Discursive Practices in Strategic Entrepreneurship
Discursive Practices in Strategic Entrepreneurship
Discourses and the use of repertoires in two firms
Abstract


This is a thesis in marketing concerned with entrepreneurship in established firms and the discursive practices that take place within a perspective of strategic entrepreneurship. The study of discursive practices in this context assumes a concern with how different aspects of entrepreneurship are produced and consumed by people in text and talk. Strategic entrepreneurship can be seen as an organisational form of entrepreneurship. The latest contribution within strategic entrepreneurship tends to focus on opportunities and advantages in organisations as two processes that need to be considered and managed jointly.

In this thesis, I have studied the discursive practices of how scholars position strategic entrepreneurship through an enhanced literature review and by means of a close analysis of assumptions made within strategic entrepreneurship, but also by studying two firms and their discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. The results have then been analysed with reference to discourse theory and previous research within entrepreneurship based on European traditions that builds on the linguistic turn.

By conducting an empirical study of two firms, I have studied discourses in use, and how they are produced by people. In so doing, two main findings emerge in the discussion of the empirical results: 1) Opportunity and advantage positions emerge in social interaction and are co-constructed. 2) Opportunity and advantage positions are constructed by the use of multiple discourses, on different levels of discourse and for different functions. The main purpose of the thesis is to enhance the understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms and the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. In addressing the purpose, seven theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to research emerge in areas of strategic entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship and the enterprising self.

Keywords: Strategic entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in established firms, organisational entrepreneurship, opportunity, advantage, discursive psychology, discursive practices, interpretative repertoires, positioning, discursive devices.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis in marketing concerning entrepreneurship in established firms and the discursive practices that take place within a perspective of strategic entrepreneurship. By the study of discursive practices, it is possible to explore the layered texture of practices, arguments and representations which make up ‘the taken for granted’ of a subject or an aspect of the world (cf. Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The classical view of entrepreneurship has been the one of the entrepreneur starting a new business or venture (see e.g. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). Entrepreneurship, has however over the years come to include so much more, and in recent decades it has evolved into a phenomenon that will solve a variety of problems in society (cf. Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Berglund, 2007). Today it is hard to open a newspaper without it saying something about entrepreneurship. The coverage of the media on entrepreneurial activities is widespread (cf. Anderson & Warren, 2011). For example, there are plenty of awards and prizes each year for business leaders and firms, given to those who are considered to be exceptionally talented entrepreneurs. Firms also like to present their work and organisations as entrepreneurial on websites, in annual reports, press articles and so forth. Research into entrepreneurship is often described as being the solution to meet up with changes in the environment and gain a competitively advantageous position (see e.g. Burgelman, 1983; Guth and Ginsberg, 1990; Zhara and Covin, 1995; Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009).

For others, as politicians, entrepreneurship is expected to solve the problems of economic growth by reducing unemployment by the creation of new ventures (cf. Steyaert & Katz, 2004). In education, for example, the Swedish Education Agency (Skolverket), describes entrepreneurship as a way of adapting to changes in society, a way of teaching, giving students confidence and stimulating their curiosity as well as starting a new venture. Entrepreneurship in a context of education and school has as well been addressed in research (see e.g. Fayolle & Kyrö, 2008; Berglund, 2013). There is also a concept of social entrepreneurship that has been developed (see e.g. Bjerke & Karlsson, 2013; Schwartz, 2013), where entrepreneurship is expected to solve social problems such as poverty, injustice and environmental issues with the help of business methods (Steyaert & Hjorth, 2006). In sum, it is possible to state that entrepreneurship has gained greatly in importance in today’s society, and there is mostly a posi-
tive value added to be associated with different aspects of entrepreneurship (cf. Berglund & Johansson, 2007).

In line with Holmquist (2003), I argue that entrepreneurship is a wide and varied phenomenon that permeates society in ways we have yet to grasp, and that research has long struggled with the concept of entrepreneurship. There are, however, some prominent discourses that are privileged over others in entrepreneurship research, and in the next section I will address contemporary entrepreneurship discourses in research. Thereafter, I will move to suggest an alternative view to the prevailing discourses. In order to go further and frame this thesis and the questions I want to discuss, two particular and interrelated considerations come to mind. The first consideration relates to what scholars describe as something that has grown to be important in entrepreneurship enquiry, but that we still know too little about, namely strategic entrepreneurship (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011; Luke et al., 2011). I will return to this concept later on in this chapter. The second consideration relates to the utilisation and positioning of social constructionism ideas through a discourse approach. I will return to discourses in Chapter 2, but I think it is important already in this chapter to address some basic notions about discourses to be able to pave the way for you as a reader towards the upcoming research questions.

In line with Potter and Wetherell (1987), I will use ‘discourse’ in its most open sense to cover all forms of spoken interaction, and written texts of all kinds, and analysis as a means to analyse these discourses. A discourse can be described as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). As Steyaert (2004) states, a discourse refers to a group of statements that provides a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about the topic. The terminology addresses both the production of knowledge through language and representation, the way that knowledge is institutionalised, shaping social practices and cultural technologies, as well as setting new practices and technologies into play. In other words, discourses are constructed because they assemble linguistic building blocks (i.e. words) and are constructive because these assemblages construct a particular version of the world (Mueller & Whittle, 2011). If we put these ideas in a context of entrepreneurship, it is possible to state that entrepreneurship discourses ‘make up’ particular versions and ways for the activity of entrepreneurship to be conceptualised and performed (Steyaert, 2004). Moreover, to take on a discourse approach incorporates a view of social construction (see e.g. Potter, 2004; Burr, 2003; Jørgensen & Phillips,
With such a view, entrepreneurship, like everything else people ‘know’, is a socially constructed reality or concept (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Gergen, 1999; Wenneberg, 2001; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Burr, 2003). How different aspects of entrepreneurship in text and talk is produced (constructed by people) and consumed (used by people) then becomes the centre of attention when studying discursive practices (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992).

The enterprising discourse

If we take a closer look at discourses about entrepreneurship, it quickly emerges that entrepreneurship is constructed on an economic discourse, to be explained by economic theories. Steyaert and Katz (2004) express a concern that this dominant economic discourse eventually turns entrepreneurship into ‘economism’ and ‘managerialism’, this, despite the fact that entrepreneurship has become more of a societal phenomenon. Steyaert and Katz (2004) state that, even though entrepreneurship is also seen as social, civic, environmental, cultural and artistic, it might be that the economic discourse and the business logic pervades all parts of society and everyday life. Subsequently I will address some of these economic and managerial discourses of entrepreneurship in the business context of the organisation.

Davidsson and Wiklund (2001) state that during the last decade, management researchers have extended the scope of their interests to entrepreneurship issues, and in doing so they have also brought in more theory-driven approaches. These management theories have led to a broader acceptance of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon, not restricted to independent small firms, but also present in larger and established organisations. This growing emphasis on entrepreneurship in different organisations is one important development, according to Davidsson and Wiklund (2001). Nevertheless, they state that most entrepreneurship research at the firm level still focuses on new and/or small firms. This has also been noted by Foss and Lyngsie (2012). Hjorth (2004) addresses that entrepreneurship studies generally are influenced by management theories, but that these theories seldom problematise management thinking or practices in order to assess the relevance and consequences for entrepreneurship. He refers to this managerial form of entrepreneurship as enterprising, a discourse that has been influential since the 1980s in the USA and the 1990s in Scandinavia. It is, thus, a discourse that produces a certain managerial form of entrepreneurship.

Similarly, du Gay et al. (1996/2005) argue that enterprise and entrepreneurialism occupy a crucial role in contemporary discourses of organisational reform where the major principle of organisational restructuring is
the attempt to introduce market mechanisms, market relationships and attitudes within the organisation. Furthermore, enterprise is a necessary and valued quality in a market-dominated system and in terms of qualities managers need to operate competently within. As du Gay et al. (1994, 1996/2005) argue, ‘enterprise’ is deployed both as a critique of ‘bureaucratic’ organisational governance and as a solution to the problems posed by ‘globalisation’ through delineating the principles of a novel method of governing organisational and personal conduct. Thus, it embraces the importance of individuals acquiring and exhibiting more ‘market-oriented’, ‘proactive’, ‘empowered’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ attitudes, behaviours and capacities. In sum, enterprise as a managerial discourse expresses the regulative ideal of a ‘managerial entrepreneur’ (Hjorth, 2004), and in most cases entrepreneurship is portrayed as a managerial strategy or as a special kind of management (cf. Bjerke & Hultman, 2003).

### Strategic entrepreneurship

Strategic entrepreneurship is expressed by several scholars (see e.g. Kuratko & Audresch, 2009; Schindelhutte & Morris, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Foss & Lyngsie, 2012) as the most recent contribution to entrepreneurship research in established firms. Hence, strategic entrepreneurship as a concept started to manifest itself at the beginning of 2000 and has been growing steadily since (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). The first journal dedicated to the subject was the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, and it was established as recently as 2007\(^1\). Strategic entrepreneurship can be seen as a form of organisational entrepreneurship that draws on the enterprising discourse and the managerial entrepreneur (cf. Hjorth, 2004). Thus, strategic entrepreneurship is strongly influenced by management through theories about entrepreneurship in established firms, e.g. corporate entrepreneurship (Hjorth, 2004), but also strategic management (Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010). Hjorth (2004) stresses that this kind of managerial form of entrepreneurship, and its attractiveness to managers lies in joining economics and behaviourism in the name of an enterprise, promising speed, flexibility and innovativeness. These are all aspects that are incorporated by the strategic entrepreneurship literature and reoccurring arguments for engaging in strategic entrepreneurship practices (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kuratko &

\(^1\)Information about the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal can be found at: [http://sej.strategicmanagement.net/](http://sej.strategicmanagement.net/).
Audresch, 2009; Luke et al., 2011). It is a practice that several scholars have pointed out to be a key differentiator regarding firms’ ability to compete in markets characterised by uncertainties and rapid changes (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011). As such, scholars argue that this practice is of importance to both practitioners and policy-makers (Luke et al., 2011).

Even though strategic entrepreneurship is a young research area, there have been several attempts to approach strategic entrepreneurship, and the field has grown extensively and in many directions to a position where it is not clear what the concept is constructed upon or where it belongs. For example, Schindehutte and Morris (2009:242) argue that the concept has to be further conceptualised, thus:

[…] it becomes less clear whether this hybrid called strategic entrepreneurship is a subfield within the entrepreneurship discipline, a subset of strategic management or corporate entrepreneurship, or a separate domain.

The quotation suggests that there are different points of view regarding where strategic entrepreneurship belongs. Hence, it addresses the possibility that strategic entrepreneurship could be categorised either as its own research domain, as an aspect of corporate entrepreneurship, strategic management, or as a separate scholarly discipline of entrepreneurship. I will look into this in greater detail with the help of a couple of quotations from scholars within the field of strategic entrepreneurship. For example, Ireland and Webb (2009:470) position strategic entrepreneurship within the area of corporate entrepreneurship research by stressing the following:

[…] strategic entrepreneurship is an important path through which corporate entrepreneurship manifests itself, and more specifically, captures a mode of organizing in which decision makers manage both uncertainty and resources as the foundation for being able to position their firms to adapt to changes. Based on a symbiotic relationship between strategic management and entrepreneurship.

Similarly, Kuratko and Audretsch (2009:12) state:

Strategic Entrepreneurship is the use and/or stimulation of entrepreneurial activity to achieve strategic goals. In the business management literature these goals are well known. […] And as strategic management is the realm of existing corporations one might conclude that strategic entrepreneurship is more or less synonymous with “corporate entrepreneurship”.

Ireland et al. (2009:20-21) in turn say the following:

Rather, consistent with the strategic entrepreneurship concept (Ireland & Webb, 2007b; Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003), we argue that CE [Corporate
Entrepreneurship strategy implies that a firm’s strategic intent (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989) is to continuously and deliberately leverage entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) for growth- and advantage-seeking purposes.

The first two quotations also draw upon aspects of strategic management and entrepreneurship, which several other strategic entrepreneurship scholars tend to do (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001; Hitt et al., 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kuratko & Audretsch; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Mathews, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). Some of these scholars also suggest that strategic entrepreneurship is the intersection where entrepreneurship and strategic management meet. For example, Kuratko and Audretsch (2009:1) express:

“Strategic entrepreneurship” is the new term that has arisen in the literature to represent the intersection of strategy and entrepreneurship.

Similarly, Ireland and Webb (2007:51) stress:

Strategic entrepreneurship: A value-creating intersection between strategy and entrepreneurship.

Other scholars prefer to take the idea of intersection a little further and address strategic entrepreneurship as the integration of strategic management and entrepreneurship. Hitt et al. (2001:481) were among the first to introduce the term of integration in the following statement:

In short, strategic entrepreneurship is the integration of entrepreneurial (i.e., opportunity-seeking behavior) and strategic (advantage-seeking behavior) perspectives in developing and taking actions designed to create wealth.

Ireland et al. (2003:966) also use the terminology of integration when concluding:

[...] that strategic entrepreneurship results from the integration of entrepreneurship and strategic management knowledge.

Luke et al. (2011:315) argue that strategic entrepreneurship was introduced as an intersection between entrepreneurship and strategy, but has evolved to become the integration of these concepts, by stating that:

Only recently however, has research begun to consider the integration of these concepts.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, an intersection suggests a place or area where two or more things meet. To use the term integration, however, rather suggests that strategic entrepreneurship is becoming a separate domain (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Thus, as Meyer et al. (2002:33)
argue, integration is about forming or blending something into a whole. These scholars (see e.g. Hitt et al, 2001; Hitt et al., 2002; Kuratko & Audretsch; Kyrgidou & Huges, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011) also like to position strategic entrepreneurship within opportunity-seeking (an aspect of entrepreneurship) and advantage-seeking (an aspect of strategy) behaviour and the practice of balancing between these. Similarly, Foss and Lyngsie (2012:208) have noted that strategic entrepreneurship is based on the:

[...]
central idea that opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking - the former the central subject of the entrepreneurship field, the latter the central subject of the strategic management field—are processes that need to be considered jointly. This involves going beyond the overwhelming focus on start-ups, characteristic of the entrepreneurship field, and paying explicit attention to the established firm as a source of entrepreneurial actions.

