

Creating space for play/invention – concepts of space and organizational entrepreneurship

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This paper focuses on how one can relate management thinking/practices to entrepreneurial processes in the context of formal organization. In order to do this we develop a number of related ‘spatial concepts’ providing us with the possibility of describing entrepreneurship as a ‘creation and use of space for play/innovation’. Using concepts of space, the managerial and the entrepreneurial dimensions and perspectives on organizing creativity become highly visible in the case studied. This is a field study (within the ethnographic tradition) focusing on an organizational transformation of a former public authority into a competitive limited company. A distinction between managerialism and ‘entrepreneurship as event’ is proposed as conceptually fruitful as well as useful for discussing recommendations to managers for how to handle entrepreneurial processes. A minimal and contextual role for management is suggested when aspiring to support the creation of space for play/invention, for example, for entrepreneurship as forms of organizational creativity.

Keywords: entrepreneurship; organization; space; strategy/tactics; invention; de Certeau.

1. Introduction

Focusing on entrepreneurial processes in the context of formal organizations, we limit ourselves here to organizational creativity in the form of invention of new practices. We approach this subject with the purpose of putting spatial concepts into use when elaborating on the possibilities of entrepreneurship, rather than to enquire into, for example, the managerial challenges of controlling innovation. We believe that a managerial perspective already marginalizes entrepreneurship as forms of creativity due to the principle mandate of management: to secure control and efficiency. When entrepreneurship is promoted as a *managerial* strategy for innovation, the need to secure control transforms the creative forces of entrepreneurial processes into strategized behaviour: self-management along normative guidelines specified in the prescribed place of information systems, expert knowledge, and promoted subject positions.

The focus is on the conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurship as organizational creativity in formal organizations – conditions described as space for play/invention. The relation between management and entrepreneurship is central for this focus. Using concepts of space we want to enable an analysis of this relation, in the context of the challenges of organizational creativity.

Although we now see some attempts to renew the academic field of entrepreneurship studies (Zafirovski 1999, Sarasvathy 2001, 2003, Gartner *et al.* 2003, Hjorth 2003,

(Steyaert and Hjorth 2003), it is recognized that the focus on organizational problems has not been too common in our field. Typically, a more macro- (firm-formation; evolution of industries; venture capital markets) or micro- (individual traits; motivation to start business; opportunity recognition) orientation has dominated. Concepts of space have been recurrent and quite central in the former group (marked generally by the influence of Marshall and Becattini). Industrial district, territories, areas, zones are concepts relying on geographical–physical space. Concepts such as community, locality or cluster, also common in this ‘macro-literature’, bring social and cultural dimensions into the task of delimiting these geographical–physical spaces (cf. Giner and Santa Maria 2002). As this paper focuses on entrepreneurship in the context of formal organizations, we instead concentrate on spatial concepts that help us to study, describe and analyse *organizational* entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is then understood as the process of creating space for play/invention in organizational contexts. As management knowledge dominates organizational life today, we focus on strategy and tactics as spatial concepts and enquire into their spatial effects in organization. In Lefebvre’s terms (1991) we could be said to focus on how the ‘mental space’ is designed by management to control the (re)production of organizational space, i.e. to determine social space as a specific *place*. Entrepreneurship can then be described as the tactics of creating *space* in managerially determined *places*. Such spaces for play/invention we call simply ‘other spaces’. This appears as an opening towards a need for theory development, for a more precise concept of these ‘other spaces’.

Entrepreneurship studies are generally influenced by management theories in the sense that there is seldom a problematization of management thinking or practices in order to assess the relevance and consequences for entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship as an academic discipline is often perceived as a happy receiver of management ideas (Sandberg 1992) or simply ‘a field of study within management’ (Busenitz *et al.* 2003). Drucker (1985) is one obvious case in point. When we turn to studies of organizational entrepreneurship, we quickly learn that this branch is even more influenced by management. Not only in the forms of corporate entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship (Peters and Waterman 1982, Burgelman 1983, 1984, Kanter 1983, Pinchot 1985, Stopford and Baden-Fuller 1994, Kemelgor 2002), but also in a broader (and perhaps more popular) form possible to describe as opened by ‘the excellence genre’ and continued in the enterprise discourse (du Gay 1997). Enterprise discourse, however influential since the 1980s (in the USA) and in the 1990s (in Scandinavia), produces a certain *managerial* form of entrepreneurship. Its attractiveness to managers lies precisely in joining economics and behaviourism in the name of an enterprise, promising speed, flexibility and innovativeness.

We find it necessary to place this *managerial* form of entrepreneurship (enterprising) in the perspective of entrepreneurship in its *entrepreneurial* form (Hjorth 2003). We believe the field story of the ES case (section 4) gives us an opportunity to ask what role management can play *vis-à-vis* entrepreneurial processes in the context of the formal organization. To suggest answers to this question we elaborate further on our understanding of the relation between management and entrepreneurship in section 2.

Describing entrepreneurship as a form of organizational creation, we need to clarify how we relate to creativity. Creativity is not about expressing the divine stroke of inspiration that lands a novelty among us like a meteorite ‘from outer space’. Rather, it answers closely to a genesis of intuition in intelligence (as Deleuze 1988, has put it),

that is, an introduction of the unthought into action as a free movement, as play. ‘Creativity disturbs the reigning order and, instead, also demands a new organization’ (Hjorth 2003: 5). Through using ‘spatial concepts’ (see discussion in section 3), we open up the problems of understanding the relation between management and entrepreneurship to an analysis that has several advantages:

- (1) It brings into focus an often-neglected but basic element of everyday (organizational) life – space. Using concepts of space will therefore enable a wide assessment of our analysis.
- (2) Through the specific concepts of space we put to use (strategy, tactics, and ‘other spaces’), power is naturally included in our analysis, something seldom happening as part of entrepreneurship research.

