

Decidedly Undecided Change: Producing Spielraum for Organizational Periphery

ABSTRACT

Extant strategy practice and process studies highlight the duality of change and stability, regarding strategic change as an accomplishment of both movement and recursiveness, which are also displayed by the observed difference in strategy-making between the organizational centre and its periphery. In this study, we examine the emergence of new strategic themes and related organizing in two research universities' organizational peripheries. By adopting a systems-theoretical view and drawing on Luhmannian organizational analysis, we are able to examine the co-existence of stability and change in each communication event, aiming to reduce complexity but also giving rise to novel complexities, providing 'spielraum' for peripheral development activities. The study contributes to the SAPP-oriented stream of studies on strategic change in general and emergent strategy studies in particular by providing an alternative theoretical viewpoint on the centre-periphery dynamics in strategic change and showing how organizations un/decide on new strategic themes, and through what dynamics they might become introduced and organized in established organizations.

Keywords: strategic change, emergent strategy, communication, decision-making

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INTRODUCTION

Universities as a context for organization and strategic management studies have inspired many novel observations, and no wonder: representing pluralistic contexts with multiple objectives, diffuse power, and knowledge-based processes (Denis et al., 2007), they provide a window into multitude of complex organizational phenomena. In extant studies, they have traditionally been described with terms such as ‘organized anarchy’ (Cohen et al., 1972) and ‘reluctant to be managed’ (Mintzberg, 1979). But as traditional and established organizations as they are, universities are also facing increasing societal pressure for change. The political expectations for universities to foster societal development have been growing since the 1980’s, when the idea of New Public Management gained wide acceptance and governmental policies began to emphasize innovation, commerciality and market-like behaviors and improving efficiency by using private sector management models.

The ever-relevant question then is, how universities renew themselves and to include new strategic themes in the face of new societal requirements? Depending on the perspective taken, the extant streams in strategic change literature suggest that strategic change requires a fundamental shift in meanings (Sonenshein, 2010) arising either out of the deliberate actions of the management, or the unintentional organizational emergence. Strategy literature and especially strategy as practice and process approaches (Burgelman et al., 2018) have highlighted this dispersed nature of strategic activities and communications in different levels of organizations. Strategies are simultaneously being formulated in the ‘centre’, through meanings constructed and disseminated by managers, and emerging in the ‘periphery’ as a result of cumulative activities of autonomous professionals, fixing new meanings (Mintzberg

& Waters, 1985; Régner, 2003; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2017). What is regarded as the accomplishment in strategic change also depends on the perspective taken: the accomplishment may be the change itself, seen as a development into a somewhat wanted (or unwanted/expected) direction; or the stability in the midst of eternal movement and flux (Chia, 2003).

Although the theme of different but co-existing modes of strategy-making in different organizational regimes has been recognized in the SAPP stream of literature from different perspectives (Bower, 1970; Burgelman, 1983; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Régner, 2003; Chia & Holt, 2006; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014), few studies have directly addressed the core paradox of stability and change underlying these modes and their interplay in production of different meanings, different manifestations of which are then examined. For instance, strategic ambiguity studies (Jarzabkowski et al., 2010; Denis et al., 2011; Abdallah & Langley, 2014) have addressed strategy making through the different interpretations that complexity gives rise to (Feldman, 1989) and therefore multiple meanings of a single decision (Weick, 1995), both enabling and hindering change (Abdallah & Langley, 2014). Due to complexity, decisions taken might not only provide solutions but also give birth to new problems by, e.g., leading to unexpected outcomes (Balogun & Johnson, 2005), or no outcomes at all (Denis et al., 2011). Focusing on organizations' attempts to maintain a 'manageable' level of complexity through decision-making provides an interesting viewpoint on the duality of change and stability in strategy-making, the need for which has been highlighted by both strategy and processual organization researchers (Chia, 2003; Birnholtz, Cohen and Hoch 2007; Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010).

Our aim is, therefore, to build on these previous developments on emergent strategy formation in the organizational periphery and address the general problem of strategic change from a novel processual approach that would enable us to focus on the complexity underlying

the different modes of strategy-making. In this paper, we provide one alternative organizational view on strategic change by adopting a systems-theoretical communication approach in sociological organization studies (Baecker, 2003; Seidl & Becker, 2006) and draw on Luhmann's (1995; 2018) organizational analysis and in particular, his concepts of *decision* and *undecidability*. Empirically, we examine the emergence of two research universities' entrepreneurship hubs through the structuring of their decision premises throughout their ten-year decision-making trajectories, Luhmann's perspective enabling us to focus on organizations as decision-making systems without recourse to human beings' intentions (Cooren & Seidl, 2020) and decisions as being "constitutive of both ordering and disordering simultaneously" (Grothe-Hammer & Schoeneborn, 2019) as decisions both fix and open meanings.

The results of our study show how the undecidability in universities' decisions provided the hubs unique sets of decision premises but at the same time a lot of room to create something new. Depending on the dynamics of the premises, undecidability either provided the hub the freedom to create programmatic premises of its own, resulting in development towards an independent organization; or it created increased complexity that became overwhelming for the organization, hindering it from reaching a regulative level of its operations. Despite the nature of the trajectory of the emerging organizations, their attempts towards independent decision-making and self-regulation triggered the decision-making of university organizations, resulting in structural and strategic changes. Our study contributes to the communication- and decision-based understanding of strategy in general, and to the literatures on strategic change and emergent strategy formation in particular, by showing how undecidability can become a lens to understand the paradox of stability and change in organizations.

DECISION-MAKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERIPHERY: A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The notion of ‘center’ (or ‘core’) and ‘periphery’ of a social collective is widely used in different fields of social sciences. In organization and strategy studies (e.g., Régner, 2003), ‘center’ refers to the management of the organization in charge of the steering and administrative tasks of the organization, whereas periphery consists of the ‘front line’ or operational level employees responsible of the production. Yanow (2004) also discusses a ‘double periphery’, distinguishing between hierarchical or vertical periphery (lower levels of the organization) and geographic or horizontal periphery (outside organizational borders). The ability to influence the decision-making is one key distinction between these organizational spheres. Even though strategy has traditionally been considered as the task of the center, strategy as practice and process approaches especially have highlighted the role of other organizational actors than the management rank (Burgelman et al., 2018) in organizational strategy formation; only the routes that the influence takes differ.

