrate a fairly positive picture of the phenomenon, in which the university gains an increased independence and funding base and becomes an active contributor to regional development. Academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie 1997; 2001; Slaughter & Rhoades 2004), in turn, represents a critical tenet, in which the entrepreneurial transformation is discussed from the perspective of neoliberalism, and attention is drawn to the downsides of privatization and marketization of knowledge and the pursuit of profit (Slaughter & Rhoades 2004) in terms of employment and stability in academia. This *study provides a broader understanding of the phenomenon by addressing the*

contextualized interpretations of university personnel, in which the entrepreneurial university contains concurrently both negative and positive assumptions, as well as less polarized readings in between. Furthermore, none of the detected interpretations of the entrepreneurial university is unipolar, rather, they can be characterized as ambitopian and ambipolar views. Consequently, *the entrepreneurial university is constructed as a complex and ambiguous phenomenon that includes several co-existing interpretations*, as the four concurrent and partially overlapping metanarratives elicited in the university personnel's sensemaking indicate, highlighting the entrepreneurial university as a tensioned and ambiguous field. The interpretations of the entrepreneurial university are dependent on the lived experience of the university personnel – their experiences of entrepreneurship and work in academia, as well as their varied academic and personal backgrounds, preconceptions and perceptions are strongly intertwined in their sensemaking. In other words, the sensemaking process is very personal and intimate, and it draws from the everyday, in which the study participants are present actors. In their narrations, they share stories of their lives with personal and interpretative elements included. Ylijoki and Ursin (2013) provided a similar kind of integrative interpretation in their study on academics making sense of transformation of higher education, in which they detected nine narratives among the university personnel with different perspectives as to what it means to be an academic in the present-day university. Consequently, the narratives of resistance, loss, administrative work overload and job insecurity were embedded in a regressive storyline, describing deterioration of academic work and one's standing. In contrast, narratives of success, mobility and change agency relied on positive storyline seeing the current changes in academia in a positive light. In addition, between these two opposites, narratives of work-life balance and bystander followed a more stable storyline, which involved a neutral stance toward university transformations. In a similar vein, the entrepreneurial university in this study has multiple understandings, which are fairly unfixed and variable.

Previous literature tends to illustrate the entrepreneurial transformation as a determinate phase of the evolution of universities; it is depicted as a rather deterministic consequence of the influence of the knowledge-based society, which urges universities to change and become entrepreneurial (Clark 1998; Etzkowitz et al. 2000; Etzkowitz et al. 2008; Gibb et al. 2009). The transformation seems fairly axiomatic if only universities step down from the ivory tower and start collaboration with the surrounding environment, thus repositioning (entrepreneurial) universities as critical contributors to innovation, technological development, economic growth and regional development (e.g. Zhang et al. 2016). This study argues that *the entrepreneurial university is not a determinate evolutionary phase* that all universities arrive at by following a blueprint or model with a focus on universities'

functions and intuitional setting, but rather, a controversial phenomenon that concerns the university at large. This includes construction and reconstruction of the meaning of the university and entrepreneurship, both of which contain assumptions and prejudices, stemming from the traditions of a university and fairly stereotypical interpretations of entrepreneurship. Therefore, *the entrepreneurial university is not a separate axiomatic condition, but it renegotiates the meaning of both what a university is as well as what entrepreneurship is* in the process of understanding what the entrepreneurial university is, can be and should be. These renegotiations call for further elaboration of the concept of entrepreneurship (cf. Gibb & Hannon 2006) and the meaning of a university (cf. Kliewe, Kesting, Plewa & Baaken 2019).