This paper seeks to demonstrate the use of specific spatial concepts in problematizing ‘organizational entrepreneurship’ in relation to management. In doing so, we want to contribute to a growing interest in Michel de Certeau’s work through using his particular versions of strategy and tactics. A form of analysis will be constructed using these ‘spatial concepts’ and will draw on the implications of that in terms of how entrepreneurial processes can be studied. Second, we want to enquire into if and how management can become part of raising entrepreneurial activities. The paper proceeds as follows.

In section 2 the relation between management and entrepreneurship is discussed. Through describing our position we want to clarify our approach. This approach is spurred on by the various readings of the rich and complex works of Michel Foucault. We put ourselves at the crossings of management and entrepreneurship, at enterprise discourse. Both those choices are urged by the interest in organizational entrepreneurship.

In section 3 the spatial concepts are discussed. Using these concepts it is argued that the relations between management and entrepreneurship become disclosed in a generative way, illustrated in how the empirical case, the transformation of ES (fictive name) can be interpreted. Being scarcely used for analysis in previous research on entrepreneurship (as exceptions, see Gorton 1999, using space to analyse market differences; and Anderson 2000, using spatial concepts to study how entrepreneurship creates and extracts value from the environment, turning peripheral weakness into a strength), concepts of space are used as a contribution to a novel approach to understanding organizational entrepreneurship.

Section 4 tells a story from a case study. This is done with a particular concern for *Qualisys* and the *Mission Organization*, both central projects in the attempt to make ES into a competitive company. This includes the re-imagining and reshaping of the ES employee as ‘better suiting’ the conditions of this new competitiveness. Management practices are central in this process. Entrepreneurial activities are played out at the margins of these projects, in an ‘other’ space.

In the fifth section we aim at constructing the possibilities for a dialogue with the story of ES. Understanding *entrepreneurship* as creation and use of space for play/invention leads us in discussions of how this is done in the event of ES’s renewal, but also of how management practices and thinking relate to this.

The sixth and final section describes how the ‘spatial concepts’ can work in analyses of organizational entrepreneurship. Then we discuss the empirical case and if management can play a role for organizational entrepreneurship. By making the distinction

between *managerialism* and ‘entrepreneurship as event’, we delineate the conditions for this role.

2. Positioning this discussion in the fields of management and entrepreneurship

In this section we will develop our introductions to management and entrepreneurship as these are initiated above. We enter into our discussion of management focusing in particular on the ways management shapes self-relations in order to make up enterprising employees. In sub-section 2.2 we argue for the need to study entrepreneurship as a creative, passionate and playful process (Spinoza *et al.* 1997, Hjorth 2003).

2.1 Management – adjusting the employee

Rather than focusing on the specific system of thinking/practising called Human Resources Management (HRM), we instead acknowledge the increasingly central ‘self-shaping’ elements in most new management concepts/practices. For sure, the basic HRM idea, i.e. the linking of the ‘human function’ to strategic thinking and planning in organizing (Haire 1970), represented a kind of break with the early managerialist approaches to the employee. Jacques (1999: 200) puts it clearly, saying that the emergence of HRM is ‘linked to a partial rupture in managerialist organizational hegemony. This rupture originates in the growing centrality of work done in knowledge-intensive, . . . environments in which Fayolian/Weberian/Barnardian ‘rationalization’ of organizational resources become ineffective’. From the perspective of governmentality studies, what is elsewhere described as a crisis of HRM (see Special Issue of *Organization*, 6 (2)), instead appears as the result of a gradual normalization of the human-conducting element in all practices of management. Managing gradually became the refined form of control we see today: primarily self-control and what is described above as strategized behaviour (cf. Deetz 1998).

Elton Mayo, we would have to conclude, is a central source of this normality. Explicitly targeting the employee’s self in perspective of a need for adjustment, Mayo aligns himself to a tradition that he claims was started by Taylor (Mayo 1924).¹ Through the counselling interview – a central ‘instrument’ in Mayo’s discussion of how to move into the employee’s relation of the self to self – the maladjusted individual was supposed to become tuned for modern industrial organization (Mayo 1919, 1945). The manager is then given the role of regulating employees’ self-understanding in order to adjust them to the strategic goals of their proper place in life – work. O’Connor (1999) summarizes Mayo’s view on managing humans as to: ‘“discharge . . . emotional and irrational elements” and “improve attitudes” – attitudes which need improving based on a manager’s or expert’s opinion that the employee is not co-operating or is not fully productive’ (O’Connor 1999: 236, citing Mayo within double quotes). The employee’s relation to his/her self is thus to be regulated by what is constructed as proper behaviour in the place prescribed by managerial strategies.

How is it possible for management to conduct our conduct, to shape our employee selves? What is the history of this possibility? When we move into modern life, with

expert-knowledge governing practices in organizational forms, the self-knowledge that is sought for is not primarily the aesthetic practice of the Greek ‘care of the self’, nor only Christian confessional self-examination clearing the way to the ‘light’ and salvation. Instead the examiner is an external authority – a representative of the state or the modern role of manager – who, thriving on the modernist (Delphic/Cartesian) ‘know thyself’ and the confessional disciplining, is interested *for economic reasons* in the development of the individual. The examiner’s role is to establish a normality in relation to which the person is individualized, a regulating *self-awareness* in Townley’s words (1995). Management practices can thus be described as a political technology that *individualizes* through asking for ‘individual goals of development’ and *normalizes* through expressing how those individual goals should come to fit with the strategies of the company. The plateau on which the employee should find her/his identity is one produced by *the strategic place proper* for the kind of strategized behaviour that is useful for the company. Such prescriptions are never total, however. There are always possibilities for poaching, for making use of the prescribed in unexpected ways. Power is possible only in relation to freedom as resistance (Foucault 1997: 167). The tactics of creating *space* within the strategically prescribed *place* is something one can identify as the form that organizational entrepreneurship has to take in managerially dominated organizations.