From the discussion so far, it emerges that there is no clear consensus among scholars regarding strategic entrepreneurship. Most scholars, however, tend to draw on aspects of the entrepreneurship and strategic management domain of research as a foundation for their thoughts. Others position strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship, which can be seen as a further development of drawing on theories from strategic management and entrepreneurship domains. The recent contribution in this development position strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking, where opportunity-seeking is seen as an aspect of entrepreneurship, and advantage-seeking as an aspect of strategy. See Figure 1.

![Figure 1 - Three areas of strategic entrepreneurship research.](image-url)
The discussion so far lays the foundation for the first research question in this thesis, which is concerned with the growing research field of strategic entrepreneurship and is stated as follow:

1. **What discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered?**

In answering this question, it emerges what discourses have been privileged by scholars so far in the field of strategic entrepreneurship. Thus, as Kuratko and Audretsch (2009) argue, to date there remains much to know about what constitutes the strategic entrepreneurship concept. Similarly, Schindehutte and Morris (2009) write that there is a need for a conceptual clarity regarding strategic entrepreneurship. Also, Foss and Lyngsie (2012) argue that many things in strategic entrepreneurship are still unclear in this emerging field.

By addressing the discursive practices of how scholars within the field of strategic entrepreneurship have positioned their work gives an idea of how the concept is constructed, and what discourses have been drawn upon in the positioning work. Furthermore, a discourse approach has the ability to produce knowledge about, for example, practices regarding certain premises, assumptions and claims of importance. Hence, such an analysis has the potential to allow study of ontological and epistemological aspects. It is also suggested that the field of entrepreneurship needs researchers to give a closer consideration to these aspects (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Busenitz et al., 2003). This means that a careful examination of the metatheoretical foundations is needed (cf. Fletcher, 2006). It also means more extensive excursions into the philosophical issues that aid scholarly work, and theoretical development (Busenitz et al. 2003). One can question why such an excursion into philosophical issues is necessary in order to understand strategic entrepreneurship. Following Fletcher (2006), I argue that, if engagement with the philosophical aspects of research aids depth of analysis, robustness of research process or outcomes, and contributes to the ongoing theoretical development of strategic entrepreneurship research, then this seems a useful way of going forward, and in this sense discourses and social constructionism ideas can be helpful (cf. Fletcher, 2006).
Reframing entrepreneurship

The primacy of economy all too often shows itself in the tendency to translate most social and cultural phenomena into economic ones (cf. Hjorth & Johannisson, 2003). By reframing and reconstructing entrepreneurship through more than merely an economic discourse, Steyaert and Katz (2004) state that we simultaneously become aware of the ‘need’ for alternative theoretical conceptions and disciplinary anchorages. An alternative point of departure would be to stress the cultural and social perspectives by a discourse approach, an approach that builds on the linguistic turn which has resulted in different and new ways of doing research (Burr, 2003). It took some time, however, for the linguistic turn to reach entrepreneurship studies, and Steyaert (2004) argue that it was not until the 1990s that narrative and discourse approaches were introduced. In recent years, however, several scholars have highlighted the importance of incorporating ‘narratives’ (see e.g. Fletcher, 2007; Fletcher & Watson, 2007; Berglund & Wikgren, 2012) and ‘discourses’ (see e.g. Hjorth et al., 2003; Fletcher, 2003, 2006; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Hjorth, 2005; Berglund, 2007) into the study of entrepreneurship. In this thesis the focus on discourses is utilized as a way of reframing entrepreneurship, and as such, it is necessary to address why it is important to study discourses.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) among others, argue that recent developments in philosophy, sociology, social psychology and communication theory have demonstrated a widespread significance of language in social science. Discourse and language use are closely related, and Alvesson and Kärreman (2000:1125) write:

[… it seems that language (and language use) is increasingly being understood as the most important phenomenon, accessible for empirical investigation, in social and organisational research. To the extent social research is an empirical enterprise, most of it seems to be connected to how people use language – sometimes how language uses people – in particular situations. […] Arguably, the insight of significance of language has contributed to an interest in discourses.

Gergen (1999:62) in turn states that, if language is a central means by which we carry on our lives together (i.e. carrying the past into the present to create the future), then our ways of talking and writing become an important aspect to take into consideration, thus:

It is not only our grand languages of self, truth and morality at stake; our futures are also fashioned from mundane exchanges in families, friendships, and organisations, in the informal comments, funny stories and the re-
minder of the daily hubbub. [...] we are challenged to step out of the reali-
ties we have created, and to ask significant questions – what are the reperc-
cussions of these ways of talking, who gains, who is hurt, who is silenced,
what traditions are sustained, which are undermined, and how do I judge
the future we are creating? Such questioning does not proceed effortlessly –
with methods tried and true. It is not easy in part because we live these dis-
courses.

In a similar way, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) stress that written and spo-
ken languages are constructions of the world oriented towards social ac-
tion i.e. how text and talk are oriented towards something, for example legitimising a way of doing things. Furthermore, language is a dynamic
form of social practice which shapes the social world including identities,
social relations and understanding of the world. This premise entails the
view of mental processes (cognitions) and categories as constituted through
social, discursive activities rather than as “internal” (Potter & Wetherell,
1987; Edwards, 1995; Potter; 1996; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005; Jørgensen
& Phillips, 2002). Hence, most discourse analysts share a starting point
that our ways of talking do not naturally reflect our world, identities and
social relations but, rather, play an active role in creating and changing
them (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). In sum, the main focus in
discourse analysis is how language creates our world (Gergen, 1999).

Discourse is also central to the work of positioning, as people draw on a
wide array of discourses in order to construct their social identities (Burr,
2003). Positioning is ascribed as the active mode in which people attempt
to locate themselves within a particular discourse during social interaction
(Korobov, 2010). Minds, selves and identities are formed, negotiated and
reshaped in social interaction (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003;
Edwards & Potter, 2005). The discourses available for articulating a posi-
tion differ depending on the person, culture, and situation. In other words,
the culturally available resources there are in an organisation differ (see e.g.
Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Juhila, 2012). Disc-
cursive resources include broad societal discourses such as gender and race
as well as more micro-discourses such as the values generated by a particu-
lar group (Larson & Pearson, 2012). During the positioning work, individu-
als draw on the available socially constructed discursive resources and
then weave these discourses into an account of e.g. who they are and what
they doing in their work. Although there are many available discourses
from which to choose or reject, some discourses exert more influence on
the construction work of a position than others, as they align with cultur-
ally, institutionally, or organisationally accepted norms and ideals (cf. Ju-
As stated, I wish to reframe and reconstruct entrepreneurship through a discourse approach, but what does such an approach mean? Within discourse analysis, especially within organisation and management studies, it is rather common to use a discourse analytical approach and to supplement it with non-discourse analytical theories about a specific phenomenon under study (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Hence, it is possible to cast a light on a phenomenon from different angles, and take account of the complexity of the phenomenon. Drawing on this, I treat discourses as an analytical concept, i.e. as an entity that the researcher projects onto the reality in order to construct a frame of reference for study. Treating the delimitation of discourse as an analytical exercise entails understanding discourses as objects that the researcher constructs rather than as objects that exist in a delimited form in reality, ready to be identified and mapped. In line with Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) as well as Phillips and Hardy (2002), I argue that delimitation can be aided by secondary literature, thus I have restricted the study to the strategic entrepreneurship literature. More precisely I have restricted it to recent contributions within strategic entrepreneurship that tend to focus on opportunities and advantages in organisations as processes that need to be considered and managed jointly (cf. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). This ability is often labelled as a strategic entrepreneurship practice, a practice there is an expressed need to learn more about (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011; Luke et al., 2011; Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). In sum, I will delimit my research area to people’s discursive practices regarding opportunity and advantage activities in an organisation that have a central place within strategic entrepreneurship (cf. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). This reasoning leads to the second research question of concern in this thesis which is stated as followed:

2. How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed?

If the first question took more of a theoretical approach, this question is concerned with the construction work of people in organisations, by taking an interest in how people use discourses rhetorically in order to accomplish forms of social action. Hence, there is a possible way to address discourse as situated language use in everyday text and talk, a dynamic form of social practice which constructs the social world, organisations, individual selves and identities (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). Edwards (2005) state that discourses in this way are important to study in order to understand what people are doing with their talk e.g. handling interactional contingencies, arguing particular points, drawing contrasts and so
forth. Edwards and Potter (2005) then make a suggestion that to study
discursive practices is to study how people ordinarily, as part of everyday
activities, report and explain actions and events, how they characterise the
actors in those events, and how they manage various implications gener-
ated in the act of reporting.

In order to be able to approach people in organisations and to study
how they use discourses in text and talk I have conducted an empirically
driven study of two firms\(^2\). This is in order to enhance our understanding
of the discursive practices that take place in organisations, more precisely
the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage posi-
tions. In this thesis, the two firms have been given the fictitious names of
System Novelty\(^3\) and PREM Food\(^4\). System Novelty was founded in the
late 1990s. They were acting in a market described as turbulent with con-
tinuous changes, and where a lot was happening in a short period of time.
The market can be positioned in a quite narrow niche in the IT-Industry.
PREM Food in turn was founded in the early 1960s, and is described as
acting in a more mature market of the Food-Industry. Their market was
positioned as competitive, and a large number of changes are occurring,
but there are longer periods of time between the changes than for System
Novelty. The firms are positioning themselves as middle-sized, growing
and as one of the market leaders.

By addressing this second question with the help of System Novelty and
PREM Food it makes it possible not only to, enhance our understanding of
how people in interaction construct opportunity and advantage positions
in organisations. But the positioning work also shows in what ways people
support each other’s accounts, creating a consensus of meaning, or chal-
lenge each other’s accounts, leading to negotiation of meaning (cf. Jørgen-
sen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). Thus, positioning is viewed as an inte-
gral part of the processes by which people constructs accounts of them-
selves, others and their doings in social interaction (see e.g. Burr, 2003;
Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Korobov, 2010). As Sarason et al. (2006) state,
entrepreneurship is a social undertaking, which must be carried out and
therefore understood, within the context of social systems. Moreover, peo-
ple use discourses rhetorically in order to accomplish forms of social action
(e.g. legitimising a way of doing things), in particular contexts of interac-
tion, and construct their accounts on the basis of different discourses in

\(^2\) The arguments for choosing these two firms are given in Chapter 5.
\(^3\) A more detailed presentation of System Novelty is given in Chapter 6.
\(^4\) A more detailed presentation of PREM Food is given in Chapter 7.
order to make sense of their accounts (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Finally, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5, I chose to conduct my empirical study on System Novelty and PREM Food because they act in quite different contexts. In this way it provides the possibility of comparing and contrasting potentially different or similar results with reference to discourse theory (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Both representability of a discourse as well as variability in use of a discourse are expected and should be understood in relation to discourse theory. There is also a call for more empirical contributions within strategic entrepreneurship research, which is an important argument for adopting this kind of research approach (Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011; Luke et al., 2012). Thus, as Foss and Lyngsie (2012) state, although many of the conceptual building blocks used in strategic entrepreneurship have been operationalised and used empirically in either the entrepreneurship or strategic management literature, as a distinct research field strategic entrepreneurship does not yet include many empirical results of its main constructs and/or dominant conceptual models.

**Purpose**

To sum up; *the overall purpose of this thesis is to enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms and the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship.* In this chapter I have introduced this purpose in at least three ways: *Firstly*, I aim to enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms by conducting an enhanced literature review of what has been studied within the field of strategic entrepreneurship, and the discursive practices of scholars when positioning their work as strategic entrepreneurship research. In this way, I also intend to answer the first research question: What discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship and what other discourses can be considered? *Secondly*, I intend to enhance our understanding of the social construction processes and discursive practices that takes place within organisations by studying two firms from a strategic entrepreneurship perspective. In this way, I will be answering the second stated research question: How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed? *Thirdly*, through discourse theories I will try to understand potential similarities and variances in the discursive practices that took place in the two studied organisations.
Further outline of the thesis

I have so far introduced the context of this thesis, including purpose and research questions. It is, therefore, time to move on to Chapter 2. But before we do this, I will present a further outline of thesis.

Chapter 2 – This chapter begins by my addressing discourses in more general terms, as it is not always clear among scholars what a discourse is, or how to conduct a discourse analysis. I then argue my way towards discursive psychology and the three analytical tools of: 1) interpretative repertoires, 2) positioning and 3) discursive devices. This chapter sets the scene for how I see the world (ontology), and how knowledge is produced (epistemology). Thus, discourses are as much about the theory as the methods used.

Chapter 3 – Presents an enhanced literature review of how strategic entrepreneurship research is conducted from three identified areas of research: 1) Strategic entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship and strategic management, 2) Strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship, 3) Strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. The literature review results in ten prevailing frames of reference that strategic entrepreneurship scholars tend to draw upon when positioning strategic entrepreneurship in their work.

Chapter 4 – Addresses the first stated research question: What discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered? In answering this question I complement the literature review with a close analysis of fifteen published articles within strategic entrepreneurship in order to outline prevailing assumptions, methods, data and theories/perspectives within what could be considered to be a scientific-discourse about strategic entrepreneurship. In doing so, it emerges that it has been a discursive exclusion towards viewing social phenomenon as socially constructed, qualitative features and practice-based approaches. Lastly, I reframe strategic entrepreneurship with the help of discourse theory and European entrepreneurship research that builds on the linguistic turn, resulting in a frame of reference that has been used to guide the analysis in Chapter 6 and 7, as well as understanding the results in Chapter 8.