Much of the sensemaking includes negotiation and speculations about the 'new university' and its trajectories. The interpretations of the entrepreneurial university, thus, are related to the study participants' understanding of the university – and by constructing their understanding of the entrepreneurial university, they also reconstruct their understanding of the university. Thus, neither is fixed or static, yet the understanding of the university seems more robust and it goes deeper. The understanding of the entrepreneurial university is dynamic and relational, and also includes negotiation about what entrepreneurship is. This brings forth the importance of the cognitive ability of an organization to make sense in and of novel situations (Weick et al. 2005), such as becoming an entrepreneurial university admittedly is. Consequently, this study suggests that the entrepreneurial university is largely dependent on university personnel's sensemaking; their collective understanding of the entrepreneurial university has an influence on whether the transformation materializes and to what extent the university becomes entrepreneurial. After all, unless the university personnel accept and adapt to the entrepreneurial transformation, the entrepreneurial university remains mere rhetoric without actualization.

Finally – what does all this imply? As all human organized endeavour, a university in transition is both obvious and enigmatic. The fact that humans and their lived experience have infinite variety is obvious. How to make sense of this is the enigmatic part. In my attempt to listen to, parse and gain insight into this variety, I have consciously not attempted to find that elusive single, monofilament thread in order to discover a set of instructions on how to understand, define and further, direct it. To reapply the blind men and an elephant metaphor – I have attempted to let all the proverbial experiencers of the pachyderm have a say. They all add to the picture, they all have real experience, and we should listen to them. Thus, what I may have given shape to is the kind of variety that evolution in organization and nature needs in order to exist and move. As an organization needs variety, so does our understanding of it. I believe this variety enables movement forward, deeper and higher, thus opening up new avenues for discussion.

8.3.2 Methodological implications of the research

Narrative inquiry as such can hardly be considered a novel method in an entrepreneurship thesis anymore. This study, however, employs narrative methodology in multiple ways and centres on stories throughout; narrative approach is used in both collecting the research material and analysing it, as well as in presenting the outcome of the study. With this methodological choice, I seek to answer the call for diverse methods (Jennings, Perren & Carter 2005; Lindgren & Packendorff 2009; Neergaard & Ulhøi 2007), since narrative inquiry, despite its increased recognition, is still in the minority both in entrepreneurship research and in the qualitative research tradition. In this study, by combining the narrative perspective and the sensemaking lens, I have explored how an entrepreneurial university is constructed and understood from within the university. Drawing from narrative methodology, this study presents stories about the study participants' sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university and the metanarratives that reflect the sensemaking process. In this way, the study makes a methodological contribution by exploring the lived experience of university personnel as they negotiate the entrepreneurial transformation within the university becoming entrepreneurial, thus going deeper into the interpretative understanding of the phenomenon. For example, it allows us to see beyond the official entrepreneurial university story that the university produces and maintains in brochures, leaflets and through various action announcements, by providing local stories that exist here and there among the university personnel alongside the grandnarrative, and sometimes even opposing it. It also brings up many of the tensions that the concept itself includes, as well as movement in the meaning making as the negotiation unfolds. On a broader note, the entrepreneurial university research is at such a phase in theory formation that the plurality of voices and the contextual nuances achieved by centring on the narrative sensemaking process can provide much needed thickness, richness and depth to the discussion in the field. The ultimate methodological contribution of this study, thus, is the shift of perspective – seeing the entrepreneurial university as a social construction that emerges and evolves in university personnel's collective sensemaking; taking individuals as units of analysis opens up the entrepreneurial university in a novel, more contextualized and nuanced manner.

One more methodological implication of this study is the use of a group discussion method (Wilkinson 1998; 2004); I collected the research material in groups, which allowed me access to both the individual and collective sensemaking of the entrepreneurial university as they occur in the group discussions. In this way, I gained more layers and nuances to the phenomenon researched. Such bilaterality, however, caused confusion at times. There is, indeed, a debate on whether the individual or the group is the unit of analysis in the group method (Carey & Smith

1994; Morgan 1995), and, following a relatively flexible suggestion concerning the possibilities of the unit of analysis, I have used both (Kidd & Parshall 2000).