2.2 *Entrepreneurship as organizational creativity, creating and using space for play/invention*

On the level of the individual employee entrepreneurship is discussed as *a certain form of organizational creativity, namely, a tactical–marginal art of self-formation immanent to the process of creating space for actualizing new ideas*. What is important to note in relation to this contextual definition is how it relates to the academic discourse on entrepreneurship more broadly. We will finish section 2 with this positioning.

It is obvious now that entrepreneurship is widely studied in disciplines such as psychology, organizational behaviour, sociology, and anthropology, apart from the more immediate: economics and business administration. It is also rather clear that entrepreneurship has had a slow start and a hard time to grow within the discourse of economics, demonstrated in how Schumpeter’s work was ‘forgotten’ for some time. Also in business administration, management has had trouble in finding a way to relate to entrepreneurship. Deetz (1992: 228) describes:

The structural placement in the reproduction of bureaucracy renders the manager invisible; however, the manager is symbolically reproduced in association to an age of personal venture capital and entrepreneurs of the past. Institutionalized entrepreneurship as a source of innovation and progress is a key element of the discourse of managerialism.

From this position of a ‘handy disturber of order’, useful for the managerial role in demonstrating the need for control, entrepreneurship in the 1980s and 1990s has moved into a much more prominent position. This takes place through enterprise discourse. Enterprise gets a gospel-like spread through Peters and Waterman (1982), Kanter (1983), and the many discussions to follow in that genre. It happens, however, through a rather sudden, though more profound, progressive enlargement of the economic sphere as Gordon (1991) puts it. Gordon further describes (1991: 43): ‘attempts to construct a culture of enterprise have proceeded through the progressive

enlargement of the territory of the market – the realm of private enterprise and economic rationality – by a series of redefinitions of its objects' (cf. du Gay 1996). Following Foucault one might reflect that it is rather characteristic for 'our times' that Gary Becker was rewarded with a Nobel Prize (1992) for constructing a more or less general *lingua economicus* – suggesting a redescription of the social as a form of the economic (Gordon 1991: 43). When the ground is well prepared for enterprisers, enterprise discourse serves us 'entrepreneurs' and 'entrepreneurship' as solutions to all kinds of problems (Kanter 1989).

Describing the more recent routes of entrepreneurship we cannot, however, *limit* ourselves either to *business organizations* or primarily to economy, for it would require a societal perspective. The Reaganism and Thatcherism of the 1980s and the 'new way' – discussions, transforming the social democratic party politics of the 1990s show a profound impact of enterprise discourse. These are the days when the 'unemployed' become represented as 'job-seekers' and when 'homeless people' are called 'rough sleepers'. Still, we consider enterprise discourse to produce a *managerial* form of entrepreneurship that is a *reduced* form. Lately, however, as in the text by Spinoza *et al.* (1997), entrepreneurship has been conceptualized without being limited primarily to the economic and to business organization (Hjorth and Steyaert 2003). Entrepreneurship is there described as the tactical invention of new practices, changing our styles of living, the cultural acts of disclosing new worlds, driven by and producing an energy that changes our history. This is why de Certeau (1984) becomes important. He stresses that *tactics* operate through a sense of timing (movements) whereas *strategies* operate through place (fixation). *With de Certeau's spatial concepts of tactics and strategy we have the means to identify, describe and analyse organizational entrepreneurship without limiting ourselves to managerial representations.*

3. Studying entrepreneurship through 'spatial concepts'

Space is an extremely difficult concept. From Parmenides and Zeno's defence for Parmenides' rejection of change, formulated in a number of paradoxes, via Aristotle's concept of finite space (understood as two-dimensional), to Newton's absolute space, time and space were kept separate. In Einstein's relativity theory this becomes impossible. Space as used in this paper is primarily a *metaphor for that period in time when a possibility to actualize (often materialize) an imagined creation is practised in concrete social relations (such as conversations)* – in short: *making use of what is postulated/constructed as a freedom to act in the words 'I can'* (Agamben 1999: 177–178). In organizational studies, the concept of context relates time and space in similar ways as it is used as a 'grammar' for understanding action/interaction and the reproduction thereof in time–space trajectories (cf. Hernes 2003). Using the being and becoming of space as a way to describe organization that doesn't pull it towards images of a steady state, Hernes in addition emphasizes that contexts extend in time and space when conditions for their reproduction are met. One can see physical, social, and mental space (a Lefebvre (1991)-distinction of 'spaces') as relating material resources, social roles/commitments, and frameworks/theories, respectively through time. In making a distinction between space and place, we use a rather precise description found in de Certeau. Elsewhere, in order to clarify his use of place and space, de Certeau (1997) refers to the univocity of scientific discourse, legitimizing itself through the production of singular truths reigning in places proper where control is central. He contrasts

this with fiction, or the spoken word, which in the ambiguity of its becoming, is multiple, metaphoric, narrates one this to tell something else, opens spaces for play.

A place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (*place*). The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are *beside* one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability. A *space* exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it...is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization...it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper’ (de Certeau 1984: 117).

We believe spatiality to be related to a kind of problem less developed in organizational and entrepreneurship studies. These are the problems of: (1) how space is part of processes of organizational creativity and the invention of new practices; and (2) how *space* is where disciplining/normalizing forces come to play as demarcating the possible and proper *place*.

For this, the concepts of *strategy and tactics* offer possibilities to describe, study and analyse the creation and use of space for play/invention (entrepreneurship) in the context of formal organizations. Putting these concepts to a more specific use in entrepreneurship studies will point out the need for a way to conceptualize these spaces for play/invention (see sub-section 3.2), so as to increase the student’s sensitivity before spatial analyses of entrepreneurship.