Moreover, Régner (2003) noted the different strategy activities in the periphery and centre, describing strategy making in the periphery as inductive with externally oriented and exploratory strategy activities, and as deductive with industry and exploitation focus on the centre. Consequently, while the centre focused on maintaining stability in the organization, new initiatives “grew out of everyday activities in the periphery in sharp conflict with the centre, which finally triggered strategic change” (ibid.,79).

This idea of strategy as emergent was originally coined by Mintzberg and colleagues when noticing that strategy in a context like university rather emerges from the cumulative activities of autonomous professionals, or through spontaneous convergence, than from the deliberate strategizing efforts of top management, that might even be irrelevant to the processes of the organization (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985, Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Building on

these studies (as well as on the resource allocation explanation: Bower, 1970; Burgelman, 1983; Noda and Bower, 1996), Mirebeau and Maguire (2014) develop a model of emergent strategy formation by showing “how emergent strategy originates as a project through autonomous strategic behavior” (ibid., 1202) and either becomes realized by gaining support and legitimacy, or the autonomous behavior becomes ephemeral and disappears.

The role of organizational periphery in creation of new initiatives and change has therefore been related to the emergence of new meaning in the absence, or despite of, intentions (Chia & Holt, 2006; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014). Rather, it highlights the role of existing organizational processes with ‘local, situational knowledge’ (Yanow, 2004) or ‘phronetic awareness’ (Chia & Holt, 2006) triggering change also in the organizational centre. In other words, these developments are not the result of deliberation; yet they are enabled by the existing organizational processes within which they occur: the stability of the existing structure providing the room for novelty to emerge.

Building on the existing studies on emergent strategy formation in the organizational periphery, we address this paradox of stability and change, as well as decision and unintentionality, by drawing on Luhmannian communication approach. This perspective enables us, first, to approach decisions as communications “without recourse to human beings’ intentions” (Cooren & Seidl, 2020) and second, to examine these two spheres of organizational reality as one system and focus on the paradox of stability and change in its development.

(Un)intentionality of decision-making and Luhmannian communication approach

In Luhmann’s systems theory, organizations are a specific type of social systems that distinguish themselves within society from society and reproduce themselves on the basis of *decisions* as a particular type of distinction (Luhmann, 2018; Seidl & Becker, 2006). Therefore,

being ultimately a communication-theoretical approach, Luhmannian organizational analysis (1995; 2018) regards an organization as a network of connected decision communications, forming the structure of the organization. As the organization exists only through the communication events, the decision-making needs to continue for the organization exist, making the process of decision-making, rather than certain set of decisions completed, constitutive for the organization (Apelt et al., 2017; Luhmann, 2003).

A decision can be understood as a decision only in retrospect. If a subsequent decision connects to the previous decision, the previous decision becomes a decision by gaining connectivity. If no subsequent decision connects to it, it was not a decision after all but just ‘organizational noise’ (Knudsen, 2013). The decisions made then form a structure that the organization uses as premises for future decisions. The structure, however, does not consist of only those elements that have been decided on (that Luhmann calls ‘decidable’ elements) and can be decided on also later on, but also those aspects that are ‘undecidable’: those that have not been decided on and on which cannot be decided, such as organizational culture and cognitive routines (Luhmann, 2018).

One notable aspect in this perspective when comparing to processual strategy and organization studies is that there is no ‘actor’ that communicates as such. According to Luhmann (1995), only *communications* can communicate – communications are ‘produced’ by the relation to other communications. This does not mean, however, that individuals and their actions play no role in organizational analysis. Individuals are included in the theory as psychic systems, the autopoiesis of which is simultaneous but separate to the one of organizations. “Every communicative event presupposes ‘parallel’ events in the psychic systems.” (Seidl & Becker, 2006: 21). Although our aim is to understand and study the processes of a social system, not a psychic system, these two types of systems are structurally coupled and mutually constitutive: organization is, e.g., dependent on the psychic systems’ perception of utterances,

serving as a memory, and relying on them to produce new communications (Seidl & Becker, 2006). However, in this process, the thoughts and intentions of individuals can only “trigger” the occurrence of communication, but they cannot determine how communication plays out eventually (Grothe-Hammer & Schoeneborn, 2019).

Un/deciding to enable new meanings

As organizations exist only in communication events, the decision-making needs to continue in order for the organization to exist. Decisions reduce complexity and uncertainty and fix contingency, establishing premises for its future decision-making. But by fixing meanings through decisions representing solutions to an observed problem (for instance, by deciding on establishing entrepreneurship minor studies), organizations simultaneously call for opening up new meanings (Grothe-Hammer & Schoeneborn, 2019), by creating new problems to be solved (i.e., how to organize the studies). Organizations therefore produce order and disorder simultaneously through decisions (Grothe-Hammer & Schoeneborn, 2019).

What eventually is a decision, is defined through its form (Spencer Brown, 1969): as the unity of distinction between what is decided (fixed contingency) and what is left outside of the decision: the undecided (open contingency). As a part of present decision, undecidability does not refer to an inability to act (Derrida, 1992), but possibility of acting and deciding is conditioned by undecidability (Andersen, 2003). While decision is an operation that seeks to reduce undecidability, it nevertheless communicates not only what has been decided but also that also other decisions would have been possible (Luhmann, 1993; Seidl & Becker, 2006).

However, maintaining some degree of undecidability may provide benefits such as legitimacy, plasticity, or flexibility, as identified Rasche and Seidl (2019) in their study of standards as an example of ‘partial organizing’. Similarly, Pors and Andersen (2015) and

Andersen and Pors (2017) note the way organizations may use ‘not-deciding’ as a source for change in organizing. In their study of Danish public administration, they show how the organization maintains a certain ‘spielraum’, i.e. leeway, through decisions that, instead of referring to the past decisions, temporalize to the future by ‘deciding to decide later’ (Andersen & Pors, 2017). Similarly, Pors and Andersen (2015) examine the way public organizations use play as a means to achieve change by increasing ‘undecidability’: to “simultaneously decide as well as avoid committing to a decision, thus keeping flexibility and alternatives intact” (ibid. p. 340). They conclude that traditional decision-making in the context described does not provide organizations with sufficient flexibility and possibilities and therefore more open and flexible forms of organizing are needed. The key problem then becomes “how to organize so as to maintain a multiplicity of possibilities and create spaces for the unplanned and unpredicted” (Pors & Andersen, 2015, p. 350).