Chapter 5 - Aims to present the line-of-action taken and the methods used in order to conduct the empirical study in this thesis, which is based on the ten steps for carrying out good research within discursive psychology. By these steps I address the following areas: 1) research questions, 2) choice of sample selection, 3) collection of documents and records, 4) in-
terviews, 5) transcription, 6) coding, 7) analysis, 8) validation, 9) the report, and 10) application.

Chapter 6 – Introduces System Novelty, which is the first empirical material to be addressed in this thesis. Firstly, some background information is given on the firm’s history and the participants who were included in the study. Secondly, I present a selection of twenty-four extracts that are analysed in detail in order to study the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. These extracts were selected for their representability but also to show variability in the use of the repertoires (a meso-discourse).

Chapter 7 – Introduces PREM Food, which is the second, and last, set of empirical material to be addressed in this thesis. As in Chapter 6, firstly I present some contextual information about the firm and its background, and introduce the participants in the study. Secondly, I explore opportunity and advantage positions in a selection of nineteen extracts, which have been selected to show both representability and variability in how the repertoire was used by the people in the organisation.

Chapter 8 – Addresses the second stated research question: How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed? In answering this question, the results of what the two studied firms showed us in Chapter 6 and 7 are discussed in detail. In doing so, I try to understand potential similarities and variation in discursive practices, possible constitutive effects and consequences of the repertoires with the help of discourse theory. As a result two main findings emerge from this discussion that has applicability in other organisational contexts.

Chapter 9 – Is the last chapter whose aim is to provide a discussion of the findings in Chapter 8 and address the stated purpose of enhancing our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms, and the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. I also address possible limitations, making suggestions for further research, and discuss some thoughts on practical implications.
A DISCOURSE APPROACH

This chapter addresses discourse and discourse analysis as a research strategy for how to approach the stated purpose and research questions in Chapter 1. As stated in the introductory chapter, discourse has a central place in this thesis, and lays the foundation for how I see the world (ontology), and how knowledge is produced (epistemology), which in turn will have an impact on how I will further conduct my research. It is important to note that a discourse approach incorporates both methodology and methods. Moreover, it is a theory as well as a way of understanding and analysing social phenomena. Hence, I will start this chapter by discussing discourse in more general terms: its background, different ways of thinking about discourses, and what aspects I will draw upon. Thereafter, I will introduce a specific strand of discourse analysis within discursive psychology, building on the analytical tools of interpretative repertoires, positioning and discursive devices.

Discourse and discourse analysis

Even though there is a commonality in discourse analysis in focussing upon language and language use, there is a broad spectrum of views regarding discourse. A large number of researchers (see e.g. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008) in the area write that there is no clear consensus as to what discourses are and how to analyse them. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000:1126) argue the following:

There is a wide array of ways of using the term discourse in social science and organisation studies. It is often difficult to make sense of what people mean by discourse. In many texts, there are no definitions or discussions of what discourse means. Authors treat the term as if the word has a clear, broadly agreed upon meaning. This is simply not the case.

I do agree that many discourse analysts neglect to discuss their view of discourse, to define the term or their ways of conducting analysis. However when they do, I will show that the main difference is to be found in the way they carry out analyses, or rather on what level of analysis they choose. Not the definitions per se, even though there are of course some differences. I will return to this question, and discuss how scholars have mainly approached discourse analysis. But first it is important to take a
closer look at some of the definitions of discourse, to better grasp what a discourse might be or include.

To define discourse in general terms Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:1) propose a definition of a discourse as:

 [...] a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world).

Nightingale and Cromby (2001:291) in turn write that a discourse is a collection of images, written texts, beliefs and metaphors that shape, influence or create practice or phenomenon. Similarly, Burr (2003:64) argues that a discourse:

 [...] refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light.

Phillips and Hardy (2002:3) present a somewhat more specific definition of discourse, when they partly draw on Parkers (1992) definition of discourse as:

 [...] an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being.

Not very differently from the other definitions, Fairclough (2010:3) states:

 Discourse is not simply an entity we can define independently: we can only arrive at an understanding of it by analysing sets of relations. [...] what it is in particular that discourse brings into the complex relations which constitute social life: meaning, and making meaning.

In sum, one can state that there are somewhat different definitions of the term ‘discourse’. The definitions, however, do have one thing in common, that is the view of discourse as a temporary fixation of meaning. Thus, text and talk are always in a flux, competing in a context of variations of meaning (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

**Various types**

In line with Edwards (2005), I will argue under this heading that the major difference between the various types of discourse approaches lies in their methods of analysis. Therefore, some examples will be given of how scholars have previously addressed these issues in the literature on discourses. I will start with Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), who wrote an article on the subject - *varieties of discourses* - with the aim of clarifying some of the confusions regarding discourses and how to analyse them. Thus, they in-
vestigated the different ways scholars have approached discourse analysis by mapping the varieties of discourses along two dimensions.

The first dimension is determinism v/s autonomy which captures the extent to which different discursive perspectives consider meaning as durable, or independent of context. For example, structuralist approaches such as Foucauldian discourse analysis is described as lying at the determinism end of this dimension. Thus, it treats objects and subjects as constituted from the top down by historically situated discourses with fixed meanings. In contrast, they observe how Potter and Wetherell (1987) understand objects and subjects as constituted from the bottom up, and treat meaning as temporary and context specific.

The second dimension is local v/s macro context, and is divided into four levels: micro-discourse, meso-discourse, Grand-Discourse and Mega-Discourse. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) argue that discourses can be viewed as local achievements. Analytically distinct from other levels of social reality (such as the levels of meaning and practice), with little or general content i.e. discourses with a lower case “d” (micro-level of discourses). Or on the other hand, discourses can be viewed as general and prevalent systems for the formation and articulation of ideas in a particular period of time, viewing discourses as “Discourses” with an upper case “D” i.e. the macro-level of Mega or Grand Discourses. Furthermore, they argue that constructionist perspectives e.g. Potter & Wetherall (1987) are examples of micro-discourse, since they analyse discourse at the micro-level. Foucauldian discourse analysis, with its broader focus, is an example of Mega-Discourse at a macro-level.

Like Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), Burr (2003) addresses the variety of discourse analysis in terms of micro and macro, and refers to the traditions of the Foucauldian discourse analysis as macro, whilst scholars from the discursive psychology school of discourse analysis such as Potter, Edwards, Billig and Wetherell are defined as micro-analysts of discourses. Gergen (1999) in turn does not use this kind of terminology in order to distinguish different traditions of conducting discourse analysis. Rather he chooses to present three different lenses that he suggests can be of help in analysing discourses; 1) discourse-as-structured, 2) discourse-as-rhetoric, and 3) discourse-as-process. These lenses, nevertheless, have a lot in common with the discussions by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), and Burr (2003). For example, discourse-as-structured refers to a set of conventions, habits or ways of life that are stable (a fixed pre-existing structure) or recurring with a focus on metaphors and narratives. Thus, they influence our definitions of ourselves and our world. This lens can be seen as being in line with the Foucauldian tradition of doing discourse analysis at a macro-
level. When it comes to discourse-as-rhetoric, it can be seen as a meso-level of analysis. Hence, it mainly focuses on ways in which conventions or structures of language are used to frame the world, and to achieve certain social effects, which means that the structure is not static in that sense, rather used by people to build favourable realities. The last lens is discourse-as-process, which departs from the idea about structure, and focuses on the flow of interchange, the conversations, negations, arguments and other processes by which we are constituted. This view is close to the traditions in discursive psychology and micro-analysis of discourses, with a focus on the interchange in conversations and subtle shifts of word and intonation.

Edwards (2005) is another scholar interested in discourse. But he neither addresses discourse analysis in terms of lenses nor micro v/s macro. He rather pays attention to the methods of doing analysis. Hence, Edwards (2005) argues that some discourse analysts are linguists, where textual material (often written texts rather than spoken interaction) is analysed, while others mainly draw upon conversation analysis (where recorded everyday talk is analysed) of the social action performed. Furthermore, some discourse analysts mix one or more of these approaches. For example, Critical Discourse Analysts (CDA) combines linguistic analysis and ideological critique. Those who focus on linguistic methods are often concerned with what Gergen (1999) refers to as structure of the language, i.e. lens one or two, or if one prefers a more macro-level of analysis, whilst conversation analysts are more concerned with lens three, or what can be seen as a micro-discourse analysis.

The last example I will give of how scholars deal with the different ways of conducting discourse analysis is by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:26) in their book - Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method. As the title suggests, they are, like Edwards (2005), interested in the methods of doing analysis, but also the theoretical premises. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) have chosen to exemplify the various ways of doing discourse analysis from three different perspectives. These are: 1) Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, 2) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and 3) discursive psychology.

The first, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, can be seen as a macro-level of analysis. According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), the theory is based on a combination of Marxism and structuralism, which they fuse into a single poststructuralist theory, where the whole social field is understood as a web of processes in which meaning is created. Moreover, discourse is seen as a temporary fixation of meaning, and it is only through conventions, negotiations and conflicts in social contexts that structure of
meaning becomes fixed, but also challenged. This theory is not based on a
detailed analysis of empirical material. It is about abstract phenomena
rather than recourses that people draw upon, transforming the practices of
everyday life (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

*Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) in turn provides theories and meth-
ods for the empirical study of relations between discourse, social, and cul-
tural development in different social domains (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).
There are several approaches within CDA, but Fairclough’s (2010) is one
of the most developed. His ideas are mainly based on a framework for
analysis of discourse as social practice. The view is that discourses both
reproduce and change knowledge, identities and social relations including
power relations, and at the same time are also shaped by other social prac-
tices (discourses) and structures. It is a text-oriented form of discourse
analysis that tries to unite (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Fairclough,
2010): 1) Detailed textual analysis (linguistics), 2) Macro-sociological
analysis of social practice (discourse) and 3) Micro-sociological, interpr-
etive tradition of sociology (including ethnomethodology and conversation
analysis), where everyday life is treated as the product of people’s actions.

Lastly, we have *discursive psychology* that developed as a reaction
against the traditional cognitive approaches in psychology (Jørgensen &
Phillips, 2002). In contrast to cognitivism, it treats written and spoken
language as constructions of the world oriented towards social action (see
e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards, 2005). Like CDA, there are several
approaches within discourse psychology. But in most of the approaches,
discourse is seen as situated language used in every day text and talk, a
dynamic form of social practice which constructs the social world, individ-
ual selves and identity (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The focus in analysis
is on rhetorical organisation of text and talk; thus people uses discourses
rhetorically in order to accomplish forms of social action in particular con-
texts. Many discursive psychologists therefore like to draw on methods
from conversation analysis. Mainly the analysis is at a micro-level of con-
textual social interaction, even though there are some variations. For ex-
ample, the branch of interpretative repertoires draws upon a meso-level of
discourse analysis.

In sum, so far I have discussed that there are differences regarding the
level of analysis when it comes to approaching discourses. Research is done
at both the macro-, meso- and micro-level of analysis. Furthermore, at the
macro-level of analysis scholars mostly draw upon a Foucauldian tradition,
whilst scholars at the micro-level of analysis draw upon traditions within
discursive psychology. CDA, in turn, often tries to move between both
micro- and macro-levels of analysis, drawing on a mix of Foucauldian
traditions (i.e. interest in structures of language and power) and discursive psychology (i.e. interest in everyday life and social interaction). Depending on what level of analysis one chooses, there are also some methods that are more or less preferable e.g. at a macro-level there is a tendency to build the analysis on written texts rather than spoken interaction as on a micro-level. Lastly, from this discussion a conclusion emerges of the importance as a scholar of stating clearly within which discourse approach one positions one’s work. Thus, each discourse analytical approach comes with its own package of methodological and theoretical assumptions, as well as choice of methods. There are, however, some common assumptions within these different approaches, which will be addressed under the next heading.

A complete package
Carrying out discourse analysis comes with a complete package of theory and methodology; thus it is not only a method of analysis detached from its theoretical and methodological foundations (see e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:4), the package contains:

[...] first, philosophical (ontological and epistemological) premises regarding the role of language in the social construction of the world, second, theoretical models, third, methodological guidelines for how to approach a research domain, and fourth, specific techniques for analysis. In Discourse Analysis, theory and method are intertwined and scholars must accept the basic philosophical premises in order to use discourse analysis as their method of empirical study.

Similarly, Gergen (1999) stresses that the reason why discourse analysts try to include a concern with text, discourse, and context relates to the fact that it represents a methodology, not just a method that embodies a strong social constructionism view of the social world. In slightly different words, Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue that discourse analysis does not simply comprise a set of methods (techniques) for conducting structured, qualitative investigations of texts. It also involves a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language. Potter (2004:97), and Burr (2003) as well as Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), among many others, stress that to build on a framework of discourses incorporates a view of social construction based on the idea that the “reality” is constructed by how people speak, write and argue about it. Wenneberg (2001) states that this leads to a view of human knowledge as something that is socially constructed, because knowledge is obtained by means of linguistic concepts. Furthermore,
language is necessarily social as a language requires at least two people in interaction.

In accordance with the discussion above, I take the position that social constructions are a collective phenomenon. However, they are produced and reproduced by individuals, and the knowledge of the environment is affected by the social context (see e.g. Gergen, 1999; Wenneberg, 2001; Burr, 2003). Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) argue that all social constructionism approaches share the structuralist and poststructuralist premise that language is a dynamic form of social practice which shapes the social world, including identities, social relations and understanding of the world. This premise entails the view of mental processes and categories as constituted through social and discursive activities rather than as internal (Edwards & Potter, 1992). The term that denotes this view is often ‘social constructivism’ or ‘social constructionism’. I will in this thesis use the term ‘social constructionism’, thus avoiding potential confusion with Piaget’s constructivist theory that draws on perceptual theory, which is not in line with the view of social constructionism⁵. However, it is important to note that some of the sources I will use refer to the term social constructivism. But they have stressed the same viewpoint as the one taken here, and therefore I will refer to their work as social constructionism. In short, social constructionism can be seen as an umbrella term for a range of new theories about culture and society, and discourse analysis is just one of several social constructionism approaches, but one of the most widely used (Burr, 2003). There are many different assumptions within social constructionism, and there is no single description. Rather there are a lot of positions and different perspectives (Wenneberg, 2001). In this chapter, I will clarify my position step by step towards social constructionism and discourses.