3.1 Strategy and tactics

Strategy and tactics are deliberately used in singular and plural, respectively. The strategic operates through totalizing/domination and the tactical through multiplicity/poaching. It is important to note that, although these concepts are conventionally part of a general social science ‘vocabulary’, we do not put them to use in the customary way. Instead we lean on de Certeau – contributor to a new cultural analysis (cf. Colebrook 1997, Hjorth and Steyaert 2003) – and his specific use. de Certeau made use of the well-established concepts of strategy and tactics in a novel way. Central to this way was the alignment of his thinking to that of Michel Foucault’s. Using these concepts of strategy and tactics will thus bring together de Certeau’s culturally-oriented focus on everyday practices and Foucault’s analytic richness in disclosing the operations of power knowledge. We believe that this is crucial for getting at entrepreneurship in managerially dominated contexts of formal organization. This is how de Certeau describes strategy:

I call strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers, competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed. As in management, every ‘strategic’ rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its ‘own’ place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from ‘environment’ (de Certeau 1984: 36, emphasis as in de Certeau’s text).

Tactics is then describing a *different mode* of power: ‘Occupying the gaps or interstices of the strategic grid, tactics produce a difference or unpredictable event which can corrupt or pervert the strategy’s system’ (Colebrook 1997: 125). de Certeau describes tactics as:

The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power... It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of ‘opportunities’ and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its positions and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment (de Certeau 1984: 36–37).

The strategic (a form of power-knowledge) operates through a place made proper. When a place is appropriated, as one’s own, one can capitalize on the acquired advantages. It is within such imposed *places* that tactics create *space*. In entrepreneurial processes, these are spaces for play or invention (Hjorth 2001). Such inventions are created in the crack of the surveillance of the proprietary powers. The tactical act poaches in these cracks; it creates surprises in them, writes de Certeau (1984). Relating to our discussion of context and space above (Hernes 2003), we would say that entrepreneurial processes operate not the least through bringing elements into contexts that couldn’t generate them, what Spinoza *et al.* (1997) call cross-appropriation.

The strategic place can be described as disciplining/normalizing. It often combines material, relational, and theoretical spaces through specific contexts. We come across this kind of place in our everyday life. When we enter into a large cathedral; when we have to walk through the office space of that big bank from which we try to get a loan; when we sat down to write examinations in that high school assembly hall; in positions *vis-à-vis* superiors in hierarchies; when we are marginalized; when ending up in minorities.

Management practices operate in proper places. Places set up in the name of economy and by the force of combining economics and behaviourism: *homo oeconomicus* is here *manipulable man*, an adjustable decision maker (Gordon 1991). In this study, we particularly concentrate on how management reproduce such a place, and thus, how entrepreneurial processes create space for play in such contexts of normalization. The place appropriated by the strategic/dominant rationality is particularly well exemplified in cases of organizational renewal. At such occasions, a strategy for how to become other sets out to assure a successful structuring of novelty. Normalizing sanctions try to correct minute details of individual behaviour and in this way make up a disciplined employee through technologies of the self. In the case we are about to describe, the normal was expressed in the language of enterprise discourse (Burchell *et al.* 1991, du Gay 1996). As a managerial discourse, enterprise expresses the regulatory ideal of a *managerial* entrepreneur.

3.2 Space for play – ‘Other spaces’?

If we now have a sense of the place appropriated by the strategic effects of enterprise discourse, what about the space created by tactics within such a place? We need a concept in order to be able to relate to this kind of space. There are few options available. In a text discussing ‘Different spaces’, Foucault launches the concept of *heterotopia*. This concept is found in medicine, describing how something is in a place where it normally should not be. He noted that: ‘One could imagine... a sort

of systematic description... [of] these different spaces, these other places, a kind of contestation, both mythical and real, of the space in which we live' (2000: 179). The concept of heterotopia seems too under-developed, though, to form into anything else than a possibility for students of 'other spaces'.

We rest with a more open description of spaces for play/invention as 'other spaces'. Relying on de Certeau (1984), we will describe the space for play/invention as a space of actualization, actuated by movements toward future creation. This captures the space of tactics, which according to our description above, is characterized by mobility. In relation to the case we have studied, we will specify this mobility in terms of *boundary playing* and *partnerships*. de Certeau's concepts allow greater sensitivity before the subversive side of practices of power. He used 'space-act' to describe the way people worked their way through and about what is in their midst (Conley 2000: 75). The creation of 'spaces of actualization', where space for play is used, could thus be described as a subversive space-act, which expands the cracks in actualizing ideas for how to make use of the strategic. The marginal-tactical act of creating space for play/invention would establish a crisis in the place of strategy, in the rule of the dominant order.

4. Management practices in an entrepreneurial perspective: the case of ES

EducatorSouth (ES), an independent subsidiary within the concern of Educator had just recently become re-created as a limited company. Until a year before the start of our study, the concern had been a public authority, and ES was one of the county-based administrative units within this authority. In addition to the juridical status as a limited company, ES struggled to become a *proper* competitor on a de-regulated market. Proper was in this case referenced as the regulative ideals of enterprise discourse. Within ES there were five market areas, which were run by market area managers (MAMs). The market areas had traditionally a strong position, and so the MAM role was central. Marty, the ES Chief Executive Officer (CEO), struggled with his relation to the MAMs as he tried to create one whole company out of five market areas.

This study started with the transformation of ES. The concept of 'the pool' was concentrated on (sub-section 4.2) and the local context in which this was launched (sub-section 4.1). The pool was a management concept for how the ES employee should be taken care of in the 'new organization'. The newness of the 'new organization' was considered by people in ES to come from two major projects: the Qualisys project and the Mission Organization (MO from now on). These form the context of the pool.

The extracts of the overall story are parts of a longitudinal ethnographic study lasting over 15 months. A majority of this time was spent in participant observation and the recording of conversations and interviews with locals at ES. Field notes accompanied ES-produced minutes from meetings, newsletters, brochures, and internal memos/e-mails together making up the 'library' of the study. The recorded conversations and interviews with Market Area Managers (MAMs) and functionally responsible together with the ES CEO (approximately 12 persons,² most of them interviewed and recorded at least twice) were typed out as word-for-word transcripts

that also contributed to the ‘library’ of the study. In the context of this library, stories have been chosen after close readings.