8.3.3 Practical implications of the research

The practical implications of this study are linked to the development of an entrepreneurial university. An enlightened university board or its management, desiring to steer the organization towards a direction it deems a beneficial one to ensure longevity, sufficient funding and degrees of freedom to attract personnel and students, may seek to inculcate entrepreneurship in the institution. In light of this study, a careful consideration of the human dimension and the narratives that encapsulate much of the experience and beliefs of the organization would probably increase the odds for success in such a project. The following four points are targeted to the management of a university to think about when the university is committed to becoming entrepreneurial – or, in any change initiative, for that matter.

1. *Take heed of the history of the faculties, departments, and key personnel thereof* – narratives reflect the past and may tell which directions and connotations to steer clear of and which to seek allies from.
2. *Allow for a many-faceted discussion and adaptation of entrepreneurship in a university*. Compressing the manifold realities into a single narrative is possibly counterproductive and rarely even plausible.
3. *Resist the desire to define a single path to a single future*; rather, allow for nonlinear, complex, ambiguous, and even contradictory routes in the right general direction. Leave room for learning on the way.
4. *Listen and seek to understand the narratives, stories, or even snippets thereof* to catch glimpses into the enacted realities and how these reflect on the strategy and its implementation and execution – and its premises.

For the *people working in a university* that is in the process of becoming entrepreneurial, almost regardless of what the motivation and drivers for the change are, the research provides insights of the in-between: it is usually neither utopian nor dystopian, neither purely motivated by better science and altruism, nor greed or nearsightedness. It probably will provide neither an unadulterated success for every individual, nor a murky Stygian hell for all. Everyone and every organization have a different history, present and future, and thus have narratives that either pose challenges or accelerators to change. It will mostly be a mix, that will depend on how a person is able to make sense of and assimilate the change into their narrative to determine whether it is mostly a positive effect, or indeed, not. To be able to

understand this could deliver a more productive or fulfilling experience, or at the very least, a better understanding of why this is.

To the *Ministry of Culture and Education*, this study provides evidence against the temptation to attempt to employ direct analogies for guidance to universities. As Heraclitus of Ephesus pointed out, you cannot step into the same river twice. The temporal aspect is different, the individuals in the organization are different, their collective narratives are certainly different. Hence, such a transition, even if deemed successful by one organization, will probably not yield a blueprint for success in another. Analogues and types of narrative may well be identified, however, given sufficient, in-depth research and provision for many voices and narratives, instead of a single, idealized one.

8.4 Evaluation of the study

Qualitative researchers often struggle with assuring that their findings are meaningful and credible, and they tend to be criticized for lacking methodological and analytical rigor (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In recent decades, there has been an increasing discussion concerning the '*crisis of representation*' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p. 9), and a number of works have tried to list the criteria describing the characteristics of good qualitative research (see, for example, Creswell 2009; Patton 2002; Creswell & Miller 2000; Polkinghorne 2007; Lincoln 1995; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Following these thoughts, the 'quality' and 'goodness' requirements of my research have been issues of constant scrutiny and evaluation during the research process. As an example, I have been speculating on how I can assure that my findings are true and valid, even if I can only offer the study participants' subjective perceptions and interpretations rather than accurate reflections of reality. In addition, since I have been largely the instrument of this study, how can I assure that the outcome is reliable and neutral, and it is not based on my personal preferences but on the data?

Since the classic evaluation criteria do not fit well with the qualitative research (Creswell 2013; Patton 2014), other ways of evaluation are suggested. Lincoln and Guba (1985), for example, in their highly cited work *Naturalistic Inquiry,* propose trustworthiness as an evaluation criterion of constructionist qualitative research, which includes four parallel dimensions: *credibility*, *dependability*, *transferability*, and *confirmability*. While I am aware of the ambivalence that they carry (e.g. Welch & Piekkari 2017), I will next briefly discuss the 'goodness' of my research in light of these principles.