Organization may therefore choose to embrace undecidability to a certain degree through different forms of decisions. As the study of Andersen and Pors (2017) detailing different forms of decision in public administration decision-making shows, decisions may use different temporalities and, in terms of defining premises, be ‘empty’. For instance, instead of aiming to reduce complexity, absorb uncertainty, and fix contingency, a *potentializing* decision aims to increase uncertainty and create undefined complexity to “generate a new horizon of possibility from which subsequent decisions may choose” (ibid. p. 132). The origins of this kind of a decision are an observation of too much order and stability, due to which the leaders do not encounter enough complexity and chaos that would enable enactment of opportunities and change.

The concept of undecidability brings therefore forward the juxtaposition of change and stability. By leaving some elements undecided might provide the organization flexibility and open possibilities; but at the same time risk decision-making ability by not deciding on some

of its core programmatic elements. As the organization makes decisions of its premises, it also decides what it can observe, what kind of distinctions are made. The more it reduces complexity, and the more fixed contingency is, the more determined the future becomes. On the other hand, the “roomier” the premises are, the more open the horizon of the future alternatives is. Even if the decisions fail to create programs for operational decisions, organization might be still reproducing itself (so-called single closure). It would not, however, be able to reach a reflexive and regulatory level (so-called double closure). Instead, it would remain “a mere extension of its environment” (Luhmann, 2018). Double, or regulative, closure (von Foerster, 2003) is the precondition for the organization to regulate its operation by allowing the organization to envision its range of possibilities and to select the promising ones (von Foerster, 2003:225–6; Baecker, 2003:126–68; Baecker, 2006).

Our theoretical framework therefore concludes that in order to maintain their decision-making ability, organizations balance with the need to reduce complexity and create decidable premises, and at the same time maintain their horizon of possibilities open by engaging in more withdrawn decisions providing less definition of premises for subsequent decisions. Out of the undecidability, novel orders may emerge that in extant studies have been referred to as ‘autonomous strategic behavior’ in the organizational periphery. In the following, we empirically examine the emergence of two universities’ entrepreneurship hubs from the viewpoint of decision premises and the dynamics between decidable and undecidable premises. The organizations are seen as networks of decision communications, where the emergence of new organizations takes place through the intertwined decision-making (or more precisely, the intertwined decision premises) of the ‘centre’ of university organizations and their peripheral entrepreneurship hubs.

CONTEXT AND METHODS

Research context

Our study focuses on two university organizations and their emerging entrepreneurship hubs: the University of Helsinki's Helsinki Think Company (HTC) and the University of Oulu's Entrepreneurship Hub (EH), both of which were established in the 2010s to facilitate intra-societal engagement of higher education with entrepreneurship via extra-curricular education offered to the students. HTC and EH thus represent local instantiations of emergent start-up cultures in the Helsinki and Oulu areas, and were formed according to models of students' entrepreneurial communities present in Finland and elsewhere. The University of Helsinki is a leading public research university with history dating back to early modern period and the University of Oulu a 60-year-old regional university situated in the north of Finland to support local economic and societal development. The universities' historically formed profiles affected the ways in which their managers observed situational complexities of their environments as they became engaged in decision-making about entrepreneurial education.

Following from the adopted methodology, we view a university organization as a type of social system the organizational form of which coordinates the knowledge-related interdependency within and between internally differentiated societal systems of science and education. What makes it a unique type of an organization is the way it is internally organized into three independent "offices" (Baecker, 2010): research, teaching, and administration involved in the organizational steering. As an organization, the university has institutionalized disciplines for structural features of both scientific research and education degree programs. More recently, the introduction of the third mission into the university legislation has further altered the internal administrative structure of the university. It is this change taking place that we focus on in our examination of the entrepreneurship hubs. Entrepreneurship education contrasts with discipline-based education as they serve different purposes. Therefore,

universities experiment with organizational forms designed to advance entrepreneurship at their societal interfaces and use flexible and creative steering mechanisms instead of drawing on their hierarchical administration structures to avoid the paralyzing effect the contradiction between differing educational content expectations might have on the decision-making.

Data collection

We use two sets of data: interviews and documentary material. In addition, we use a complementary set of field notes from participatory observations of a series of strategy workshops called ‘change laboratory’ regarding EH’s development. First, we conducted total of 31 free-form thematic interviews (from 60 to 90 minutes each) with university managers and different actors involved in the decision-making about the hubs from two universities. Two researchers were usually present, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews gained us access to those mechanisms that sustained decision-making processes in observed organizations (Besio & Pronzini, 2011).

Second, we collected a documentary data set consisting of documentation regarding both universities’ and their entrepreneurship hubs’ development, such as universities’ strategy documents, and planning and presentation material of the entrepreneurship hubs. The documentary material was used in detailing various phases of the decision-making processes.

Data analysis

Following from the systems-theoretical perspective that forms our theoretical framework, empirical research means theory-driven observation (Besio & Pronizini, 2011). Decision, not actions, are the main research objects, and we therefore focused on the key decision events and evolving decision premises of the entrepreneurship hubs. Through the analysis, we aimed to

observe how the organizations were able to sustain their decision-making processes, ensuring that subsequent decisions follow.

As we were not looking for explanations of chains of action but chains of decision communication, we aimed to analyze structures, expectations, and schemes of observation that shape decisions and are at the same time a result of decisions (Besio & Pronzini, 2011). In the first phase of analysis, we used all available data sources to construct a timeline of the trajectories of the entrepreneurship hubs. We identified the key decision events by going back and forth on the timeline and following the connections between universities' and entrepreneurship hubs' decisions (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here.

In the second phase, we focused on those mechanisms that sustained decision-making processes in the entrepreneurship hubs: structuring of the decision premises. Here, we clustered relevant passages from the interview transcripts and field notes to identify how the observation of expectations and the ensuing complexity reduction was done based on decision premises.

Finally, we focused on the unfolding of un/deciding and the role it had on the decision-making process: as the horizon of alternatives, as the 'spielraum' left in a decision, and as part of the decision premises. The results of the analysis are explained in the next section.

FINDINGS

We focused on the development of both entrepreneurship hubs from their establishment to a point where they reached a relative state of stability. In the case of Helsinki Think Company (HTC), this was marked by the university's decision to corporatize the hub. The status of HTC

as an organization located at the interface between the university, the city and the local entrepreneurial ecosystem thus was transformed from an administrative unit to a limited company tied to the University of Helsinki via a temporary service contract only. In contrast, University of Oulu's Entrepreneurship Hub (EH) began as a project organization, became part of the newly founded university's 'buzz place' TellUs Arena operating directly under the university's management, and was finally terminated as a brand in 2019 after its operations had been adopted in other parts of the university. The key decision events are presented in Table 1 below.