4.1 ES’s local history

The monopoly on selling labour market education was broken for ES. Competition faced them and they had to rethink themselves. This is where the two projects – Qualisys and the MO – came in. The MO was the project of renewing the organization (roles, responsibilities, ways of handling customers), whereas Qualisys was a new ‘management information system’ central for controlling and directing the new organization.

4.1.1 Qualisys – the manager’s toolbox: Educator decided to use WellDone (fictive name), a consulting agency, to organize the renewal project. WellDone sold them their whole Qualisys package. This was a product designed to identify/construct main processes and to build the different information systems necessary (from this product’s perspective) for *the managers’ control, measurability, accountability, and individual responsibility*. We can thus describe Qualisys, which also promised to secure the quality of the operations, as forming the context for specific managerial practices, i.e. it constructed the material, relational, and theoretical space in which actions were now framed. Qualisys prepared the ES organization for the measurability that was understood to be normal in the discourse of change-for-market-adaptation that characterized the event. This measurability had to be made meaningful for individuals. For the place of Qualisys never seemed to be practiced by the ES employees, which is to say, that it never reached its assumed effect – that of instigating the new law of the proper, of effectuating stability. For this reason the ES employee had to become attracted to the subject-position of manager. The theoretical space of employees was shaped through expert knowledge provided by the consulting agency in project groups. Self-regulation and self-disciplining along the lines of Qualisys was sought for. This was an attempt to achieve a greater match between material and relational space as instigated through the Qualisys project. The position of manager was constituted by the accountability and individualization that are central to management (as Hoskin 1998, shows): writing (documenting meetings and tasks), grading (comparing the market areas’ results in terms of new key point indicators) and examining (create reports that individualized employees and related their responsibility to the customer/market). Qualisys also meant that the everyday organizing was extensively documented through the use of a number of new reports. ‘Key Point Indicators’ (KPIs) were used for measuring activities (accounting, tracking people and resources). They were like hungry newborn children that had to be fed.

4.1.2 The Mission Organization – making up enterprising employees: The Mission Organization (MO) had already been launched by the time Qualisys was imposed from the concern office. During this study, the MO was also taken into a second phase (MO2) where it was supposed to become radicalized in certain respects (see below). The MO was thought to function as a project organization. Every new deal with customers was supposed to be managed according to this new project or mission

organization. The MO was thus an intensified effort to shape the local ‘theoretical space of organizing’, to construct the MO place with specific ways of relating to the new ES reality.

Flexibility, speed, and customer orientation were the assumed advantages with a properly running MO. The managers of ES such as the ES CEO (Marty) were excited about this. Work, for the ES employee, was re-coded. The market-focused, customer-attentive employee-to-be would thrive upon the individualization and ‘responsibilization’ of the employees that Qualisys had instigated. There were sceptics, though, and Kim, one of the MAMs in ES, said:

Well, the mission organization is about flexibility...yes...but people are surprised by the loneliness they see coming down the road. That's a high price for some people...just to get some flexibility.

Marty described the need for the MO:

The mission leader is the organizing power. This is where the power to succeed exists...and...it is true as it is said...sub-optimization is what is happening today, when we have five companies in the company, because that's in principle what we have today....It's not possible to measure performance only at the mission-level, which could be company-wide [a mission could include the whole company, i.e. several market areas] and then on market-area level...and generate that in a company. You have constant conflicts on those levels where this is supposed to be measured later, the final result...which means that you will end up in an eternal merry-go-round of different discussions about internal invoicing and discussions about what it should cost to move a person from here to there.

Marty started to talk about ‘what the employees need?’ and that ‘a mission leader needs proper feedback on what they do’. This urge was about implying the need to become an independent consultant with market orientation and customer focus. This is how ES employees became individualized, prescribed the individual place of the independent consultant-within-the-company – the mission leader. The mission leader was the project organizer who should see to that every sold educational service was organized as a project that could be measured and documented. S/he was supposed to acquire administrative support services from an efficiently providing company. Marty described:

It is not about hiring more people. It is about being more efficient. This is the logic of a mission, you see...all the resources needed to complete a mission are to be organized by the ‘mission leader’. This means that logistics, administration, and so on is to be attached temporarily to the mission at the proper time and at the proper amount. All these functions are split in the company and will assist wherever the mission is run.

Marty understood that he had to do something not to lose the MO case to the sceptics. He decided to ‘radicalize’ things into a MO2-version. In Marty’s world the MO2 was to do away with the walls that the market-area organization meant. Beyond those walls he saw the flexibility and efficiency that he believed was needed for the new ES:

To swap over to a mission organization, keeping the management, compared to the old work-team structure, means that we miss a major part in the role of the mission leader. That is, the mission leader doesn't get the feedback on his concrete mission. It's not possible for the mission leader to see what ‘I have been successful with, what I have done not so well’. For the reason that there is a filter that's called MAM...which is the filter between the mission and the result.

4.1.3 The MO2 – the ES employee subject to management practices: Marty could make sense of the MO2-place: customers – efficiency – mission leaders – and the whole new order of Qualisys, if he could represent this as required by a more consultative way of working. However, the mission leader was not the attractive position that Marty had imagined. Sarcasm was used among the employees at ES during those days of the MO fights. At one lunch a certain metaphor was used to let out some comments on the transformation:

(Q)quality-, (P)production-, (S)strategy-, and (SL)sales-managers: ‘Well, the film has been stretched off, hasn’t it? (Q) – Yeah...and the popcorn is nearly finished too, isn’t it? (P) – It’s like people start to make ‘buuh’ in the salon, you know, when everyone is waiting for something to happen (S) – Right, and now we try to find the stump...and there are three of them, and you don’t know which one to use for the rest of the film (Q)’.

Someone suggested that one could pick the one that makes the film start again.