**A lack of developed methods**

In order to argue for my position within discourse analysis, we need to go back to the introduction chapter, and the stated research questions. The first research question is concerned with the construction work of scholars, and how they position their work as strategic entrepreneurship. In this way, addressing what discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered. The second research question is empirically driven, and draws attention to people’s own construction work and how they construct opportunity and advantage positions. As such, I am in this thesis interested in the processes of social construction made by people and by the discursive practices of people’s

⁵ See Burr (2003:19) for an extended discussion.
positioning work. This means that a macro-level of analysis or the Foucauldian way is not preferable. Rather, this research question points at a micro-level of discourse analysis that takes place within discursive psychology.

As stated earlier, previous scholars do have a tendency to mostly draw upon the Foucauldian way of conducting discourse analysis. It is important to note, however, that Foucault in fact proposed two ways of doing analyses of discourses, namely archaeology and genealogy (see e.g. Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005). Burr (2003) writes that archaeology is related to the clarification of the history of the rules that regulate particular discourses, and that genealogy is interested in the forces and events that shape discursive practices into units, wholes and singularities. But, even though the Foucauldian tradition is strong within discourse analysis, and one of the most commonly used approaches, there are some critiques of its usability on empirical material. Thus as Alvesson and Kärreman (2000:1128) stress:

Although Foucault is probably the single most influential author on how social scientists use the word discourse, it is clear that students of discourse feel that neither the archaeological, nor the genealogical approach exhaust their research possibilities. Within social science and organisation studies ‘discourse’ generally signals a variety of interests, often difficult to grasp.

Edwards (2005) in turn argues that Foucault’s influence on discourse analysis remains inspirational for discourse-based critiques of power and inequality. But there is no clearly formulated Foucauldian method for analysing talk and texts. Furthermore, he stresses that the plural term discourses says much about the concerns of this kind of analysis, where large interconnected systems of concepts and social arrangements are being identified, rather than paying close attention to the workings of social interaction which discursive psychology is concerned with. Edwards (2005), who also is one of the founders of the term ‘discursive psychology’, argues that one motive for inventing the term was to define something more specific within the broad spectrum of discourse analysis, but at the same time to promote discourses as something more than just a method. This emerges as discursive psychologists mostly draw upon well-developed methods by conversation analysts as well as having a well-developed methodological stance (cf. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Edwards, 2005).

In sum, discursive psychology offers more developed methods for approaching empirical material than the Foucauldian way of doing analysis. As such, it is the most preferable approach to take, especially when it
comes to answering research question two. Furthermore, the macro-levels of analysis and the Foucauldian tradition are more concerned with the implications of structures and power relations from a top-down perspective, whilst the stated research question is concerned with how something is constructed from a bottom-down perspective i.e. a view much closer to a micro-level of analysis and the traditions of discursive psychology. When it comes to the approaches of CDA, I do not see it as suitable as the discursive psychology approach, especially regarding research question two. Hence, CDA is mainly concern with structures and power relations, whilst I am concerned with the process of social construction in everyday life. Power relations and structure may, of course, be of interest, but are not the main focus in this thesis. This means that I will further explore the area of discursive psychology under the upcoming heading and discuss different possibilities of doing research within this area.

**Discursive psychology**

I will begin this part of the chapter by addressing the idea that discursive psychology could mean different things to scholars. Thus, as Edward (2005) stresses, it is apparent that a variety of different work, not always closely related, has used the term ‘discursive psychology’. The starting point or origin of the discursive psychology adopted in this thesis is based on scholars such as Edwards, Potter and Wetherell. For example, Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) book reconceptualised the topic of social psychology. It outlined an alternative methodological approach that could be used instead of the experiments and questionnaires that had been the mainstay of published psychological work at that point. Potter and Wetherell (1987) draw on conversation analytic work, post-structuralist ideas, linguistic philosophy and ethnomethodology. Wiggins and Potter (2008:74) write that this is a potentially confusing mix, but the:

> [...] discipline was provided by taking as its major focus discourse – talk and texts – and, in particular, the ways in which discourse is oriented to actions within settings, the way representations are constructed and oriented to action, and a general caution about explanations of conduct based in the cognition of individuals.

A major theme in discursive psychology was the problem of how to analyse interview data. Edwards (2005:259) argues:

> The traditional use of interviews was as a source of information about the interview’s topic and what respondents thought and felt about it. The fact that respondents might produce inconsistent, variable versions and accounts had hitherto been treated as a kind of noise to be avoided or behind which
to find the signal—that is, the consistent facts or attitudes supposedly being expressed. DA [Discourse Analysis] developed as a radical alternative to that approach. It focused on the so-called noise, the variability, and found there a different kind of order. What looked like cognitive inconsistency and unreliability became coherent when interview responses were left in the contexts of their occurrence and examined functionally and indexically. People were doing things with their talk: handling interactional contingencies, arguing particular points, drawing contrasts.

In another work by Edwards and Potter (2005:241) they explain the following about discursive psychology and discourse practices:

Topics recognised in mainstream psychology such as ‘memory’, ‘causal attribution’, ‘script’ knowledge, and so on, are re-worked in terms of discourse practices. We study how people ordinarily, as part of everyday activities, report and explain actions and events, how they characterise the actors in those events, and how they manage various implications generated in the act of reporting.

In short, most discursive psychologists agree on the premise of viewing mental processes and categories as constituted through social, discursive activities rather than as ‘internal’, as in cognitive psychology (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter et al., 1993; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). In cognitivist approaches towards language, written and spoken language are seen as reflections of an external world or a product of underlying mental representations of that world (Edwards & Potter, 1992). While discursive psychologists treat written and spoken language as constructions of the world oriented towards social action (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Edwards, 2005). Accounts are oriented towards action in specific social contexts, and their meanings are therefore dependent on the particular use to which they are put (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, language use is contextual and how people use language in interaction is what discursive psychologists define as discourse or discourse practice.

Over the years it has developed different strands within discursive psychology. These strands mostly disagree on how to balance between the larger circulations of patterns of meaning in society on the one hand, and the meaning production occurring in specific contexts on the other. This is perhaps not so surprising though, as scholars tend to draw both on conversation analytic work, post-structuralist ideas, linguistic philosophy and ethnomethodology. To clarify this, I will shortly address the different strands of discursive psychology as Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) describe it. But in order to do so I need to address the fact that within discursive
psychology there is a tendency to address context differently. To frame this, I take some help from Fairclough (2010) and the discussion about three different layers of context – 1) social practice (macro), 2) discursive practice (meso), and 3) text and talk (micro). The three different layers of context are also shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Three different layers of context. Source: Fairclough (2010).

The first strand of discursive psychology takes on a poststructuralist perspective that builds on Foucauldian theory of discourse, power and the subject. The focus is on how people’s understanding of the world and identities is created, and changed by specific discourses, and social consequences of these discursive constructions. In other words, this strand of discursive psychology tries to connect text and talk (micro-aspects) to the wider context of society and social practice at a macro-level of analysis. The more recent work by Wetherell (see e.g. Wetherell, 1998; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Reynolds et al., 2007) could be positioned within this strand.

The second strand takes on an interactionist perspective that builds on conversation analysis and ethnomethodology. The focus is on how social organisation is produced through speech and interaction. Within this strand, it is important that the researcher keep his or her own theoretical perspective of the world out of the analysis. In that sense, this strand is
very close to the empirical material of text and talk, and the context in which the interaction takes place is of great importance. The interaction should not be taken out of its specific context of text and talk when analysed (i.e. a micro-level of analysis). In other words, the first and second strands treat the micro-aspects of text and talk in quite opposite ways when analysing. Much of the more recent work of Edwards and Potter could be positioned within this strand of discursive psychology (see e.g. Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Edwards & Potter 2005; Potter & Edwards 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008).

Finally, the third strand can be seen as a synthetic perspective that unites the first two. Thus, there is a combined interest in how specific discourses constitute subjects and objects, with an interest in the ways in which people’s discourses are oriented towards social action in the specific contexts of interaction. The main focus is still on micro-aspects of text and talk in interaction. However, when analysing, scholars tend to leave the specific context of the interaction (which strand two never do) and try to analyse it towards the wider context of discursive practices. Nevertheless, scholars do not take it as far as to the wider context of social practice, which the first strand does; in this way, it can be described as a meso-level of analysis. Moreover, within this strand the concept of interpretative repertoires is often used instead of discourses in order to emphasise the fact that discourses are drawn on in social interaction as flexible resources. Much of the previous work of Wetherell and Potter (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; McKinlay & Potter, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) could be positioned here.

Interpretative repertoires
In this thesis I will mainly draw upon the third strand discussed, namely interpretative repertoires, that originate in the ideas of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) earlier work within discursive psychology. Discursive psychology and interpretative repertoires have not only been used by many scholars from across the social sciences, for example in psychology and sociology, but also in organisation, management and entrepreneurship studies (see e.g. Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Whittle, 2006; Shepherd, 2006; Berglund, 2007; Whittle et al., 2008; Ostendorp & Steyaert, 2009; Whittle et al., 2010; Whittle & Mueller, 2011; Mueller & Whittle, 2011). Wiggins and Potter (2008) write that it offers a picture of complex, historically developed organisations of ideas that could be identified through research, and yet is flexible enough to be reworked within the contingencies of different concrete settings. Whittle et al. (2008) stress that the activities of talking and writing are understood to actively constitute and reconstitute
organisational reality. Thus, descriptions are constructive of their objects. This does not, however, mean that talk brings things into the world. But, rather those descriptions are categorisations, distinctions, contrasts etc., and there are always relevant alternatives available (cf. Edwards & Potter, 2005). This permits descriptions to be performative. Thus, they offer one construction rather than another, produced in sequential and rhetorical contexts, where the specifics matter for the actions being carried out (Edwards & Potter, 2005).

I also choose to draw upon this particularly strand because of its focus on the context of discursive practices and a more meso-level of analysis. As said in the introductory chapter, this thesis is concerned with the discursive practices of peoples positioning work, and how discourses are produced and consumed in text and talk. This emerges in the first research question by addressing the discursive practices of researchers when positioning their work as strategic entrepreneurship. But more importantly from a discourse psychology approach it emerges in the second research question, thus, addressing the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions in organisations by people in interaction. This suggests that a more societal and macro-level of analysis is not suitable. Too great a focus on the micro-levels of conversation will in turn deflect the focus on the organisation and the context of the discursive practices that takes place. Thus, only focus upon the specific context of where the interaction (text and talk) took place, thereby not being able to aggregate the interaction to a higher level-of-analysis of the firm and the collective context.

When it comes to the analytical concept of interpretative repertoires, it has the same premises as most discursive psychologists do. There are, however, some variances I will discuss further. Firstly, as stated earlier, Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) view of conducting a discourse analysis is to take on a meso-level of approach to discourses. In order to distinguish this kind of discourse from the broader, more abstract and reified phenomenon, they prefer to use the term ‘interpretative repertoires’. However, they emphasise that the term ‘discourse’ can be used to describe the same process. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:106) stress that the purpose of this view is to gain insight into questions about communication, social action and the construction of the self, others and the world. As the originators of the term, Potter and Wetherell (1987:149) initially defined interpretative repertoires as:

[...] recurrently used systems of terms for characterising and evaluating actions, events, or other phenomena.
Over the years, nevertheless, Wetherell took on a more structuralist and macro-level approach to discourses, and have shown an enhanced interest in power relations. Interpretative repertoires and the discursive practice are then constructed in relation to social practice. How people construct their understandings of the world in social interaction, and how these understandings work ideologically to support forms of social organisation based on unequal relations to power (see e.g. Wetherell, 1998; Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Reynolds et al., 2007). In other words, it is more closely connected to the first strand in discursive psychology, and is not the approach taken in this thesis. This strand can also be seen as having a more ontological interest than the original view of interpretative repertoires, or the line of work that Potter and Edwards has taken towards a more micro-level. I will return to this. In short, the founders of interpretative repertoires have developed in two different directions, and in this thesis, I am leaning more towards the paths that Edwards and Potter have taken, though with some smaller adjustments that I will address more thoroughly in Chapter 5, when discussing the methods used and lines-of-action taken to conduct the empirical study.

Secondly, interpretative repertoires are seen as linguistic recourses or tool kits available to speakers in their construction of accounts (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). Potter and Wetherell (1987) state that an interpretative repertoire can be understood as a more or less coherent collection of styles, metaphors and rhetorical devices used to characterise and evaluate actions, events and actors in the context of interaction. In line with Potter and Wetherell (1987), I adopt a view of interpretative repertoires as a flexible resource that people can use to construct versions of reality. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:107) argue:

> These repertoires are used by people actively as flexible resources for accomplishing forms of social action in texts and talk. As flexible recourses, interpretive repertoires are, at one and the same time, identifiable entities that represent distinct ways of giving meaning to the world and malleable forms that undergo transformations on being put to rhetorical use.

Similar Burr (2003:167) stresses:

> They [interpretive repertoires] are analogous to the repertoire of moves of a ballet dancer: finite in number and available to all ballet dancers for design of different dances suitable for a variety of different occasions. If you went to enough ballet performance, you would eventually begin to recognise the

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6 A further discussion of the view of ontology taken by Potter and Edwards will be included under the next heading about positioning.
repertoires of moves that the dancers have available to them. The idea of a repertoire therefore also involves the idea of flexibility of use; the moves can be put together in different ways to suit the occasion.