Insert Table 1 about here.

In the first phase, undecidability was a way of enabling the emergence of hubs outside universities' formal decision-making processes. In the second phase, the emerging organizations used their differing premises differently. The decision made by the University of Helsinki and the City of Helsinki provided such premises for HTC that enabled the future decision-making but left contingency open. HTC involved undecidable premises from the campus-based student communities and start-up culture and used undecidedness to open up a temporal space for creating their own way of operating. In the case of EH, the decision to establish the organization was made by a local business school and the university of applied sciences, completely without university administration being aware of it, resulting in dispersed premises that did not enable connecting of future decisions. As EH operated at the boundary of two universities, the complexity became overwhelming due to the controlling role of each university's undecidable premises.

In the third phase, HTC increased the level of decidedness and became a complete organization in the form of a limited company (with an almost-lost connection with the formal

organization's decision-making). EH, in turn, was never able to develop a programmatic decision-making ability of its own, thereby getting integrated into the University of Oulu's third mission administration with focus on cooperation affairs. What is also interesting is that the un/deciding changed the university organizations as well. By making decisions concerning the emerging organizations, they needed to work with the issue of entrepreneurial education. As a result, they solved the problem of complexity through structural solutions of their own, which were not involving the emerging organization. In the following, we discuss the unfolding of undecidability and the resulting stability/change through these three phases in both hubs.

Phase 1: From environmental expectations to decidedly undecided orders

First, universities observed external stimuli: the expectations towards the universities to address entrepreneurship. These expectations were difficult for them to process the idea via administrative operations. The universities had functions for technology transfer, operating on the boundary of research and economy, but none at the boundary of education and economy. At the Uni. of Helsinki, the observation of entrepreneurship followed the logic of research, and was first processed through the idea of technology entrepreneurship in biomedicine. University managers who had experience outside the university organization understood the logic of economy/working life and were the ones to make decisions resulting into new forms of entrepreneurial education. At the Uni. of Oulu, the theme was recognized at the local Business School also through entrepreneurship research and via the existing industry partnerships.

University decidedly undeciding of HTC

Uni. of Helsinki had responded to the changed legislation by establishing new positions of Research Services Director (RSD) and Director of Communication and Community

Relations (DCCR), former Chief Communications Officer, into the central administration. The new directors were hired from the business world, being more sensitive to the expectations coming from the university's economic environment and used to different management methods than what was traditionally used in public administration. The Research Services Director had work experience in Silicon Valley as well as personal contacts with entrepreneurial activities in the City of Helsinki and Aalto University. In his current position he aimed at developing university's engagement with business and to develop student entrepreneurship. In a similar manner, the DCCR had experience in experimental organizational development during her previous work in commercial software development in the private sector, which made her to observe the bad reputation of the university among key stakeholder groups of the university, such as local business representatives. The directors held a series of meetings with the Business Services Director of City of Helsinki, Head of Aalto University's Center of Entrepreneurship, investors active in the greater Helsinki area and various consultants, resulting in the decision to pilot a student entrepreneurship community following the example of Aalto University and Silicon Valley.

The decision was never made through the 'official' administrative route but was enabled by the university allowing a relatively wide room of freedom to operate within its different branches. At the branch level, the idea was decidedly kept away from the formal administrative decision-making and the given freedom 'not to ask for a permission' was used to experiment with the idea of student entrepreneurship together with the partnering organizations:

“Interviewee: When I came to the university, I realized that this is such a heavy ship that nothing will move without piloting. ... I did ask [from a representative of the university's top management] that should I take this [decision] into some forum or something like that. He said that sometimes it's better not to ask for a permission. ...

Interviewer: “So in a way it was a green light from the university management?”

Interviewee: “A mandate was given that you are allowed to operate.”

”It has been said aloud quite many times, even by the higher management, that this would never have been born had the decision been made through the normal route. ... They [Think Company] would not have been born if they would have been taken to be handled in here and there, and then presented as a proposition and involving people...”

The communications and community relations administration took the lead of the project, made an agreement with the City of Helsinki to fund the student entrepreneurship hub, and obtained free office space from the university’s real estate administration for the emerging student group. At this time, the emergent student community was called Think & Do Station but was soon renamed Helsinki Think Company.

One contradicting undecidable decision premise was the differing understanding of entrepreneurship of the organizers and contributor communities. The theme of entrepreneurship and money was challenging for an academic community with a strong ‘Bildungsuniversität’ ethos and emphasis on science, as implied by the experiences of DCCR with the first fundraising campaigns:

“...so that it was ok to proceed through piloting. Since we have seen in many other instances... when we started the fundraising, we got [feedback] from the theologians that we will never go along with that [kind of activities], and the Faculty of Political Science was like ‘yack. Dirty money.’ Then when the money started to come in, then the same people were asking that what have you done for us.”

Differences also existed between the founding units, Communications and Community Relations, and Research Services, the former highlighting entrepreneurial skills and mindset, and the latter emphasizing ‘hard’ entrepreneurship idea, focusing on establishing businesses and growth venturing:

“...I was interested in seeing whether there would be things that would have a real growth potential. The ones that would go into the society and then you would get a new big pharma company in Finland... So how could we bring those things forward. But then this. I was in serious pain when the others were like, ‘No, we want to save the world. We don’t want to make money.’ And I was like ‘What? Oh no, you have understood this whole entrepreneurship thing all wrong!’ [laughs] ... These were the discussions I went through at least inside my head, and I think that there were also otherwise these two different worlds that needed to adapt to each other, quite clearly.” (Research Services representative)

Since the development of HTC initiated from the university’s communications and community relations administration, the organizers were conscious about the ethos of the university as a *Bildungsuniversität* and its identity as a world-class research university. Thus, as the topic of entrepreneurship was difficult to manage within the university’s traditional administrative structure and using its formal decision-making processes, the issue was decidedly advanced via using experimental organizational development, which kept the pilot away from the formal decision-making process. Due to the same reason, the administrators wanted the operations of HTC to be led by the students so that it would fulfil its purpose. During the first two years of the hub’s operation the organizers thus processed the ambiguous idea about student entrepreneurship into a crystallized concept, providing a decidable and unified premise for the emerging organization to base its future decision-making.