Yes, then they would applaud, wouldn’t they? Because then people would recognize themselves in the film (Q). – But now...no one wants to leave the salon since it’s cold outside. So...even if there’s no film, people sit there still (P).

Marty’s strategy to handle the discomfort of the ES employees can be described by the focus on *taking care* of the employees. Their need for development and their need for *self-knowledge* (proper feedback). Meeting those needs would, according to Marty, enable an answer to the question whether one was *successful* or not:

Let’s, for a moment, forget this thing with the customer and internal perspective and just look at the inner drives of the human. It is like this...that as mission leader you have the full responsibility for your mission, or should have the full responsibility for your mission...and where’s the drive for succeeding with this? Well, they’re of course in the self-satisfaction from being successful in this, but there must also be incentives in this that makes you see, concretely, and get concrete proofs for that you have done a good job (Marty).

4.2 ‘Taking care’ of the employee vs. other spaces

New roles were set up as exit routes for the eroded MAM position in MO2. Among them – district manager, business-deals manager, logistics manager – we also find human resource manager and personnel leaders. The *human resource manager* was in charge of the *personnel leaders*, who in turn were in charge of the *pools*. The pools can be described as a more intimate/private ‘place’. The place of care-taking, reproducing the context of HRM, is here the relational place of human resource management into which the employees should step were they not fully booked into missions. The pool was supposed to create opportunities for personal development and coaching. Most people, however, understood the pool as a refined way to find out which persons were popular consultants and how much people worked.

Having turned, in the 1970s, towards ‘designing our thinking’, management practices and thinking increasingly provide employees with ways of participation in the effectuation of strategies. The pool answers to such a need, prescribed by the MO2. The increased individual responsibility and loneliness following from working as consultants was to become compensated by the pool. However, the pool increased the competition between ES employees who were now subjected to the documenting and registering apparatus of Qualisys, and the organizing procedures of the MO2. The counselling relation to a personnel leader was understood as inspection/dressage.

One could describe the pool as ‘liberation’ into deeper dependence, for participation in effectuating the company strategy had to be performed in specific, prescribed ways. Only then is this performance considered good and an example of ‘empowerment’, which in effect is only a high score on the *strategists’* clapometers.

4.2.1 In the margin – space for play/invention: In relation to the strategically initiated pool-concept, supposedly taking care of the assumed needs of the new *performing* ES employee, there was a *marginal place*. In this margin, partly isolated from everyday organizational practices, space for play/invention was created. The creation of new ES practices was done in these off-site worlds. We studied the so-called EKC project that took ES into the building of a new knowledge centre. This whole project was co-created (with local municipal authorities and business networks) by Cole and Will from ES. Their anxiety was not directed towards the control apparatus of Qualisys or the cold hand of the care-taking pool of MO2. Instead it was related to the difficulties with hanging on to the anomalies they initiated.

I think it's damn hard to see what people are worried about. I fool myself every time. As soon as you dig into it, you find a lot. You easily run over people as a steam-roll now. You see it, but you don't believe it. Why don't you see it?... well, because you're not afraid yourself. There are a thousand different fears in this that was amplified to a giant paralysis (Cole).

Cole’s story below brings us into the *space of organizational entrepreneurship*. He narrates his position into the margin of the official change projects – indicating an *other space*. Below, he expresses a concern for re-contextualizing ES-to-become. In this sense he is far from the anxiety of the ES employees trying to relate to Qualisys and the MO. Cole rather described the official change project as reproducing an ‘improper context’, a place too slow and prescriptive (creating fears).

Well... I have been thinking. You remember I asked you about this process organization that I had been thinking on. I wonder if that's not what could be right for us. But I am tired of this MO2 thing... or what didn't become any MO2 thing. Like I've said before, I don't want to be involved this time.... I think I am a bit too impatient (Cole).

5. Towards conceptualizing the relation: organizational entrepreneurship and management

In further analysing the story of ES’s renewal we will make use of the central concepts of sections 2 and 3 – *strategy, tactics* and ‘*other spaces*’. We will concentrate in particular on how management, legitimized as expert knowledge and through conducting practices, construct a relational and theoretical place that installs and exercises the power of a specific normality. In this case, that of *managerial entrepreneurship*.

The case of ES is recognizable for most people, both in profit and as in the non-profit sectors. ES represents an everyday experience: a need to live up to new conditions, transform the organizing practices, a need for new ideas, vocabularies. Most people at ES focused on how to perform correctly in the new place of Qualisys. The tools/techniques of Qualisys were related to as *ends* rather than *means* for the renewal project. This way, the change of identity, of how to think and practice organizing as a Mission Organization, could become marginalized. Cole represents a focus on actualizing a new ES (new products, markets, brand), for which the

Qualisys could function only as means. The CEO's declaration of the need to become a Mission Organization was used as an official reason for creating space for play/invention. How to understand the conditions for entrepreneurial processes in the context of organizational renewal? We see this ES event as a case of a strategic process of normalizing behaviour prescribing a proper place in which to conduct oneself as 'enterpriser'. What sets the entrepreneurial processes off is *the tactical poaching of this prescribed place and its normalizing force*, creating a different space – an other space.

From the case, it doesn't seem like the entrepreneurial initiatives are stimulated by what can be called management solutions. The question is here: apart from the negative sense of producing boundaries to breach, what kind of management practices can become helpful, enabling entrepreneurial processes? If there are, how could this be phrased into a conceptual framework relating organizational entrepreneurship and management?

We will first discuss the case of ES to see if we can further substantiate our idea of entrepreneurship as organizational creativity, a tactical art of creating space for play/invention. Two empirical examples of organizational creativity, close-ups from the EKC project, will be focused: *playing with boundaries* and *raising partnerships* (5.1). Second, we will enquire into the possibility of a role for management in or for such entrepreneurship processes (5.2).