It is the “moves” or repertoires used by people when constructing opportunity and advantage positions that are of interest in this thesis. Also how these “moves” or repertoires are used in different ways to suit people in their accounts of what works for them or not with their actions in the context of a firm. I will return to this in Chapter 5 when addressing how the analysis of the empirical material and the results has been conducted.

**Positioning**

Positioning is an important analytical concept in this thesis and within discourse psychology in general. Positioning is described as the active mode in which people attempt to locate themselves within a particular repertoire during social interaction. Burr (2003:113) states the following when discussing positioning in interaction:

> The concept of positioning recognises both the power of culturally available discourses [repertoires] to frame our experience and constrain our behaviour while allowing room for the person to actively engage with those discourses [repertoires] and employ them in social situations.

As stated earlier, discursive psychologists draw on social constructionism ideas that premise that an individual self is not an isolated and autonomous entity. Rather it is in constant dynamic interaction with the social world. Minds, selves and identities are formed, negotiated and reshaped in social interaction (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards & Potter, 2005). Hence, discursive psychologists share the view that identities are formed through the ways in which people position themselves and others in text and talk in everyday life. There are, nevertheless, some differences in how scholars incorporate the social constructionism view regarding ontology and epistemology, which therefore makes it important to clarify the view taken in this thesis.

Potter and Edwards have for the last decade or so been carefully articulating a non-ontological, purely epistemological constructionism approach (see e.g. Edwards 1997; Edwards & Potter 2005; Potter & Edwards 2005). Korobov (2010:266-7) stresses that Potter and Edwards’s discursive psychology is mute or agnostic on issues of ontology, thus:

> They do not [...] reject or affirm any particular relationship between discourse and mind/world, or of any ontology involving mind or world. [...] What they reject is the assumption that discourses and mind-world are necessarily wired together in a referential way. Instead, they ask that we con-
sider the relationship differently. The current analytic task of DP [discursive psychology], therefore, is one of epistemic constructionism. [...] DP [discursive psychology] thus takes an interest in how people construct versions of objects in talk and texts, how these versions are undermined, and how they are rhetorically developed to resist being undermined.

According to Korobov (2010), this view of discursive psychology, with an epistemic constructionism approach, alters the status of positioning and social rules. Thus, as stressed in discursive psychology, positioning is a performative social action. Acts of positioning, like discourse itself, are the domain of public accountability; as such social rules and representations are features in participant’s discursive practices. This means that they are constructed and described as people performing social action. It is the discursive practices that are the topic of the study. Rules and social representations are treated analytically as discourse’s topics and business. Korobov (2010:267-268) argue the following:

It is an epistemological constructionist approach to positioning without recourse to either psychological speculation or cultural exegesis, but instead to the dynamism of social interaction itself. This discursive view of positioning promotes a tight fidelity to the discursive moment where positions are actually occasioned and put to use. Positions are, in the first instance, interactively drawn-up in particular contexts, resisted in particular contexts, and amended or mitigated in particular contexts for particular purposes. They are indexed and occasioned as an effect of the way the social interaction is ordered, made relevant, and attended to as an ongoing and active accomplishment of persons in conversation.

An epistemological constructionist approach understands acts of positioning through an analysis of the relationship between discursive actions and (the features of) social identities. It is a view that connects a prototypical fine-grained analysis of discursive action with an analysis of identity categories. According to Korobov (2010), discussions about identity have, unfortunately been historically dominated by traditional psychological approaches that treat identity as an internal state of being, or by radical constructionist/narrative approaches that see identities as ontologically discursive or storied. A discursive orientation approaches the question of identity by way of positioning, where positions are ways of describing the force of certain discursive actions in the establishment of a sense of self and others, or of a relational constellation. Furthermore, Korobov (2010) states that this approach opens a space to consider identities as topics in conversations, or as recipient-designed rhetorical projects, and invites social scientists to closely examine the discursive work done to ground.
In sum, within this strand of discursive psychology, identity is treated both as the product of specific discourses, and as a resource for accomplishing social action in talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, positioning is viewed as an integral part of the process by which people construct accounts of themselves and social action in interaction with others. These processes are understood as a process of negotiation, as people actively take up positions within different and sometimes-competing discourses (or repertoires) (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Parts of the position activities are specific discursive devices (Korobov, 2010).

**Discursive devices**

In line with Mueller and Whittle (2011:188), I see discursive devices as language-based tools that are employed as part of interactional business. Furthermore, discursive devices refer to the micro-linguistic tools that people use in interaction in order to construct a particular version of the world and their relationship to it. Repertoires are constructed because it assembles linguistic building blocks (i.e. words) and constructive because these assemblages construct a particular version of the world. Even if the audience does not accept a particular construction, that construction has still been made and therefore still matters (Mueller & Whittle, 2011).

Wiggins and Potter (2008) argue that the original concept of the interpretative repertoire (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987) required a series of procedures, and criteria for the trustworthy identification of something as a repertoire. Yet, many current studies offer only the vaguest idea of how the repertoires are identified and how they relate to a corpus of data (Potter, 2003; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). A result, many scholars have moved away from this concept, because it tends to reduce the complexity and variability of language use to a few distinct repertoires (cf. Mueller & Whittle, 2011). Despite this, I have chosen to use the term ‘interpretative repertoires’, thus as Potter and Wetherell (1987) once stressed, it distinguishes the level-of-discourse (a meso-level) from other larger (macro) or smaller discourses (micro). Nevertheless, this does not mean that I do not think it is of importance to meet some of the criticism directed at that earlier work of interpretative repertoires. One way of doing this is by incorporating some of the newer contributions made in the field of discursive psychology about discursive devices into interpretative repertoires, in this way, drawing on conversation analytical approaches to develop methods and tools to make the process of identification of a repertoire more transparent. Thus, with discursive devices it is possible to contribute to an understanding of the role of rhetoric in the construction of opportunity and advantage positions. I use the term ‘discursive device’ rather than ‘rhetorical device’ (cf. Whittle et
al., 2008), as the latter term is grounded in the classical Greek notions of rhetoric, such as metonymy or synecdoche (Mueller & Whittle, 2011). In this way, I hopefully avoid the dualistic assumption that rhetoric is something distinct from reality, and that the term ‘rhetoric’ is also associated with assumptions about the intentions of the speaker, particularly the idea that speakers deliberately design an argument to persuade an audience (Mueller & Whittle, 2011). This is not in line with the discursive psychology approach and interpretative repertoires.

Potter (1996) discusses a set of discursive devices from three overall themes, see Table 1, which are the following: Firstly, the way in which the category entitlement of people is built up or undermined. Potter (1996:111) writes that a central feature of any description is its role in categorisation. Thus, a description or an account formulates some objects or events as something. It constitutes it as a thing and a thing with specific qualities. For example, the description can present something as good or bad, big or small, successful or not, useful or not, etc. Potter also stresses that a common role of description is to present some action as routine or exceptional. Moreover, Mueller and Whittle (2011) argue that pronouns are one way of achieving these categorisations, and referring to management as ‘them’, for example, also implicitly constructs another category of ‘us’, suggesting a different group with different needs, goals and values. Alternatively, if the term ‘we’ is used, this implies a common identity and set of goals that seeks to unite those who have been categorised. Categories can also be used to justify our entitlement and qualification for making a claim. For example, when a person states ‘the CEO told me that lean production is the only way forward’, they are presenting the CEO as part of a category of person with knowledge and authority that should be respected (Mueller & Whittle, 2011). The careful management of categorisation devices, I suggest, is therefore crucial for the positioning work of opportunities and advantages within an organisation.

Secondly, the way speakers use offensive and defensive rhetoric to manage accountability (stake and footing). Potter (1996:113) argues that interest management is one of the most fundamental approaches to fact construction. Anything that a person (or group) says or does may be discounted as a product of stake or interest, not necessarily an individual’s interest or stake attributions. Thus, it is regularly attributed to social groups, nations, organisations etc. The referencing of such a stake is one principle way of discounting the significance of an action or reworking its nature (Potter, 1996:110).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive Device</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key sources</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Categorisation</td>
<td>The social categories used to describe yourself and others, including what responsibilities, expectations, rights and obligations are involved. Pronoun selection (e.g. ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘them’) is one way of doing this.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, Ch 5), Edwards (1995, p. 581)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Footing</td>
<td>Positioning ourselves in relation to what we say. It is about the range of relationships that speakers and writers have to the description they report. Pronoun selection (e.g. ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘them’) is one way of doing this.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, Ch. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stake Attribution</td>
<td>Appealing to the vested interest or stake of another, particularly with regard to discounting or doubting the position of another.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, p 125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stake Inoculation</td>
<td>Denying or downplaying the stake or vested interest the speaker has in a situation.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, p 125-132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stake Confession</td>
<td>Is where a speaker acknowledges their vested interest.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, Ch. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Externalisation</td>
<td>Presenting a description as independent of the speaker doing the construction.</td>
<td>Edwards (2005, p. 6), Potter (1996, Ch. 6), Edwards &amp; Potter (1992, p. 105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominalisation</td>
<td>Replacing nouns with verbs, adjectives or adverbs to avoid mentioning those who performed the action, particularly to avoid attribution of blame or responsibility i.e. taking away human agency.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, pp. 155-157, 182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagueness</td>
<td>About the use in supporting broad claims and is difficult to ‘pin down’ or undermine.</td>
<td>Potter (1996, Ch. 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1- A set of discursive devices from three overall themes. Inspired by Mueller & Whittle (2011).
For example, apportioning blame can be discounted as merely a product of spite, or an offer may be discounted as an attempt to influence. Another example is the use of stake inoculation as a device to make people appear more objective, unbiased and trustworthy. Whether people choose to confess a stake or, on the contrary, inoculate themselves against stake imputation seems to matter a great deal for whether ideas are subsequently accepted or rejected in organisations (Muller & Whittle, 2011). Footing, in turn relates to the range of relationships that speakers and writers have to the description they report. For example, people make their own claims, or report the claims of others, and when they report claims they can display various degrees of distance from what they reporting (Potter, 1996:122). Footing is central when dealing with factual reports; thus it is through footing that speakers manage their personal or institutional accountability for such reports. In the case of constructing opportunity and advantage positions, I suggest that stake (attribution, inoculation, confession) and footing may be a key device through which people might emphasise, or downplay, their own role in the organisation, their work or the work of others.

Thirdly, the way in which descriptions are produced as external and independent of the speaker or writer as a form of ‘out-there-ness’ (externalisation, nominalisation, vagueness). The discursive device of externalisation can be used to present a description as independent of the speaker doing the construction, for example, by the description ‘the findings show’ and ‘the hypothesis show’. Nominalisation in turn is a technique for categorising actions and processes that allow the speaker or writer to avoid endorsing a particular story about responsibility. Or it can be a way to report a story objectively and naturally (Potter, 1996:182). In this way, nominalisation can be a device for displaying neutrality, which Potter (1996:182) argues is not the same as actual neutrality. An example of this device is by taking away human agency. Another way to produce ‘out-there-ness’ is by the device of vagueness, to make broad claims that it is difficult to undermine. The use of vague or formulaic descriptions may provide just enough material to sustain some action without providing descriptive claims that can expose it to undermining (Potter, 1996:118). Just as scientists may present their research findings in a way that deletes their role and presents them as mere vessels for the discovery of the world ‘out there’, so too might people in an organisation use similar ‘externalising devices’ (cf. Potter, 1996) to justify their positioning activities of opportunities and advantages. For example, presenting an opportunity and/or advantage as a rational solution to external circumstances that exist ‘out there’ — such as changes in customer preferences, competitor behaviour or technological
advances — can help to present the opportunity and/or the advantage as both inevitable and desirable (cf. Muller & Whittle, 2011).

**Summary of the chapter**

As stated in this chapter, there is a broad spectrum of views regarding discourses, and there is no clear consensus as to what discourses are or how to analyse them (see e.g. Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Nevertheless, it emerges that there are three main approaches to conducting discourse analysis, which are based on the Foucauldian way, CDA and/or discursive psychology. As such, analysis is made at both micro-, meso- and macro-levels, with a focus on different aspects of discourses, what they accomplish in society and with people, and what people are doing with discourses (see e.g. Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Burr, 2003). What most scholars, however, do agree upon is that conducting a discourse analysis comes with a complete package of theoretical and methodological assumptions with a view of social constructionism (see e.g. Gergen, 1999; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005 among many others). In some approaches, the use of specific methods of qualitative features also appears (see e.g. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Edwards, 2005).

I have in this chapter also argued my way towards a particular strand within discursive psychology through interpretative repertoires (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987). A repertoire is addressed as a flexible recourse that is used by people in their daily life (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Through positioning a non-ontological, purely epistemological constructionist, approach emerges (see e.g. Edwards 1997; Edwards & Potter 2005; Potter & Edwards 2005). Finally, parts of the positioning activities are due to discursive devices (Korobov, 2010). In sum, three linked analytical tools within discursive psychology were discussed through: 1) interpretative repertoires, 2) positioning, and 3) discursive devices.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH IN STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In this chapter I will carry out a literature review of previous strategic entrepreneurship research. This will be done by studying the discursive practices of how scholars positioning their work as strategic entrepreneurship in books, journals and conference papers. As stated, by the study of discursive practices it is possible to explore the layered texture of practices, arguments and representations which make up the taken for granted of a subject. It is important to note that I have limited the review to include only the work of scholars that have positioned their work clearly as strategic entrepreneurship research. This means that similar potential work by others is not included in this review. By comparing the various studies done by strategic entrepreneurship scholars, it is possible to address recurring assumptions and approaches, but also possible competing ideas and thoughts. As will be shown, conducting such a review is important, as strategic entrepreneurship still remains elusive. The chapter begins by addressing how strategic entrepreneurship has been constructed by scholars in at least three ways: 1) by drawing upon parts of entrepreneurship and strategic management literature, 2) by being part of corporate entrepreneurship, and 3) by being a potential new practice of balancing between opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. Lastly, I will summarise the chapter by addressing what recurring frames of reference (i.e. shared assumptions, thoughts, ideas etc.) are commonly drawn upon by strategic entrepreneurship scholars.