University undecidedly undecideding of EH

In contrast with the case of HTC, the origins of the establishment of Entrepreneurship Hub can be traced to the changes taking place in the regional economy, and the observation was

made in the periphery of the University of Oulu at its business school. The University had been originally established to support local technological and economic development and was therefore more familiar with the business-related expectations than Uni. of Helsinki. However, like Uni. of Helsinki, it did not have functions that would have enabled it as an organization to observe and respond to these expectations. Moreover, it had been slower to respond to the changed university legislation that introduced the so-called third mission as one of the university's purposes, lacking a position for community relations which had been the origin of HTC.

The interest towards entrepreneurship began to rise in the wake of structural changes in the society on a larger scale and eventually Nokia's massive layoffs on the regional level in 2011. Oulu Innovation Alliance (OIA), a collaborative body of regional development actors, was organized to find solutions to the resulting economic downfall. Existing collaboration network involving people from Oulu University of Applied Sciences, University of Oulu Business School, City of Oulu and its business development activities (Business Oulu) recognized the need for supporting entrepreneurial capabilities collectively, and as a result, Oulu Growth Venturing (OGV), a joint project executed by University of Oulu Business School and Oulu University of Applied Sciences was launched in December 2011. The project was the initiation for the student entrepreneurship hub (later called Entrepreneurship Hub), the idea of which was to support both new business development as well as students' innovative activities. This development was taking place in the university's periphery without university administration's involvement, who was aware of the piloting only through its financial coordinating function.

Due to its socially complex nature in relation to the universities' traditional tasks of research and teaching, the universities were playing with temporality by leaving the topic of entrepreneurship education development in an 'un/decided state' (i.e., decided to decide later,

allowing solutions to emerge). They decided only on those things that needed to be decided at the very present, but otherwise operated with their existing processes representing fora for complexity reduction, such as handling project applications by faculties through research service office (Oulu), or communication relations office engaging in informal development activities with societal partners (Helsinki).

To summarize, in contrast with HTC, EH began as a project organization operated by two the Oulu University of Applied Sciences and the University of Oulu's business school as its main organizers. In addition to these, the City of Oulu's business development activities (Business Oulu) participated in the project, which also involved several other actors, all of which carried their own expectations and ways of working to EH's operations. Interestingly enough, the University of Oulu's administration did not provide any kind of supervision or acknowledgment of the operations, leaving the emerging organization to decide for itself.

Phase 2: From decidedly undecided orders to (partially) decided orders

In the second phase, the emerging organizations were established on this potentializing decision: the developmental activities bypassed universities' formal decision-making process. The development of the entrepreneurship took place in the 'expanded developmental periphery' of the university (Clark, 1998) instead of its central administration. Even though the decisions took a similar 'non-decision' form, the premises they provided for the future decision-making of the emerging organization and therefore also the complexity produced were different between the cases.

EH struggling with undecidability in establishing its own decision premises

EH was based on the project agreement between the university, Oulu University of Applied Sciences (OUAS) and the City of Oulu. The project was officially located at the Uni. of Oulu Business School who coordinated the project, but it was operated by both the higher education organizations jointly. The project had two sub-projects and two project managers, one university employee and one OUAS employee. Like regional development projects in general, also EH's operation was based on the project plan and the included key performance indicators based on which the project needed to report to the financiers. The project was organized around the core project team and the supervising steering group involving organizer representatives.

Being a development project, the operation was not based on a crystallized concept – on the contrary, “*even the organizers did not know what EH is in the beginning*”. During the three-year-project, EH as a concept for supporting new business development and creating a hub for different entrepreneurial activities was developed. However, the concept remained somewhat vague for everyone involved until the end. Due to different organizers and lack of hierarchy, it was difficult for the participating actors to make decisions at any level: regarding goals, contents, methods, and even the smallest operational issues, like joint funds that could be used for small purchases. The necessary financial issues were processed according to the two universities administrative rules and regulations, but more strategic affairs were largely left undecided altogether.

OUAS had several working concepts including incubator and entrepreneurial education programs that it brought under the EH brand, while the University had neither pre-existing entrepreneurial activities nor the related structural processes and practices. For this reason, the integration of the new forms of entrepreneurship education created in EH with the University's basic function, education, proved difficult. Existing program structures at the University of Oulu did not provide possibilities for the students to include the credits earned in EH activities

to their study programs, and engaging students and teachers of the University in the activities was challenging, as EH activities were competing with people's time to be allocated for the program-based education. Also, the differences in organizational work cultures and focus areas became visible in the attempts to coordinate joint activities.

In addition to the existing or non-existing functions, the project managers of EH and other contributors also carried certain cultural aspects of their organizations with them. These were mostly related to hierarchy and work practices, i.e., rules and priorities regarding tasks at hand. Notable aspect also was that while the University's project manager was hired solely on the project and did not have a continuation in her work contract through the University's budget, the OUAS people were first and foremost on their organization's payroll and the hub represented only a project among many others in their work plan.

The university side of EH did not therefore have any other formal premises than those relating to the financial issues, providing them more freedom and willingness to create the premises of their own. OUAS' side of EH, on the other hand, was tightly connected to their organization's educational, financial and personnel administrative premises, which also made OUAS representative less active in creating EH's own undecidable decision premises: start-up community and culture.

The differences were also seen in the way the contributors approached entrepreneurship: for OUAS, it was more about creating new businesses, while the University emphasized working life skills and development of entrepreneurial mindset among the students. EH struggled with problems relating to coordination and use of the physical space; creating the community; division between organizers' own vs. joint contents; communication; lack of clear rules and clear object of action; division of work; and understanding others' ways of working. One of the key problems identified in addition to the mentioned ones was the collective nature of the operations, requiring the universities to let go. The participants were aware of the

contradicting goals of serving the parent organizations, and “being a radical and renew and develop the existing things” at the same time. The need to serve the home organizations was highlighted by a statement in a shared meeting where one contributor stated that *“I need to talk about it [entrepreneurship] in this way, but you can, of course, emphasize learning own your own organization’s behalf”*.