5.1 Organizational entrepreneurship: through boundary playing and partnerships

For ES, there are many boundaries: between ES and the concern Educator, between past and present, their presence today and possible futures, themselves and customers, between Qualisys and the MO... Poaching at boundaries to create space is a discursive act; one ends up in a different discourse, invites other contexts for framing action, playfully destabilizing the reigning normalities in prescribed places. Having created a space for play/invention, we cannot return to the world in which no space was virtually real. Creation/language is in this sense irreversible. This is why those who have created new spaces have a hard time understanding why others still don't see the opening, exemplified by what Cole said above: 'I think it's damn hard to see what people are worried about. I fool myself every time'.

Qualisys can be described as the grid of intelligibility through which the ES employees became strategized. This new strategy, this new power-knowledge, enters through expert-knowledge expressed in a new vocabulary. It contrasted rather sharply with the more philanthropic language of Educator's earlier operations as a public authority. This new vocabulary – the global grammar of managerialism (sub-section 5.2) – was used by the consulting agency, and sanctioned as normal by newly hired people with experiences from competitive markets. As with learning a new language, ES employees carefully tried to use the right words at the right moments. This insecurity together with the examining measures of the Key Point Indicators (KPIs), instigated a *self-awareness* that signalled the need for an *adjusted* self. Management operated as dressage (cf. Jackson and Carter 1998) to accomplish the new, enterprising employee.

No manège is hermetically sealed, though, and dressage can always be interrupted by the very freedom to play/invent that forms the condition for it all. Testing boundaries is a way to create space. Cole decided to team up with new partners, to engage

in new projects, to make use of the cracks rather than stare at the new walls. These are the crafters of other spaces where, like in transit-halls, they can cross many tracks on their way to invent new practices of organizing.

ES had not been engaged in a project like the EKC before Cole and Will initiated it. This play with boundaries is a relational activity (Shotter 1993, Hosking *et al.* 1995). In creating multiple projects, they tried to enact new boundaries while interacting with others, primarily the stakeholders in the EKC creation process. They created partnerships, which gave opportunities for conversations where new boundaries could become negotiated. Instead of seeing possibilities shrink, opportunities were explored and the network of contacts (and contracts) grew. The contrast between those trying to fulfil the vague strategy of the MO versus those enacting their own MO by engaging with others is sharp. The latter ones tactically used the strategy of managerial entrepreneurship as operationalized in Qualisys and the MO, for the creation of a space where new practices were relationally invented. These inventions came from the organizational creativity generated at the margins of ES: amazingly enough, the EKC project was never brought to the top of any top management meeting. However, it was also part of the tactic, a way to create space, this locating of oneself at the margin (remember Cole's words again):

Like I've said before, I don't want to be involved this time.... I think I am a bit too impatient.

5.2 Management: making up governable employees

To understand how management operates through making up governable employees one needs to enquire into managerialism. Managerialism is then defined as a form of governmental rationality – a governmentality – that includes more and more into what should be managed (as Grey 1996 puts it). Governing is conducting the conduct of others, structuring the possible field of action of others (Foucault 1982: 221), i.e. delimiting a place proper. Managerialism reproduces a need for ‘managers’ (cf. McKinlay and Starkey 1998). Management thrives on a preferential right of interpretation – they are hermeneutics of strategy – in modern business organizations. Managerialism reproduces a particular *image of the human*, which must be ‘in place’ in order for systems of control (as Qualisys) to make sense and work.

5.2.1 Images of humans: The human subjected to management practices is a human of needs and interests. This human we might relate to the long-standing *homo oeconomicus*, or to Simon's (1945) administrative man. The needs – in various ways, to capitalize on life, to exercise what the neo-liberal economists describe as the fundamental human faculty of choice (Gordon 1991) – feed a calculative behaviour that is guided by properly formulated interests. Hirschman (1977) has brought us the background story for this development, showing how passion gradually became marginalized in discourses of human nature (or the subject). Needs and interests, when produced in relation to company goals, prescribes a proper place in which we find the manageable individual. For the neo-liberal *homo oeconomicus* is a manipulable *homo oeconomicus*, both a product of and a target for managerialism.

This forms into a possibility for tactics of poaching through which space for play/invention is made actual. Although officially marginalized, relocated into ‘sunday-culture’ or art, passion is continuously disturbing managerial control.

Where the excessive creativity of life starts, scientific knowledge almost stops. Entrepreneurship studies suffer from this. We need a different image of humans to understand the tactical acts of creating space. It is rather *homo ludens* – playing humans (Huizinga 1962)³ – that help us to develop concepts for entrepreneurship as a tactical creation process operating from the margins.

5.2.2 Governing and management practices: When we concentrate our listening to examples of entrepreneurial processes, images of the human become broadened to include the playful and passionate: trying out boundaries; negotiating for space to act; spontaneously answering to occasions; becoming moved by the incomplete, the in-between as an opportunity. This *homo ludens* – for it is in playfulness that the move from virtualities to actualities is tried out – seems to have lived at the margins of management, manifest in the case of renewing ES. As with the pool in ES, an attempt to attend to peoples' needs turns into a crafting of a dependence on the role of manager and a subsequent inspectability. This is a tutelary form of discipline effected in the HRM developments for which Elton Mayo is central. Under these conditions – the normalizing force of strategy and the tutelary disciplining operating in the ‘mental space’ targeted by HRM expert knowledge – organizational creativity moves into the margins. From there, as de Certeau (1984) shows, tactical acts enable creative manoeuvres.

6. Conclusions: towards a framework using spatial concepts to study organizational entrepreneurship

When we draw on the case of ES to conclude, we benefit from highlighting the different contexts enacted by managerialism and by ‘entrepreneurship as event’ in processes of organizational renewal. We need this distinction in order to enquire into if and in that case how management can play a role for organizational entrepreneurship.