Strategic entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship and strategic management

The first area to study in this literature review is strategic entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship and strategic management. Kuratko and Audresch (2009) state that strategic entrepreneurship can be seen as a quite new concept, constructed by certain aspects of entrepreneurship and strategic management domains. Hitt et al. (2001) argue that strategic entrepreneurship is all about where the two domains of entrepreneurship (E) and strategic management (SM) meet and become integrated, see Figure 3. Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) in turn state that entrepreneurship and strategic management inform each other and have overlapping interests, thereby distinguishing the domain of entrepreneurship by excluding what is studied by strategic management is counterproductive. Similarly, Hitt et al. (2001; 2002) and Ireland et al. (2003) note that both research areas are concerned
with competitiveness, growth and wealth creation, but their foci slightly differ. Furthermore, Hitt et al. (2002) write that, in strategic management, the main foci have been on which decisions and actions are needed in order to achieve competitive advantage, often in larger firms. Whereas a majority of entrepreneurship scholars focus on trying to understand how opportunities are discovered and exploited in new businesses and ventures, mostly in small- and middle sized firms (Hitt et al., 2002).

Figure 3 - strategic entrepreneurship as the integration of entrepreneurship and strategic management.

Scholars positioned with the concept of strategic entrepreneurship often describe it as problematic that these two domains – strategic management and entrepreneurship – are developing largely independently of each other (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2002; Ireland, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010). Thus as Hitt et al. (2001), and Venkataraman and Sarasvathy (2001) express it, both domains are concerned with how established firms adapt to environmental change and exploit opportunities created by uncertainties and discontinuities in the creation of wealth. Furthermore, Venkataraman and Sarasvathy (2001) stress that theories in strategic management have the possibility of enriching the understanding of the entrepreneurial process. However, this statement is mostly drawn upon by scholars within the domain of strategic management. Rather, entrepreneurship scholars express a concern that strategic management is trying to take over and integrate the domain of entrepreneurship within their own domain (see e.g. Baker & Pollock, 2007; Meyer, 2009). For example, Meyer et al. (2002) are supportive of the benefits that an intersection of strategic management and entrepreneurship can bring about, but argue that it is important that the field of entrepreneurship develops its own domain. They also argue that it might be useful to broaden our outlook and explore other complementary theories and/or perspectives when it comes to entrepreneurship in established firms.
In other words, within strategic entrepreneurship there is still no one who explicitly supports the idea that the domain of entrepreneurship and strategic management are a single discipline that has been subdivided. Rather, Ireland et al. (2003) stress that scholars of both entrepreneurship and strategic management have rendered unique and valuable contributions. Here it becomes important to remember the discussion in the introductory chapter. Thus, there were some statements made by scholars in the field of strategic entrepreneurship that could be interpreted as trying to move the field towards its own domain. Especially when it came to arguing that strategic entrepreneurship is integrating aspects of entrepreneurship and strategic management, as in Figure 3. This was also noticed by Schindehutte and Morris (2009), who question the founders of the concept in using the term “hybrid”. Stressing that they clearly intended more than a merger or interface between the two disciplines of entrepreneurship and strategy, suggesting something new was being created. At the same time, Schindehutte and Morris (2009) also stress that strategic entrepreneurship does not constitute a new theory of strategy or entrepreneurship. Separately, it has been argued that strategic entrepreneurship is needed, because no commonly accepted and well-developed paradigm exists for research into entrepreneurship, and strategic entrepreneurship can provide this paradigm (cf. Hitt et al., 2001). However, Schindehutte and Morris (2009) disagree and indicate that a paradigm includes shared assumptions, concepts, and methods that constitute a way of viewing reality. Moreover, no such worldview has emerged yet.

Under the next two headings I will discuss strategic entrepreneurship in relation to the domains of entrepreneurship and strategic management. In doing so I am able to analyse how strategic entrepreneurship scholars position their work within these domains. I will start with entrepreneurship, and then return to strategic management.

**Entrepreneurship**

Cornelius et al. (2006) argue that entrepreneurship is still a relatively new research field that has attracted extensive interest beyond the usual areas of management during the last few decades. Thus, the field of entrepreneurship as a disciplinary research area is not more than thirty years old, but has developed substantially over that short period of time (Cornelius et al., 2006). Despite its relatively recent rise to acceptance as an academic field, entrepreneurship research has a long tradition that goes back in history. Entrepreneurship research originates in economics and with the macroeco-

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7 They based this on theories of Kuhn (1970) and his notion of paradigm.
nomic focus of scholars such as Richard Cantillon (about 1680-1734) and Jean Baptiste Say (1767-1832). The word entrepreneur originates from the French language and the word *entreprendre*, and it has been used since the thirteenth century, with focus on a person who is active and doing something (cf. Landström, 2005). In this context, modern entrepreneurship research tends to have its origins in the four classic founders of Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950), Israel M. Kirzner (1930–), Frank Knight (1885–1972) and Jean Baptiste Say (1767–1832). According to Henrekson and Stenkula (2007) these founders are also ascribed four different functions of entrepreneurship, namely; innovator, arbitrageur, decision-maker and coordinator. See Figure 4.

![Figure 4 - Four functions of entrepreneurship. Source: Henrekson & Stenkula (2007:31).](image)

Henrekson and Stenkula (2007) state that newer contributions in this area are generally variants or analytical sophistication of these four functions, or have a more eclectic approach in order to try and combine the various functions. In line with this, I will put the four basic functions of entrepreneurship in relation to strategic entrepreneurship research. In doing so we gain a better understanding of how scholars position strategic entrepreneurship as a concept in the field. I start with Schumpeter, and then address Kirzner, Knight and Say.

The function of Schumpeter

Schumpeter (1934) added the concept of innovation to the theory of entrepreneurship, and he saw the entrepreneur first and foremost as an innovator who identifies and introduces new innovative combinations. In this
way, the entrepreneur is seen as a disequilibrium creator (Schumpeter, 1934). It is also the aspect of innovation that many strategic entrepreneurship scholars tend to draw upon. For example, Hitt et al. (2001) talk about creative destruction in terms of radical innovations that are introduced onto the market. Another example is by Ireland and Webb (2007:52) who state the following:

New products, new processes used to produce products, and new ways to structure a firm to facilitate innovation are all examples of newness that SE [strategic entrepreneurship] can produce.

Schumpeter (1934) made a distinction between two separate systems of economic activities: a static and a changing system. The static system describes the static circular capitalist system, where the entrepreneur has an important function in a changing system. Thus, for Schumpeter (1934:61 note 1) the entrepreneur is the bearer of the “mechanism for change”. Change, development or entrepreneurship is defined by Schumpeter (1934:66) as:

[...] the carrying out of new combinations.

These new combinations will not necessarily be new products or services, but new production methods, new markets, new resources and organisations or alternative forms of organisation (Schumpeter, 1934). It is possible to state that Hitt et al. (2001:480) draw upon these thoughts when they make a special issue of strategic entrepreneurship and stress the following:

For the purposes of the research included in this special issue, we define entrepreneurship as the identification and exploitation of previously unexploited opportunities. As such, entrepreneurial actions entail creating new resources or combining existing resources in new ways to develop and commercialize new products, move into new markets, and/or service new customers.

It is interesting to notice in the quotation by Hitt et al. (2001) that they do not address entrepreneurship through an entrepreneur as does Schumpeter when discussing the entrepreneur as a bearer of change. Like most strategic entrepreneurship scholars, they rather tend to address entrepreneurship at the level of the firm (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009), not on an individual level. There are, nevertheless, scholars who try to challenge this idea of entrepreneurship as a firm level approach. For example, Holcomb et al. (2009:168) say that they are building on previous work by Schumpeter and:
In sum, strategic entrepreneurship scholars tend to draw upon the Schumpeterian function about entrepreneurship through new resource combinations, and the idea of innovation (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). Most scholars, however, do not position their work in line with the Schumpeterian function about the individual entrepreneur as the carrier of change (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). It is rather the firm that is the carrier of change.

The function of Kirzner
Unlike Schumpeter (1934), Kirzner (1973) chose to highlight the arbitrageur, the equilibrium creator, who discovers and acts on untapped profit opportunities in the economy. These opportunities do not have to come from something genuinely new; but also include imitations. Many scholars in strategic entrepreneurship chose to draw upon parts of the Kirznerian function of the entrepreneur i.e. as the arbitrageur who discovers opportunities from changes. Thus, in many of the papers change is important as a context, but the researchers tend to focus on firm’s reactions to change rather than their driving market change, as in the function of Schumpeter. Ireland and Webb (2007:50) can be seen as good example of this view when expressing the following:

[...] we believe that effective SE [strategic entrepreneurship] helps a firm position itself such that it is capable of properly responding to the types of significant environmental changes that face many of today’s organizations.

Others such as Hitt et al. (2001:480) express the following:

While the fields of strategic management and entrepreneurship have developed largely independently of each other, they both are focused on how firms adapt to environmental change and exploit opportunities created by uncertainties and discontinuities in the creation of wealth (Hitt and Ireland, 2000; Venkataraman and Sarasvathy, 2001).

Kirzner (1973) disagrees with neoclassical economics about the existence of equilibrium, because he does not believe in the assumption of complete information. To Kirzner, the entrepreneur contributes to a movement towards economic equilibrium by pursuing existing opportunities, even though a state of equilibrium will never be reached. Essential to Kirzner’s view on entrepreneurship is the imperfect distribution of information. The
economy is described as a process characterised by discovery and learning. The entrepreneur takes advantage of the imperfect distribution of information, and tries to profit from the superior information and knowledge they possess. For example, Kyrgidou and Petridou (2011:700) draw upon discovery when arguing:

The entrepreneurial components of strategic entrepreneurship (entrepreneurial mindset and creating innovation) require investments in processes underpinning experimentation, play and discovery.

Another example is by Agarwal et al. (2010:275) who state:

Knowledge spillovers can be viewed as involving either the creation of new entrepreneurial opportunities or else the discovery of (existing) entrepreneurial opportunities that had not been recognized previously.

Also Mathews (2010:238) draws upon opportunity discovery:

I see strategic opportunity as being equated with the discovery of an entrepreneurial opportunity where a mismatch between prices and values (as seen from the perspective of the firm with its idiosyncratic bundle of resources) leads to the formulation of a business project that will actually test whether the opportunity is real or not.

A central concept added to entrepreneurship by Kirzner (1973:35) is alertness. Those with the ability to identify when new products or services become feasible or when existing products or services become unexpectedly valuable to consumers possess entrepreneurial alertness. The temptation of creating wealth (mostly growth and profitability) and the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities stimulates entrepreneurial alertness. According to Kirzner (2009) this means alertness to already existing but as yet widely unnoticed changes. The insight resulting from entrepreneurial alertness informs the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities as well as stimulating development of an entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial leadership in a firm. In other words, entrepreneurs’ insights influence the search for marketplaces in which the insight can be applied through new products or new services (Kirzner, 2009). Within strategic entrepreneurship, Ireland et al. (2003:968) draw upon alertness and state the following:

The flash of superior insight resulting from entrepreneurial alertness informs the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities as well as stimulates development of an entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial leadership in a firm. In slightly different words, entrepreneurs’ insights influence the search for markets in which the insight can be applied through new goods or new services. [...] Those with keen entrepreneurial alertness demonstrate a strong entrepreneurial mindset.
Others as Kyrgidou and Petridou (2011:701) stress:

Competence exploration widens the range of activities a firm can undertake and is therefore likely to increase the firm’s opportunity alertness and entrepreneurial mindset.

In sum, there are scholars that implicitly and explicitly draw upon the Kirznerian function of entrepreneurship, mostly, however, in a context of being reactive as regards acting on changes (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland & Webb, 2007), but also by drawing upon the discovery aspect (see e.g. Agarwal et al., 2010; Mathews, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011) and alertness (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011).

The function of Knight
Knight is often seen as the third major entrepreneurship researcher. For him, the function of the entrepreneur is to be a carrier and decision-maker during genuine uncertainty. According to Knight (1921) genuine uncertainty cannot be calculated and should not be confused with risks. Furthermore, in a society where uncertainty exists, the function to manage and decide is important and is concentrated on a small group of people, who are the entrepreneurs. When it comes to strategic entrepreneurship, research uncertainty and risks are present in many of the papers. Folta (2007) is one of those who explicitly refers to Knight when presenting a comment paper in the *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*. The same goes for Schendel (2007) as moderator of the same journal. Miller (2007) also draws upon Knight when discussing risk and rationality in entrepreneurial processes. Others draw on Knight more implicitly (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; Ireland et al., 2009). For example Ireland and Webb (2007:54) stresses the following:

[…] although exploration contributes to strategic flexibility (a skill through which the firm is able to acquire and subsequently use information to appropriately respond to change), the outcomes of investments made in the firm’s exploratory capabilities are uncertain. Because some stakeholders (e.g., suppliers) often are uncertainty avoiders, exploratory actions may lack appeal, due to their experimental nature and the lack of certainty that positive outcomes will accrue from them. […] In exploration, firms seek to discover opportunities for which markets do not exist. The process inherently involves much uncertainty and risk regarding, for example, how markets will form and the nature of competitors’ actions.