8.4.1 Assessing trustworthiness

Credibility relates to the truth-value of the study (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The challenge in constructionist research, however, is that there are multiple realities and thus multiple truths, and therefore, instead of aiming at a '*provable truth*', researchers often refer to the terms '*verisimilitude*' and '*truth-likeness*' (cf. Yagi & Kleinberg 2011). The question then becomes how adequately the multiple constructions and realities of the study participants are presented (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Indeed, my idea has been all along to focus on multiple realities – i.e. the study participants' perceptions of the entrepreneurial university and narratives thereof – rather than attempting to provide a single reality. While accepting that reality is always impartial, I have tried to bring new insights to how entrepreneurship in the university can be understood, and in the end, I claim that these multiple views providing a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon are 'truer' than a construction of one '*grandnarrative*' (cf. MacNeil, Briggs, Christie & Sheehan 2021) of the entrepreneurial university. In addressing these multiple views, I have sought to ensure credibility in several ways.

In this study, I have discussed my methodological preferences thoroughly, applied and followed established research methods and justified my choices in detail (cf. Shenton 2004). The study participants, including their identification and selection processes, are described accurately yet anonymously. When writing the stories, I have allowed for a multiplicity of perceptions, not just the ones resonating with my presumptions and understanding. In the stories, I have used thick description and direct quotations in order to demonstrate adequately the links between the data and the outcome. Afterwards, I have given my work to the study participants for feedback to ensure that they recognize my interpretation (cf. Walle 2015; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

In terms of the research process, I have kept a log in which I have written the progress of the study in general and reflected on myself as a researcher. This helps to follow the steps that I have taken from the beginning to the end of the process and to establish a structure and metrics for such a lengthy and messy project as writing a PhD thesis always is. Similarly, I have stored all the research material to ensure the possibility for check-ups between the original data and my findings (cf. Lincoln & Guba 1985). Along the way, I have discussed my work with peers (Lincoln & Guba 1985) and thus exposed my argumentation for feedback and evaluation.

Dependability concerns the aspect of consistency, and it refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions (Polit & Beck 2014). To ensure dependability, I have addressed carefully and thoroughly the setting of this study. In other words, I have provided thick description of the research process as a whole and in parts, including the research design and methodological choices, detailed illustrations about the data collection and the analysis, and opened up the evaluation

of my work, which all contribute to the logic of this study to be understandable and repeatable (cf. Walle 2015; Lincoln & Guba 1985). In addition, I have reflected on the process openly along the way, including when I have changed the strategy (e.g. in identifying and selecting of the study participants), been at a loss with my analyses, or otherwise felt that I had to alter the direction somehow. In writing the stories, I have sought to capture and illustrate the particular reality – a university becoming entrepreneurial – as experienced and perceived by the participants in this study, and to show that even within those subjective perceptions and interpretations, consistency can be found (cf. Walle 2015).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study hold true in other settings and contexts (Lincoln & Guba 1985). It should be restated that the idea of transferability is not about replication (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016), but rather it is largely an empirical issue concerning the applicability of the research (Lincoln & Guba 1985). For example, Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) talk about '*theoretical generalizations*' that '*travel*' from one context to another, because they explain situated dynamics. Transferability calls for an adequate description of the original context – in illustrating the research site, I have utilized my insider role (cf. Hodkinson 2005; Davies 2007) in order to allow the reader to determine the applicability of the argumentation in another context (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Other means of ensuring transferability have been detailed description of the underlying reasoning and methodology as well as data collection and the analysis process of this study (Walle 2015; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Confirmability is about linking the data and the results; it concerns the steps that were taken and the process that shows how research findings were attained. It concerns the aspect of neutrality, but instead of the objectivity of the researcher, it focuses on the representativeness of the data. (Lincoln & Guba 1985.) The outcomes of this study are presented as stories and metanarratives from a university that is committed to becoming entrepreneurial, and while I have not established an '*audit trail*' (Lincoln & Guba 1985) to evidence explicitly how I have interpreted and written those stories and metanarratives, there are other ways to ensure the inter-subjectivity of the data. To this end, I have used a reflexive mode of writing and direct quotations and anecdotes throughout the study, with an attempt to show that the findings of this research – as based on my interpretation – are not my imagination, but they are grounded in the data.