6.1 Spatial concepts and organizational entrepreneurship

The description of the case of ES above leaves us with an image of a ‘managerialization’ of an organization. The strategy to create an efficient organization (through Qualisys) set the stage for an enterprising employee – a managerial entrepreneur. In this place, the employees’ needs are described as continuous competence-development, self-development, correct (quantified) information and feedback concerning how well one has performed, and the possibility to compare (grade) oneself against a common norm. The pool promises to respond to those needs. This illustrated how managerialism appropriates space: physical (the loneliness of mission leaders, working as independent consultants); relational (individualizing in order to measure; grading people in a certification system); and theoretical (designing ways to think through launching the vocabulary of enterprise management).

The effect of the pool, however, is also possible to describe using our ‘spatial concepts’. If you adopt the discursive position of the enterpriser (the managerial entrepreneur) you operate within the strategized place of managerialism limiting your possible field of action. When people oppose this strategy, though, a tactical work of poaching pulls you (centrifugally) towards the margin of this place. From there, as in

the example of the creation of the EKC, one practices a space for play/invention – experimenting with what could come out of new partnerships. Such partnerships set up an in-between where occasions can be transformed into opportunities. These opportunities strike as events, i.e. they breach the self-evident. An event manifests itself as ‘*a singularity* at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness that imposes itself uniformly on all’ (Foucault 2000: 226). An event ‘alters and reconfigures the force operating’ (Colebrook 1997) in a strategized field of action. Organizational entrepreneurship, so it seems, always strikes as an event, creating another space.

An occasion is not an opportunity waiting to be discovered. An opportunity has to be actualized in its own way, through creating its own difference. This, however, can only happen with a certain timing. How could we understand those radically different spaces, those ‘different worlds’ then? Let us turn to one suggestion in sub-section 6.2.

6.2 Managerialism and entrepreneurship as event

As managerial knowledge thrives on a culturally sustained preferential right of interpretation, managerial diagnosing controls what is considered to be important, also what the ‘enterprising’ individual ought to need.

When we write entrepreneurship as event (*entrevent*) we want to describe the centrifugal orientation that follows the spontaneity, immediacy, passion and relational orientation of organizational creativity. This is then *not* part of a managerial representation of the employee as entrepreneur where ‘enterprising qualities are [thus] given an instrumental value in relation to the optimal performance of a market economy’ (du Gay 1997: 311). There is no need for ‘the best example’ as measuring and normalizing is not of interest or importance for the creation of novel opportunities. Normalizing is on the contrary reducing differences and heterogeneity, which in turn are central for invention. In the ‘entrevent’ occasions become transformed into opportunities. This is how the EKC project (among others) both started and emerged. It used an opening that was created by an already existing strategy and turned it into something that ES was part of as co-creator of the EKC.

de Certeau (1984) is a writer who sensitizes us to these relations between time and place and the use of tactics in everyday life. When, from this study, organizational entrepreneurship is conceptualized as event, the relation to management practices as a reproducer of ordered places become apparent. We are also given novel ways to describe and analyse the problematic aspects of management practices *vis-à-vis* organizational entrepreneurship. The often confident promises of popular management books on ‘managing entrepreneurship for success’, have to be challenged by more local, minimal and contextually specified images. Considering the univocity of management knowledge, its globalizing, totalizing tendencies, such local images would be more relevant for a knowledge of organizational entrepreneurship. We would then get useful, and to date much lacking, knowledge of the limits of management, an understanding of the different worlds of managing and creating, of the incommensurability or discursively different ‘knowledges’ of managerialism and entrepreneurship as event.

In a local-contextual view, there is no reason to ‘build’ theoretical systems out of the daily experiences of employees in relations. Studying entrepreneurship as creation,

we silence too much of local realities if we do not attend to local cultures and histories (Hjorth and Johannsson 2003). From the perspective of organizational entrepreneurship, it becomes important to turn our attention to margins of organizing, and the tactical acts of creating spaces for invention. Organizational entrepreneurship strikes like events, breaching the reigning order. If management cannot learn to live with *homo ludens* as neighbour, it is difficult to see a role for management in organizational entrepreneurship. Both Schumpeter and Weber have provided gloomy images of entrepreneurship in the context of formal organizations. We believe that using ‘spatial concepts’ has allowed us to describe its actualities – in ES. Through ‘spatial concepts’ we have also been able to enquire into the analytic possibilities of creating knowledge of organizational entrepreneurship, which eventually can shape future organizational practices.

Describing, studying, analysing, and practicing organizational entrepreneurship, from the perspective of this paper, depend on our ability to grasp the uniqueness of entrepreneurship in such contexts. We have tried to show that making a distinction between managerialism and entrepreneurship as event helps us to avoid reducing entrepreneurship into a managerial strategy. Using spatial concepts has enabled this distinction and, we believe, this could be developed further in studies of organizational entrepreneurship. This in turn is crucial for economies where inventive skills have to become an *organizational* competitive factor as well as a way of relating to the world.

Notes

1. It seems necessary to say, though, that even if Taylor indeed was concerned with the relation: manager–employee (Taylor 1916), he spent more effort in developing a system for matching bodies and tasks rather than focusing on the employee *as a person*.
2. ‘Approximately’, as this group changed during the study: some left, others were temporary and new ones came in.
3. ‘The 19th century seems to leave little room for play. Tendencies running directly counter to all that we mean by play have become increasingly dominant. Even in the 18th century utilitarianism, prosaic efficiency and the bourgeois ideal of social welfare – all fatal to the Baroque – had bitten deep into society. These tendencies were exacerbated by the Industrial Revolution and its conquests in the field of technology. Work and production became the ideal, and then the idol, of the age. All Europe donned the boiler suit. Henceforth the dominants of civilization were to be social consciousness, educational aspirations, and scientific judgement....This grotesque over-estimation of the economic factor was conditioned by our worship of technological progress, which was itself the fruit of rationalism and utilitarianism after they had killed the mysteries and acquitted man of guilt and sin’ (Huizinga 1950: 191–192).

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