In Knight’s (1921) definition of an entrepreneur, uncertainty is a basic element and starting point, whereas for Schumpeter this is innovation. Knight (1921) postulates that one receives a profit is for bearing the risk of
losing, which suggests that the entrepreneur is a resource owner. There are those such as, for example, Schumpeter (1934:75) who have criticised Knight for not distinguishing between an entrepreneur and a resource owner. Furthermore, anticipated change does not generally give rise to profit, and the receipt of profit is temporary, lasting only until the innovation or adaptation which gave rise to it has been generally imitated. Like Schumpeter, Knight held a dynamic residual theory of profit, but Schumpeter emphasised innovation and development rather than uncertainty and unpredictable change to be its drivers (cf. Schumpeter 1934:128-56, 172).

In sum, there are several scholars within strategic entrepreneurship that address aspects of risk and uncertainties brought on by changes. Some scholars explicitly draw upon Knight, while others more implicitly position their work within the function of Knight (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; Folta, 2007; Schendel, 2007; Miller; 2007; Ireland et al., 2009).

The function of Say
The fourth entrepreneurial function is presented by Say, who sees the entrepreneur as a coordinator. The main idea behind this is the need for somebody to coordinate, monitor and make decisions on what knowledge, and labour should be coordinated and how it should be used. Without these features, there would not be any business activity, and it is these tasks which the entrepreneur takes on, according to Say. His definition of an entrepreneur is (in Drucker, 1995:19):

The entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield.

Say (in Stevenson and Sahlman, 1987:14) broadens understanding of the entrepreneurship by including:

[...] the concept of bringing together the factors of production.

Say did not, like Knight, emphasise uncertainty in his definition, otherwise there are some similarities between them regarding the entrepreneur as a decision-maker (cf. Henrekson & Stenkula, 2007). I could, however, not find that any scholars within strategic entrepreneurship have positioned their work within this function of entrepreneurship, either implicitly or explicitly.
Strategic management

Historically, the domain of strategic management can be traced to the 1960s with concepts of strategic adaptation. According to Herrmann (2005), there was in the beginning a great deal of experimental work done by scholars and consulting firms, which led to the development of two main directions in strategic management.

Firstly, there is a direction where scholars are concerned with defining strategy. Important works of e.g. Chandler (1962), Andrews (1971), Ansoff (1965) and Rumelt (1974) have been developed within this area of research. Today, grounded in managerial practice, Hitt et al. (2001) express that strategic management has its core in wealth creation in modern industrial societies. Furthermore, the main interest among scholars is to explain differential firm performance. In this quest, Herrmann (2005) stresses that strategic management has developed theories and concepts that mainly examine the environment, and look at management in order to develop ideas and methodological advances that follow and try to predict management practice transformation. According to Hitt et al. (2001), environmental alignment is one of the intended outcomes of an effective strategy, and when a firm develops a match between its unique competitive advantage and the opportunities in its external environment, it is properly aligned with its environment.

Secondly, there is a direction where scholars are concerned with resource allocation. Accordingly to Herrmann (2005), the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) introduced the Growth/Share Matrix in the 1970s, an analytical tool for portfolio planning. From this work the allocation of resources became an important aspect to consider for managers in practice (Herrmann, 2005). In the mid-1980s, Wenerfelt (1984) suggested that the view of resources could bring another insight to firms than the traditional product perspective e.g. by identifying resources that lead to significant profit and/or growth. Wenerfelt is by many considered to be the founder of the Resource-Based View (RBV). In sum, RBV is a construction in strategic management that has emerged from two approaches: 1) resources and 2) performance (with focus on differences in performance). Within RBV, a strategy for larger firms means a balance between the exploitation of existing resources, the acquisition and development of new ones.

Strategic entrepreneurship scholars have a tendency, explicitly or implicitly, to draw upon aspects of the RBV. Thus, a majority of scholars choose to focus on recourses as the unit of analysis (see e.g. Hitt et al. 2001; Hitt et al., 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Monsen & Boss, 2009; Audretsch et al., 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Agarwal et
al., 2010; Mathews, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). Most of them, however, take quite a broad view of resources, which can be traced back to Barney (1991:101), who defined resources as:

[…] all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge etc. controlled by a firm.

It is possible to state that this view of resources is so dominant in strategic entrepreneurship that it is hard to find a paper that does not relate to resources in some way. I therefore think it is of importance to present an enhanced discussion of RBV, and how strategic entrepreneurship scholars draw upon this view.

The resource-based view
For the last decades, strategic management and the RBV is largely concerned with how firms generate and sustain competitive advantage; see for example Barney (1986; 1991; 2001) and Peteraf (1993). In short, using resources as a unit of analysis, they try to explain the extent to which a firm may be able to sustain a position of competitive advantage. The RBV is built on the idea that firms create sustainable competitive advantages (SCA) by developing and applying idiosyncratic firm’s resources. SCA is based on the ownership of firm-specific resources. Barney (1991) argues that resources that are simultaneously valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) are a source of competitive advantage. Resources become valuable because of social complexity, implying that resources that resist imitations, such as culture and reputation, are the result of complex interactions. Furthermore, not everybody can implement a strategy, though firms are limited by their resources. It is the strategic resources which, according to Barney (1991), are interesting and which distinguish the firm from its competitors. This means that it is the strategic resource that is the competitive advantage. Herrmann (2005) argues that, before the RBV, scholars struggled to determine the main assumptions necessary for resources to lead to SCA. Furthermore, the RBV is said to “open a new era of ferment”, and to become the new theory of strategic management. There are, however, to my knowledge, no strategic entrepreneurship scholars who clearly base their work on VRIN. There are, nevertheless, scholars (see e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007) who address the importance of firms gaining a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). There are also great many scholars that discuss resources and its importance for a firm in gaining a competitive advantageous position (see e.g. Hitt et al. 2001; Hitt et al., 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007;
Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative to look further into the basic assumptions of the RBV.

The RBV are mostly constructed in equilibrium terms, which means those advantages that last after all attempts at imitation have ceased. According to Foss (1998), this also implies that a SCA has no meaning outside equilibrium, and it limits the practical relevance of this view. This could be a reason why there still is so little empirical founded research in the development of RBV. The same problems can also be seen in strategic entrepreneurship (cf. Luke et al., 2011; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). The few surveys that have been carried out with an RBV approach have tried in different ways to show that entrepreneurship as a strategy is positively associated with the firms’ profitability. Some of these scholars have also found that entrepreneurship in established firms is related to SCA and above normal rent (e.g. Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Zahra & Covin, 1995; Elfinger, 2005).

According to Barney (1991), the RBV is based on the assumption that resources are heterogeneous across firms, and that this heterogeneity can be sustained over time. Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) stress that, similar to the RBV, heterogeneous resources are also a basic condition of entrepreneurship. Thus, the RBV is a theory to explain how some firms are able to earn above normal rent in equilibrium (e.g. Barney, 1986) and, as such, it is essentially a static view (Priem & Butler, 2001; Lockett et al., 2009). That the RBV is so static has notable potential limitations. For example, Priem and Butler (2001:34) stress the following:

 [...] the problems of static studies might be exacerbated when theorists extend the RBV to second-order issues and beyond, wherein the ability to learn to develop effective resources is in itself a resource, the ability to establish an environment that encourages such learning is a resource, and onward in an infinite regress.

Lockett et al. (2009:16) argue that:

 [...] for an approach that ultimately ascribes differences in firm performance to intrinsic differences in the firms themselves, the RBV is certainly prone to circular reasoning.

Furthermore, apart from criticism on the grounds of its vague and tautological character as well as its lack of empirical grounding, the RBV has not achieved a dominant-design status, or theoretical foundation (e.g. Priem & Butler, 2001; Herrmann, 2005).

When it comes to heterogeneity, it also means that all firms should have the same opportunities within an industry. Furthermore, Barney (1986)
stresses that the RBV focuses on factor market imperfections within an industry, which means that the completion is constrained. The aspect of heterogeneity is also questioned by scholars, and there are still many questions unanswered. For example, Lockett et al. (2009) argue that the RBV at its most basic offers interpretations of the existence of profits in equilibrium based on firm heterogeneity. Moreover, if that is all it offered, the RBV would be essentially trivial. Thus, it would amount to a statement that firms differ in performance because they differ in attributes, which Lockett et al. (2009) states is true but not very informative. Others such as Priem and Butler (2001) stress that, in general, value creation is a minor aspect within the original RBV, which is a central part in the entrepreneurship literature. Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) argue that from the beginning entrepreneurship was clearly a part of the RBV. But it has then more or less been neglected, which has contributed to the fact that the RBV has largely failed to integrate creativity and entrepreneurial action. This is, however, something that strategic entrepreneurship scholars explicitly and implicitly approach by combining aspects on strategic management (mostly through the RBV) with entrepreneurial aspects.

To meet the criticism of being static, there have been several attempts during the last decades to bring some dynamics into the research on resources. For example, a new conceptual perspective has been suggested on the significance of combining the RBV in the firm (the management of resources) with research on the cognitive management models (resource of management) (cf. Mahoney, 1995). According to Miller (2007), this is not as rational approach as previously. Thus, it recognises that manager expectations and objective facts are not determined, which makes it less static. Others, such as, Amit and Shoemaker (1993) take it a step further and add decision-making theory, complexity and uncertainty, and the existence of cognitive barriers to the RBV. A similar approach has been adopted when it comes to strategic entrepreneurship. For example, in the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal there was a special issue on cognitions were scholars as Baron (2007), Shepherd et al. (2007) and Busenitz (2007) have included aspects of cognitions in different ways. Moreover, Amit and Shoemaker (1993) argue that, for managers, the challenge is to identify, develop, protect, and deploy resources and capabilities in a way that provides the firm with a competitive advantage, and thereby creates wealth for the firm. It is in this context that strategic entrepreneurship is mostly set and resources are discussed (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al. 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; West, 2007; Marvel et al., 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). Others strategic entrepreneurship scholars who adopt a less static view of resources are those scholars that incorpo-
rate network theories (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001; Rosenkopf & Schilling, 2007).

Lastly, it may be worth mentioning that there is a growing field within strategic management, which is dynamic capabilities (cf. Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The literature on dynamic capabilities is viewed by many as a complement to or an extension of the RBV (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Lockett et al., 2009). However, according to Eisenhardt and Martin (2000), the RBV has not adequately explained how and why certain firms have a competitive advantage in situations of rapid and unpredictable change. Which dynamic capability is said to do. If we look at this context of rapid and unpredictable change, it would be possible to state that dynamic capabilities could be a useful concept among strategic entrepreneurship scholars. There are also some strategic entrepreneurship scholars who embrace this view. For example, I found a paper by Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) that takes a view of dynamic capabilities as a way to further develop a model of strategic entrepreneurship practice. Another paper by Luke et al. (2011) refers to dynamic capabilities as a way of managing resources to fit in with the external market. There are also scholars who do not clearly position themselves with the concept of strategic entrepreneurship, but discuss entrepreneurship and aspects of strategy, such as, for example, Zahra et al (2006). They stress that dynamic capabilities are an important and complex concept that occupies a central place in the entrepreneurship and competitive strategy literatures.

In sum, strategic entrepreneurship scholars are often concerned with firm performance (e.g. profit and growth), competitive advantages and resources. The majority of scholars draw upon aspects of the RBV, and it is even hard to find a paper that does not apply some aspects of resources (see e.g. Hitt et al. 2001, 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; Baron, 2007; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Smith & Cao, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011; Luke et al., 2011). Hence, a terminology of equilibrium and resource heterogeneity becomes important. In order to make the RBV less static, ideas about cognition comes to the fore (see e.g. Baron, 2007; Shepherd et al., 2007; Busenitz, 2007), network structures (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001; Rosenkopf & Schilling, 2007), and dynamic capabilities (see e.g. Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011).
Strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship

The second area to study further in this literature review is, as stated, strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship. For example, Ireland et al. (2009) discuss corporate entrepreneurship strategy, and in doing so they position their work as consistent with the strategic entrepreneurship concept. They argue that a corporate entrepreneurship strategy shows a firm’s strategic intent to apply leverage on opportunities in order to grow and seek for advantages. In another paper, Ireland and Webb (2009) argue that strategic entrepreneurship is an important path through which corporate entrepreneurship manifests itself. Furthermore, it captures a mode of organising in which decision-makers manage both uncertainty and resources as the foundation for being able to position their firms to adapt to changes. Similarly, Covin and Kuratko (2008) discuss strategic entrepreneurship within the realm of corporate entrepreneurship. However, they stress that all forms of strategic entrepreneurship have one thing in common, thus involving the presentation of organisationally consequential innovations that are adopted in the pursuit of competitive advantage. According to Kuratko and Audresch (2009), strategic entrepreneurship refers to a broader array of entrepreneurial phenomena, which may or may not result in new businesses being added to the corporation i.e. corporate venturing. Similarly, Guth and Ginsberg (1990) as well as Kuratko (2007) use corporate entrepreneurship as an umbrella term for entrepreneurship in established firms which contain two main areas; corporate venturing and strategic entrepreneurship, see Figure 5.

According to Kuratko (2007) corporate venturing has its main focus on diversification and the creation of new business areas that in most cases are external to the firm core businesses. Strategic entrepreneurship in turn focuses on internal development such as e.g. sustainable regeneration, renewal of the domain, organisation, strategy, and business model reconstruction. From reviewing the literature of these two areas – corporate venturing and strategic entrepreneurship – it is possible to state that most scholars tend to focus their research on corporate venturing (see e.g. Bur-

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8 It is important to note that Guth and Ginsberg (1990) in their paper address strategic entrepreneurship, in Figure 5, in terms of ‘strategic renewal’. Thus, they divide corporate entrepreneurship into two main areas, of ‘corporate venturing’ and ‘strategic renewal’. However, Kuratko (2007) argue that Guth and Ginsberg (1990) do incorporate more than renewal of strategies with their concept of ‘strategic renewal’. They rather address renewal of organisations, and thereby Kuratko (2007) include it as belonging to strategic entrepreneurship.