EH was not recognized by the university administration, and soon also the faculty under which the project was operating, started to reject the operations that did not have the kind of research emphasis that they were planned to have originally:

“There was this contraction that a traditional university unit or faculty cannot operate in a role that EH has at that time, or what it was planned to be. It just won’t bend. The operation is completely something else. And this was one of the premises for wanting to transfer EH away from the Business School. Because it did not fit in here. And I guess that is why the operations took a different turn. ... the operations were redirected, in cooperation with the Uni. of Applied Sciences, away from this kind of [research-based] operations towards supporting students and alike, more based the thoughts of the Uni. of Applied Sciences.” (Business school representative)

“I remember when our dean was about to have a developmental discussion with the rector and I asked him to ask about this EH thing. Since in Business school, they were suffering with the thought that it is not business school’s objective or job to organize and finance these kinds of university-level entrepreneurship hub activities. I saw the dean on the corridor when he came back from the discussion and he said that ‘[Name], look, it’s not looking good’. Rector’s opinion was that this kind of entrepreneurship thing, it does not concern the university. That it is something that the city needs to take care of, these entrepreneurship issues.” (EH representative)

Due to the dispersed structural premises, EH suffered from operational difficulties throughout its life cycle. The activities lacked impact due to being disconnected from the university's education. In addition, differences in work cultures and focus areas of the participating organizations did not allow EH to make those kinds of decisions that would have provided premises for subsequent decisions. Thus, EH suffered from not being acknowledged by the University administration and made continuous efforts to become recognized. The main difference with HTC was that this was a position that HTC was seeking as they were able to build connectivity through the premises they had; while EH was not able to develop premises independent of the University. The existing premises did not allow them to temporalize to past, only towards future, leaving many decisions 'empty' and waiting for future resolution of problems.

“Now when I look at these things in retrospect, I have this kind of feeling that the greatest effort in time and energy went to solving these internal matters with the Uni. of Applied Sciences. Who is allowed to what and what are we and on what premises do you have the right to say this and that. Exactly these challenges of a boundary organization. So my [time] went into searching for the form [of the operation] and who is the supervising team and how often should it meet and what can this team decide on, and so on.” (EH representative)

Despite the problems, EH managed to create new forms of operation and reach both entrepreneurs and students. EH's project manager had actively lobbied the activities of the project for the central administration to gain more integration to the university's main functions. Once the project's three-year-term was ending, they applied for a continuation project, but needed a six-month funding to fill the budgetary gap between the two projects. At that point, the project emerged in the administration's budget as one row. Lobbying also helped in catching the attention of the newly appointed Rector of Cooperation Affairs and raising awareness of the

importance of entrepreneurship to such a degree that the University Board officially announced the year of 2015 as “the theme year of entrepreneurship” in the university’s strategy. Due to these activities, EH was slowly moving towards the administrative core of the University.

HTC utilizing undecidability and creating its own decision premises

The key factor enabling HTC’s independent decision making was the decision of the Uni. of Helsinki administrators not to lead HTC but merely to launch it and then leave the operation to be student-led. They hired a part-time student captain from Aalto University’s student entrepreneurship hub to build the community. Even though the captain and the team she collected were the employees of the communications and community relations administration in the beginning, the students who came from outside of the university did not carry the undecidable premises of the organizers but brought the premises of student and entrepreneurship communities with them.

“We began doing this in a lean way, which meant that it is student-led. We just help, and then it will become student-led. We are not going to build a heavy layer... so that students would suddenly be like ‘ok, nice’ and become apathetic, just waiting for something to happen, and then it is no longer what it was supposed to be. Instead, we just got an old shop facility for them. And let them to create their own rules.” (University representative)

“In the beginning, their workers were our team’s employees, but still the philosophy from the beginning was that we want the students to take over this. We believed that we will get the best result if this is not going to be the activity of older people but that they will take the ownership. And they did establish Helsinki Think Company registered association, which was a central actor there for a while, involving the community, and then we had this student captain and the hosts who were crucially important for the

development of activities. But also for keeping the place open, and then they executed the events and programs. But now the responsibility has been shifted to them completely.”

(University representative)

HTC began to organize the joint working facilities at the campuses and event hubs, and to arrange different kinds of programs and challenges. Soon they founded a registered association Think Company around the activities. The board members of the association, which as a group of actors changing each year, was the core team of contributors, in addition of which there were a lot of individual volunteering students who participated in different programs. Despite the organized form, decision-making was decentralized to different working teams. The working culture was based on the idea of co-creation, and decisions were made more on a consensus-base rather than by an executive decision.

Since the organizers gave HTC the freedom to find their own way of operating, HTC decided to approach the topic by emphasizing the development of practical working life skills. *“...in this classical academic research university, when we went to ask the folks that ‘are you interested in entrepreneurship’, they would go to the other side of the street... But if you ask that ‘are you interested in taking your academic competence into practice’, they are like ‘yes, of course’.”* (HTC representative)

HTC lacked university-born premises also due to the fact that university’s teaching and learning services administration was not involved in HTC. The degree programs were the responsibility of the faculties rather than of the educational administration. The teaching and learning services did not regard HTC as an operation relating to them, nor did HTC wish to be connected to them through credits. HTC was afraid that focus on credits would attract students interested in credits rather than those kinds of students that are ‘the curious ones’, ‘experimenters’, and ‘impact seekers’, i.e. the students willing to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, the link between HTC and the formal curricular programs remained weak.

HTC managed to create connectivity to its decisions by establishing functional premises for decision-making. The student captain called the approach taken as ‘hyper-focus’: being aware of the differing expectations coming from different contributors, they needed to establish their own premises in order to secure the operation.

“We are [working with] a kind of a hyperfocus in a way that yes, there are these needs of the university, but then we are also an actor in the start-up ecosystem, and operating and succeeding in that innovation ecosystem requires totally different kind of engagement. ... So that for every single problem that the university might have... I’m open in a way that if there is something you want to take forward, then we’ll do that, but we can’t do everything just for the university.” (HTC representative)

When the Uni. of Helsinki was hit by a financial shock, leading to a co-determination procedure and lay-offs involving 570 employees in total, also HTC was at risk of dismissal. To secure the continuation of the hub, the communications and community relations unit decided to save HTC by outsourcing it to a limited company. This was a familiar practice for the university, as it has developed a routine over time of holding several limited companies in those areas that were not part of its main functions, such as technology transfer, university pharmacy and publication services.

Phase 3: Outcome – Dissimilar decided orders

In the third phase, the need to make decisions regarding entrepreneurship hubs had also changed the universities’ decision-making premises. As a result, their administrative branches became active in processing the expectations and began organizing entrepreneurial education themselves but detached from the hubs. The faith of the hubs, however, depended on the nature of their relationships to the university organizations and the way their decisions were connected.