To ensure the transparency of the process, I have created plentiful supporting documentation. The material includes (regrettably hasty) 'feeling notes' of each group discussion, reflective notes in the transcription phase as well as my log regarding the general progress of the research process. All these were to provide me with an abundance of stimulations in the analysis, as if I was able to travel back to the group discussions whilst doing the analysis. Furthermore, I returned to the

original data for regular check-ups (cf. Lincoln & Guba 1985) because the audio data were more accurate than my transcriptions.

In my study, I have tried to present my findings and argumentation in a neutral manner, and at the same time, I have discussed openly my presumptions and myself as researcher in exploring a university so familiar to me, which admittedly have influenced my interpretation (cf. Rheinhardt, Kreiner, Gioia & Corley 2018; Shenton 2004). Reflexivity (e.g. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2017; Haynes 2012) has been an important device to ensure transparency in this sense. Furthermore, I have used direct quotations to illustrate the data and opened up my analysis process as accurately as possible, thus establishing an opportunity to follow the chain of evidence and to ensure that my argumentation is supported by the data.

Above, I have assessed the trustworthiness of my research especially from the perspectives of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. While these criteria are intertwined, and thus, the ways of ensuring those are partially overlapping, I have tried to the best of my ability to establish the trustworthiness of my work and to ensure the rigor in my research. At the end of the day, however, it is for the reader to judge whether I have succeeded.

8.4.2 On limitations

There are some limitations in this study that I want to bring up here. One critical concern is related to the data: its amount, content and appropriateness, particularly. One might rightfully speculate whether the six stories and the four metanarratives derived from these provide an encompassing understanding of the entrepreneurial transformation within the researched university. While I have argued for the sufficiency and appropriateness of the data, especially from the perspective of selection criteria of the study participants (see chapters 4.2.4 and 5.1) in order to be able to capture the assumed variation of perceptions concerning entrepreneurship, I admit that the six stories presented in this study are not the whole story, but rather (purposely selected) reflections from the university. In the end, thus, the question remains as to whether I have been able to reach the ‘right’ participants and whether their stories have been able to connect the dots in a sufficient enough and a meaningful manner. I leave it to the reader to decide the extent of these concerns.

Another limitation of this study is connected to the chosen perspective of investigation. One motivation of this research was my desire to bring new insights to the prevailing structural and functional knowledge about the entrepreneurial university, and I thought that a view from within the university could provide more layers and nuances to the phenomenon and thus, add to our understanding of the entrepreneurial university. However, while I argue that the inside perspective inspires new thinking regarding the entrepreneurial university, it is good to keep in

mind that complementary information outside the university that was consciously omitted from the scope of this study might have provided more to the equation. Also, since no university operates in a vacuum, and collaboration is mentioned as one of the essential elements of the entrepreneurial university, even to the extent that the entrepreneurial transformation in universities is often referred to as stepping down from the ivory tower and as opening up the university to the outside world (e.g. Etzkowitz 2004; 2013; Redford & Fayolle 2014; Guenther & Wagner 2008), the lack of external stakeholders' perspective can be considered a possible limitation of this study. Then again, my particular aim in this study was to provide a perspective of the lived experience of academics *inside* the university. Yet one interesting future research aspect could be to combine the views from inside and outside the university (this and other future research avenues will be discussed in the following chapter 8.5).

The third limitation links to the scope of entrepreneurial university literature utilized in this study. The literature review focused on discussions and debates in the subject with an aim to outline the extensive research field and to justify the proposed shift in perspective. However, the conceptual positioning and argumentation of an entrepreneurial university might have benefitted from a visit to the history and evolution of the university. Such missing perspective can be considered a limitation of this study, and a historical overview of the concept of the university itself could have provided more sensitivity, for example, to the historical development of universities acting entrepreneurially and a better understanding of the tensions between the university and entrepreneurship that oftentimes seem to be taken for granted.