EH losing its decision-making ability

EH managed to come closer to the university administration due to both the attempts of EH to become recognized by the university and the development taking place in university administration. The university had recognized the increasing societal entrepreneurship expectations but lacked capabilities and processes to respond to these. While EH faced even more difficulties with balancing with the conflicting expectations arising from its contributor organizations, the University went through structural changes. It first decided to establish a position of Vice-rector of Cooperation Affairs. The connecting managerial decisions such as including entrepreneurship in the university strategy (as an outcome of the theme year of entrepreneurship) and establishing entrepreneurship minor studies open to all students of the university changed the structure of the university organization, allowing connections between EH and university administration. Minor studies solved the problem of integration of students' EH activities and their disciplinary studies.

Another significant investment in entrepreneurship education was the creation of TellUS Arena – a low threshold meeting place for all the different people at the campus. The continuation project had partially consolidated EH's position as a part of the university's operations, and by the time the project was ending, university had undergone structural changes enabling EH's integration. When the university became the biggest owner of OUAS with the plan to create a joint campus by the year 2020, the university also made decisions concerning EH. In August 2017, a few months before the second project was about to end, EH moved from its location in the city center and was divided between the university and OUAS campuses, causing university's side of EH to lose most of its core activities. The project manager of EH became the manager of TellUS, and EH became to locate in TellUS's premises.

In result of university's decisions, EH become part of the university's administrative core, i.e. TellUs Arena. University's premises became EH's premises, resulting in EH losing its decision-making ability and existence as an organization. Due to the reorganizing activities, it had become void of any activities or members of its own. Because of this, the EH brand was abandoned as redundant in 2019.

HTC gaining an independent decision-making ability

HTC was decidedly kept distant from the university's administrative core, but administration provided steering in those phases that required the organizer's decision-making. During organizational reform and lay-outs, the hub's existence was compromised, and therefore the decision to corporatize the activities was made. Based on this decision, HTC transformed from an activity run by the university's communications and community relations administration to a limited company which was, however, tied to the university by a steering group and annual service contracts. The basis of organizing became more diverse, as the limited company (formally entitled Do Company) became on top of the registered association and a separate brand of HTC.

University was also slowly changing its structure otherwise. As a separate development from HTC, teaching and learning administration created and the rector decided on a compulsory 10-credit unit that every student had to take to increase his/her working life capacities, and integrated it into the Bachelor's degree programs. The premise for this decision was in the Bologna Process as well as the recruitment and career services organized by the teaching and learning administration since the 1990s. Even through some of HTC's activities were possible to integrate into formal education, they remained weakly connected to the degree programs.

Despite the structural changes, the mission of HTC remained the same: to facilitate entrepreneurialism among the students of the university. Through the change, HTC also began to be more accepting towards using its activities as a part of the University's educational programs. This, however, remained in a somewhat 'undecided' state, since the inclusion of HTC activities into educational programs remained dependent on the activity of students and teachers to apply for, or provide, credits based on participation. Through the service contract, the University paid HTC for those extra-curricular entrepreneurial education services it received and provided steering for HTC's operations, at least from the University's perspective:

"...but they are, Think Company is, really dependent on our facilities, to begin with. And then on this support, and then we also need to use a competitive bidding since they are a company. So if they don't do what we want, they will lose the competition. And what will they be after that." (University representative)

Even though the operation and steering provided remained the same, HTC became nevertheless able to make decisions as an independent organization. The university did provide steering through the service contract, and if the guidance were not followed, HTC would lose the contract in competitive bidding. But while the service contract was the main decision premise for the operations linking the University and HTC, HTC had nevertheless gained the possibility of deciding otherwise.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to shed light on the way universities' centres and peripheries together process new strategies themes, reconfiguring the university organization. Based on our empirical study of two universities' entrepreneurship hubs and their decision-making processes, our analysis showed how the change in the university organization was triggered by the

emerging forms of organizing in the periphery. Non-deciding on entrepreneurial education enabled new orders to emerge in the periphery. Undecidability either provided the hub the freedom to create programmatic premises of its own, resulting in development towards an independent organization; or it created increased complexity that became overwhelming for the organization, hindering it from reaching a regulative level of its operations. Despite the nature of the trajectory of the emerging organizations, their attempts towards independent decision-making and self-regulation triggered the decision-making of university organizations, resulting in structural and strategic changes.

Systemic view on strategic change

While action-based understanding of organizations and related practice and process approaches have examined the different activities and intentions of individuals both in the centre and the periphery (Régner, 2003; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014), the systemic perspective involves both ‘sense-making’ and ‘sense-giving’ (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1998) in a decision, forming the unity of information, utterance, and understanding (Luhmann, 2018) and being detached from intentions of human beings.

The elements left undecided provided flexibility and potential for change for the emerging organizations, but also left a door open for the undecidable premises of the organizers to intervene in the decision-making. The difference between the two hubs is that while HTC represented ‘decided undecidability’, the premises of EH contained ‘undecided undecidability’. This was the result of the different direction of the development: HTC was developed inside the university management and then decidedly driven outside the university; whereas EH was developed in between organizations even though formally lying in the outskirts of the university organization, and the hub itself was striving to become a recognized function inside the

university (i.e., striving to move outside-in). Through un/deciding, the university organizations created undefined complexity, from which subsequent decisions might then derive. Based on the premises provided, the hubs then observed this complexity differently and aimed to reduce it differently.

Our study therefore shows how undecidability can be used as a lens to understand the paradox of stability and change in organizations. Extant streams in strategic change literature have suggested that strategic change requires a fundamental shift in meanings (Sonenshein, 2010), and it is this constant process fixing and opening meanings that constitutes the organization. Our systems-theoretical analysis of the decision making of existing and emerging organizations reveals the drivers and hindering elements of change as well as stability, as both directions of development are accomplishments in their own way, resulting from the interconnected decision-making.

The role of organizational peripheries

Organizational periphery draws attention towards the boundaries of the organization and the way organization as a system is connected to the wider society. Our findings show how university, itself representing an organization that already connects the logics of education and science (through the operations of teaching and research), did not, however, have existing premises for operating with the logic of economy. Universities observed the need for entrepreneurial activities but were not able to process these observations with the current processes. The problem was being processed in the periphery of the universities, drawing on existing decisions of freedom that allowed many kinds of connections, like empty boxes thrown into a river that anyone could pick up and fill the form as they wished. Those peripheral units

that chose to use the freedom then used different experimental forms of organizing (project and piloting) to establish the operation.