Finally, with regards to methodological limitations of this study, I have brought these up earlier in conjunction with the crafting of the methods (see chapter 4.4).

8.5 Suggestions for future research avenues

The results of this study indicate that changing gears allows for new insights and ideas, even in a much-researched field such as the entrepreneurial university. I do believe that we need more nuanced exploration of entrepreneurial universities in different contexts and settings, and the sensemaking lens provides one such possibility in theorizing and conceptualizing the phenomenon. I invite more researchers to focus on the inside of the organization and to utilize the narrative sensemaking approach.

In addition to these generic thoughts about future research directions, I have also developed the research idea of this thesis further by taking into account some areas of interest that have arisen during the investigation as well as a few of the issues that were not addressed in this thesis or considered as limitations. Consequently,

considering the process nature of the entrepreneurial university adopted in this study, there is an obvious call for a longitudinal study (cf. Hassett & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki 2013). This research focuses on a particular university with a strategic commitment to becoming entrepreneurial, and it investigates the entrepreneurial university sensemaking process at a particular time from within that university. Given the strong intertwinement of sensemaking and organizing (Weick et al. 2005; Glynn & Watkiss 2020; Kudesia 2017; Vogus & Colville 2016) and the related ontological turn to see organizations as always changing, evolving and renewing (Vogus & Colville 2016; Tsoukas & Chia 2002), it is assumed that the phase of 'becoming' and the interpretation of the entrepreneurial university are temporally and spatially dependent. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that the entrepreneurial transformation is at a relatively early stage in the university under investigation, and the entrepreneurial university is yet in search of meaning. Therefore, a longitudinal study could further add to our understanding about the entrepreneurial transformation and the continuous sensemaking thereof. For example, the next rounds of group discussions could be organized once a year (perhaps in a lighter manner) in order to be able to look at the changing sensemaking and the stages of evolving over time.

Another way to advance our understanding of the entrepreneurial university by enriching the research material is to increase the number of universities in the investigation. A good number of universities, preferably at different phases of their entrepreneurial transformation, could be selected to a comparative study. Here, the emphasis is not on comparison as such, but rather, it is expected that a selection of different universities would provide yet more nuances through the variety of contexts and settings in which they exist and operate.

One more interesting future research avenue derives from the missing external stakeholders' perspective that I talked about in the previous sub-chapter, in which I reflected on the limitations of this study (see chapter 8.4.2). In fact, I believe that widening the scope of investigation of the entrepreneurial university sensemaking to cover more broadly the stakeholders inside the university (e.g. management, students), as well those outside (a range of external actors that contribute and benefit from knowledge production of a university), could provide an interesting and worthwhile layer to the phenomenon. For example, some of the metanarratives interpreted in this study ('*much ado about nothing*' and '*illusion*'; for more, see chapters 7.1 and 7.4) challenged the grandnarrative of the entrepreneurial university to some extent, and it would be interesting to see if the external stakeholders' sensemaking draws more on the official narration of the entrepreneurial university or whether the negotiation also includes some opposing narrations – and what would these then be?

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Outline of the discussion themes

1. Entrepreneurship and university
    - What is entrepreneurship in your opinion?
    - How do you see entrepreneurship in university context?
    - Views, thoughts, experiences about entrepreneurship and university
2. Entrepreneurship promotion
    - Examples and perceptions about promoting entrepreneurship
    - Thoughts about it
3. Entrepreneurship on a personal level
    - Are you involved in entrepreneurship personally?
    - Experiences in university context?
    - Examples and thoughts?
4. The future of the entrepreneurial university
    - How do you see the future concerning entrepreneurship in university?
    - Examples and thoughts?

Note: Despite the discussion framework, the group discussions did not follow the same script but rather, the study participants were encouraged to talk broadly about entrepreneurship and university. Such open-ended approach resulted in a variety of discussions with different content and foci, which were based on the interests of the study participants. The framework was used as a loose reminder of the topics of interest.

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