The interplay between centre and periphery can be seen in the way the organization produces and uses 'emptiness' in its decision to provide a certain 'spielraum', or leeway, for the creation of new meanings in the periphery. By allowing emergence of new beginnings, it creates internal means of 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter, 1942). Temporary forms of organization may emerge in the periphery, triggering change in the established organization through its attempts to define and regulate itself, and then dissolve, if not enough stability could not be achieved. On the other hand, the emerging form may also develop towards higher levels of 'organizationality' and detach from the established organization. Either way, the outcome of the emerging organizations is not relevant for the universities, but the irritation they provide for the university's decision-making. University as a decision system can thus be seen to function according to a similar logic than the entrepreneurship hub is functioning at an operational level: creating empty 'spaces' that can then be filled in the means of communication, providing possibilities for novel solutions to emerge. Similarly to the study of Pors and Andersen (2015) examining decision and play as antagonistic forms of communication, former reducing contingency and latter producing contingency, we can understand the emerging organizations described in this case as a form of 'very serious play' from the university organization's perspective. Like in the school example presented by Pors and Andersen (2015), also universities can be seen 'playing a game', as they establish a forum for 'play' where the 'game' is actually a decision process, and the 'conclusion of the game' becomes a decision of how to approach entrepreneurial education. These observations resonate with Mirabeau's and Maguire's (2014) findings of autonomous strategic behavior that becomes either an emergent strategy, or ephemeral strategy which eventually disappears.

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TABLE 1

The key decision events of the two Universities' entrepreneurship hubs.

| | Helsinki Think Company (HTC) | Entrepreneurship Hub (EH) |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Phase 1: Foundation (2010-2012) – From environmental expectations to decidedly undecided orders</i> | | |
| Observation/ expectations | External stimuli from the national policy, local economy, and the City observed in the University's research services administration | External stimuli from the regional economic actors and the City after Nokia's closedown and lay-offs observed in the University of Oulu's Business School |
| Complexity reduction | The need for a 'buzz place' (with purely commercial goals) identified; the idea transformed into more acceptable 'academic entrepreneurship' due to the University's organizational identity as a Bildungsuniversität and a world-class research university | The need for new business development and developing entrepreneurial skills identified. Initially combined with research interests of the business school, but eventually more directed towards more acceptable 'working life relevance'. |
| - decidable decision premises | Enabled by the previous work experience of the University's professional managers in the private sector | Enabled by the existing connections and joint development projects between the Business School professors, Oulu University of Applied Science's (OUAS) teachers and the local industry |
| - undecidable decision premises | | |
| Decision | Operational concept of the hub formed; agreement between the university and the city to establish HTC | Project application by the business school and OUAS, co-financed by the city |
| Undecidability | The decided elements included the basic concept and program outlined in the agreement made between the organizers. The actual contents of operation and the personnel, expect for the student captain, is left undecided. The decision also excludes the undecidable elements of the university's formal decision-making process and gives room for the undecidable elements of the student and start-up community. | The decided elements include the project plan, personnel coming from the universities, and the steering group consisting of members from all the organizing organizations. The actual contents of the operation are left undecided. |
| <i>Phase 2: Transformation (2015) – From decidedly undecided orders to (partially) decided orders</i> | | |
| Observation/ expectations | A wish to have the hub led by the students themselves, cuts of the university's public funds → threat for the continuation of HTC | Project and therefore finance ending, EH lacking the contact to the university's functions and administration, development of the concept still in progress |
| Complexity reduction | Refinement of HTC's operational model and organizational structure via experimental development | Need to secure the financing, show impact on the local economy, and become connected with the university functions |
| - decidable decision premises | Organizational renewal and layoffs; need to secure HTC's operation | Previously utilized decidable decision premise: applying for a continuation project with the existing partners; |
| - undecidable decision premises | Undecidable decision premise: start-up culture adopted from Aalto University, campus-based student cultures in the university | Applying short-term bridging funding from the University of Oulu. |

| | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| | Previously utilized decidable decision premise: corporatizing those functions that are not in the core of the university | Decidable decision premises: financial rules and regulations of the two universities |
| | | Previously utilized undecidable decision premise: experience of the manager in networking and selling ideas → creating connections with the university administration and management |
| Decision | Establishment of a student association and recruitment of Student Captain to run the operations of HTC Different models of HTC's operation in different campuses | An application made for bridging financing from the University of Oulu and a continuation project from the regional funds |
| Undecidability | Establishing a limited company Undecidability is used in decision-making to create own premises for HTC's future decision-making. Undecidable premises of its own (culture, routines) begin to develop. | Elements left undecided in the establishing decision remain partly undecided (the 'program'; hierarchy; rules; operation), leaving room for the undecidable elements of the formal organizations to intervene in EH's decision-making. |

Phase 3: Absorption (2017) – Outcome – Dissimilar decided orders

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Observation/expectations | Governmental policy (Bologna Process, cabinet programs) emphasizing generic working life competencies and entrepreneurial skills in education. | University management's and other stakeholders' expectations in terms of the hub's impact on the development of start-ups. Government and the city emphasizing entrepreneurship, expectations towards the university's operations in facilitating this. |
| Complexity reduction | Need for ensuring students' employability recognized (by the faculties and the teaching and learning services administration) Bologna process → the new degree structure and altered curricula Undecidable decision premise: Unplanned and uncoordinated application of HTC's services by teachers in education Previously utilized decidable decision premise: recruitment and career services for students since the 1990s | Need to clarify EH's operational concept and connect it to the University of Oulu's operations The need for a 'buzz place' and coordinated development of entrepreneurship activities in research (technology transfer) and education (working life relevance, entrepreneurial mindset) recognized by the University of Oulu's management Developmental seminar of EH to develop its operational concept Previously utilized undecidable decision premise: experience and connections with the industry, reform of the University of Oulu's administrative structure and appointment of Vice-Rector for Cooperation Affairs |
| - decidable decision premises | | |
| - undecidable decision premises | | |
| Decision | Entrepreneurship education integrated into the university's degree structure in the form of a compulsory 10-credit unit | Establishment of TellUs Arena and transferring EH into its premises as a sub-brand of TellUs Terminating the EH as a sub-brand |

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Undecidability | (HTC remaining as a separate, potentializing organization in the form of a limited company tied to the university by a temporary service contract) | (EH absorbed into TellUs, now part of the university of Oulu's formal organization) |
| | The role of undecidability is gradually reduced by defining HTC's own premises and continuing the operation as an independent formal organization based on the service contract between HTC and the University. | The role of undecidability remains high until EH becomes integrated into the University's central administration and the organization of TellUS, causing EH to lose its decision-making ability. |

FIGURE 1
Forming of organization's trajectories.