Similarly, Kenney and Mujtaba (2007) concluded that the literature in the area of corporate entrepreneurship tends to weigh the benefits and risks of new ventures. When it comes to strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship, there are far fewer scholars (see e.g. Covin & Kuratko, 2008; Ireland & Webb, 2009, Kuratko & Audresch, 2009; Ireland et al., 2009).

There are scholars who stress that there could be a problem in separating corporate venturing from strategic entrepreneurship by arguing that corporate venturing can be seen as a form of strategic entrepreneurship. For example, scholars such as Zahra (1995), Dess et al. (2003), Darroch et al. (2004), West (2007), Covin and Miles (2007), Yiu and Lau (2008) have focused on strategy and entrepreneurship, but from the perspective of corporate venturing. What becomes apparent here is that – whether or not corporate venturing is part of strategic entrepreneurship or not – depends on what view scholars take of strategy. Thus, corporate venturing could be described as a strategy, but more of a corporate strategy then an entrepreneurial strategy, what Covin and Miles (1999) refer to as a strategy with an uncertain outcome. But venturing could also be seen as a form of entrepreneurship, though with a focus on strategies for new business creation and not on the transformation of organisations through aspects of renewal i.e. strategic entrepreneurship.
Others such as Ireland et al. (2009) question the division of corporate entrepreneurship into corporate venturing and strategic entrepreneurship – thus it is not portrayed as a strategy but as a set of phenomena that exist separately from strategy. Along with structure, process and core values and beliefs, strategy is identified as an organisational level driver of corporate entrepreneurship. Therefore, Ireland et al. (2009) suggests an alternative representation, adopted in the Dess et al. (2003) model of how knowledge is created through four types of corporate entrepreneurship activity. These ideas, in turn, are based on Covin and Miles (1999) and addressed as: 1) sustained regeneration, 2) organisational rejuvenation, 3) strategic renewal, and 4) domain redefinition. Covin and Miles (1999), however, refer to these activities as innovative strategies, i.e. strategies with uncertain outcomes. They stress that, as the outcomes of entrepreneurial processes are uncertain, the forms cannot readily be enacted as a deliberate strategy with the expectation that particular outcomes will necessarily be realised. One can, however, choose to see Covin and Miles (1999) and Dess et al. (2003) as a further development of the area of strategic entrepreneurship that Kuratko (2007) has suggested is one of the two areas into which corporate entrepreneurship is divided. Ireland et al., (2009), however, write that most of the earlier research in modelling the area of strategic entrepreneurship has not yet seen it as a strategic construct. It might be important here that they draw upon ideas based on the Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), where strategic entrepreneurship is seen as a strategy for entrepreneurship with an organisational focus instead of an entrepreneurial strategy, where entrepreneurship e.g. is seen as a way of formulating new core strategies. As Ireland et al. (2009:25) stress:

Guth and Ginsberg (1990) explicitly depict strategy as a factor separate from EO [Entrepreneurial Orientation].

Corporate entrepreneurship
Under this heading I will take a closer look at how corporate entrepreneurship has emerged as a research field. This is important in order to better understand the underlying assumptions that strategic entrepreneurship scholars within corporate entrepreneurship draw upon in their work. But first let us start with an assessment of the terminology of corporate entrepreneurship and its history. Thus, it appears to be hard to define what corporate entrepreneurship is, and what should be incorporated within this concept (cf. Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Zahra, 1996; Birkinshaw, 2003; 9 It is worth noticing that these four types of corporate entrepreneurship activities are also represented in Figure 6 as strategic entrepreneurship.

9 It is worth noticing that these four types of corporate entrepreneurship activities are also represented in Figure 6 as strategic entrepreneurship.
Thornberry, 2003; McFadzean, O’Loughlin & Shaw, 2005; Kuratko, 2007; Wolcott & Lippitz, 2007; Ireland et al., 2009; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). Birkinshaw (2003) also stresses that the level of analysis that should be used in various types of studies of the phenomenon is unclear. This although Kuratko and Audretsch (2009) stress that there have been many attempts to define corporate entrepreneurship.

There are also related terms used to describe the phenomenon in established firms other than corporate entrepreneurship, e.g. corporate venturing and intrapreneurship (see e.g. Knight, 1987; Echols & Neck, 1998; McFadzen et al., 2005). The border between these notions is not easy or obvious (Veenker et al., 2008), but to simplify it, the main difference between them can be described as follows: In corporate entrepreneurship, the main focus is on top-management, competitiveness and the growth of the firm through entrepreneurship, mostly from a marketing perspective. Within intrapreneurship, the focus is more on the employees and internal processes that support the employees to become entrepreneurs or more entrepreneurial i.e. mostly from an organisational perspective. As already stressed, corporate venturing has its main focus on the creation of new businesses within or external to the firm.

Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) stress that, before theories were developed about corporate entrepreneurship, management and entrepreneurship more or less developed in two directions. Thus, management and entrepreneurship seemed to be a contradiction in terms for many scholars. Furthermore, when exploring the literature on entrepreneurship, to which corporate entrepreneurship to some extent is related, one finds that entrepreneurship is described as something which is radically different from corporate management. Some scholars, as e.g. Thornberry (2003), even find it to be the opposite of corporate management. Thus, the very concept of corporate entrepreneurship sounds to many entrepreneurship scholars’ to be something of an oxymoron (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990). Burgelman stresses that large firms are mostly administered and bureaucratic (1983:1362), and that:

[...] entrepreneurial and administrated economic activities have long been considered essentially opposite forms with little if any connection

I will in the discussion that follows address how scholars during the 1980s, 1990s and the 2000s have approached the research area.

It is possible to state that the term corporate entrepreneurship and the interest in studying entrepreneurship in established firms began in the 1970s. Two scholars in particular are frequently drawn upon by others, that is: 1) Westfall from 1969 with Stimulating Corporate Entrepreneur-
ship in U. S. Industry. Westfall stressed that entrepreneurship should be seen as a business function in existing corporations and be applied in management strategies. 2) Schendel and Hofer from 1979 with their book: strategic Management– A New View of Business Policy and Planning. They suggested some new ways of doing business e.g. through entrepreneurship and venturing. In Sweden Norman (1975/1999) became the key advocate of entrepreneurship in established firms in the mid-1970s when he released a book called Creative Management. He was dealing with entrepreneurship and business management in a world characterised by increasing uncertainty, and where the need for renewal in established large firms was increasing. Norman, however, does not use the term corporate entrepreneurship, but addresses the same phenomenon of entrepreneurship in established firms as the scholars from U.S.A. who do use the term. Thus, during this time frame the foremost scholars are from U.S.A. and are within the field of strategy that is approaching entrepreneurship in established firms. The prevalent view at this time is that entrepreneurship is part of strategy (cf. Westfall, 1969; Schendel & Hofer, 1979). This view is still dominant among the scholars who position strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2009). However, most scholars are not that clear whether it is about a strategy for entrepreneurship (cf. Ireland et al., 2009). Or whether it is about an entrepreneurial strategy (cf. Morris et al., 2008; Ireland & Webb, 2009).

During the 1980s, corporate entrepreneurship as a research field started to grow. Burgelman (1983; 1984; 1985) is one of the most quoted scholars and a strong force in driving the conceptual development of corporate entrepreneurship forward. Burgelman (1983) defined corporate entrepreneurship as a process:

\[\text{[...]}\text{ whereby firms engage in diversification through internal development. Furthermore, such diversification requires new resource combinations to extend the firm’s activities in areas unrelated, or marginally related, to its current domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set.}\]

In another paper, Burgelman (1984) connected corporate entrepreneurship with strategy and strategic behaviour in large, established firms, which identifies entrepreneurial activity as a natural and integral part of the strategic process. Burgelman (1985) focused mostly on strategies for internal venturing. Worth noticing is that Burgelman (1984; 1985), like previous scholars from the 1970s, puts entrepreneurship as a part of strategy. Another much quoted scholar is Miller (1983) who argues that, as firms grow larger, the complexity increases. To manage this complexity, he suggests that entrepreneurship is important for firms so that they can engage in
organisational renewal, innovation, risk-taking and the search for new business opportunities, as such, presenting several concepts that are frequently drawn upon by scholars that position strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship (see e.g. Kuratko, 2007; Morris et al, 2008; Ireland & Webb, 2009). Miller (1983:770-771) stresses the following:

[...] what is most important is not who is the critical actor, but the process of entrepreneurship itself and the organizational factors which foster and impede it. [...] An entrepreneurial firm is one that engages in product-market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with “proactive” innovations, beating competitors to the punch. A non-entrepreneurial firm is one that innovates very little, is highly risk averse, and imitates the moves of competitors instead of leading the way.

With Miller, another kind of discussion emerged regarding the entrepreneurial aspect i.e. entrepreneurship is discussed in other terms than just being part of strategy. It is rather discussed as a process and put into the context of the entrepreneurial firm. In the late 1980s, Knight (1987:284) also made an important empirical contribution where he tried to show that a shift in paradigm had been made. He stresses the following:

[...] where once large corporations were known for their avoidance of entrepreneurs, and their efforts to either cure them of it or force them out of the firm, today we see a movement by these same corporations to hire and encouraging entrepreneurs within their ranks. They are trying to do this by recruiting creative people, encouraging them to be innovative within the corporation and creating an atmosphere where these individuals can be as entrepreneurial as possible.

From the quotation it is possible to say that Knight took on a Schumpeterian view of entrepreneurship in established firms as the individual entrepreneur who is creative and an innovator, a view also drawn upon by some of the strategic entrepreneurship scholars (see e.g. Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). To view the entrepreneur as an individual, can be seen as competing with the idea about entrepreneurship as a process of a whole firm’s achievements, i.e. the entrepreneurial firm, or as a part of strategy.

When it comes to the 1990s, corporate entrepreneurship started to be recognised as a legitimate path to high levels of organisational performance e.g. for growth, profitability, innovation, competitive advantages and renewal (cf. Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990; Zahra, 1995; Zahra, 1996; Kuratko, 2007). For example, Zahra and Covin (1995) found a supporting linkage between corporate entrepreneurial behaviour and subsequent financial performance. During this timeframe some research was also conducted into
small- and medium sized firms (cf. Naman & Slevin, 1993), whereas previous research had only included larger firms. Like Miller (1983), Guth and Ginsberg (1990), Naman and Slevin (1993), and Lumpkin and Dess (1996) all noted that corporate entrepreneurship can be used to improve a competitive position and transform corporations, their markets, and industries as opportunities for value-creating innovation are developed and exploited. Covin and Miles (1999) concur in these thoughts, but they also try to put forth innovation as a point of intersection between entrepreneurship and strategy. Similarly, Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) argue that corporate entrepreneurship has a background in management that accepts behaviour that challenges bureaucracy and supports innovation.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, scholars start to emphasise innovation even more. For example, Heidemann Lassen et al. (2006) point out the connection between corporate entrepreneurship and innovation. They are, nevertheless, critical of the idea that scholars have not used already established theories in the area of innovation. Thus, even if innovation is often connected to entrepreneurship, it is also a separate research area with its own domain. Like Covin and Miles (1999), Heidemann Lassen et al. stress (2006:361):

> The common denominator amongst all entrepreneurial firms is in this paper considered to be that they innovate. As such, innovation can be perceived to be a focal point of corporate entrepreneurship.

During this timeframe it is also suggested that corporate entrepreneurship would benefit from incorporating different frames of reference and perspectives (cf. Kuratko, 2007). For example, Yiu and Lau (2008) use a network-based perspective in conjunction with corporate entrepreneurship. It is also becoming a practice to concentrate on more specific aspects of corporate entrepreneurship e.g. competence, knowledge, learning and cognition (e.g. Adenfelt & Lagerström, 2006; Hayton & Kelly, 2006; West 2007). Otherwise many scholars argue the importance of incorporating middle management behaviour (cf. Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Kuratko, 2005; Adenfelt & Lagerström, 2006; Hayton & Kelly, 2006). As in the 1980s, there are also some scholars who draw on the entrepreneur as an individual or as a set of individuals i.e. entrepreneurial teams (e.g. Mosakowski, 1998; West, 2007; Ireland et al., 2009).
Innovation

Innovation emerges in the historical description of corporate entrepreneurship to have grown in importance. When it comes to strategic entrepreneurship scholars that position within corporate entrepreneurship, there is also a tendency to view innovation as an important, mostly though as an aspect of renewing firms in different ways. Thus, in order for firms to explore new opportunities and gain a competitively advantageous position, innovation becomes a key aspect within strategic entrepreneurship (the word innovation is derived from the Latin *innovare*, which means renewal\(^\text{10}\)). For example, Kuratko and Audretsch (2009) write that innovations can happen anywhere and everywhere in the firm and by an opportunity-driven mind-set management seeks to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage for the firm. Morris et al. (2008), as well as Kuratko and Audretsch (2009:8), discuss two possible reference points involving innovation that can be considered when a firm exhibits strategic entrepreneurship:

1. how much the firm is transforming itself relative to where it was before (e.g. transforming its products, markets, internal processes, etc.), and
2. how much the firm is transforming itself relative to industry conventions or standards (again in terms of product offerings, market definitions, internal processes, etc).

In this context it is possible to envision at least five forms of strategic entrepreneurship (Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko and Audretsch, 2009), which I will further address in the upcoming heading.

Five forms of strategic entrepreneurship

The five forms of strategic entrepreneurship are: sustained regeneration, organisational rejuvenation, domain redefinition, strategic renewal, and business model reconstruction. These five forms are not described as mutually exclusive and two or more of the different forms can appear simultaneously, and usually do exist concurrently. The main reason given by scholars for presenting the five forms separately in previous research is for theoretical conceptualisation in order to clarify the fundamentals of each form (cf. Covin & Miles, 1999; Morris et al., 2008). I will under this head-

\(^{10}\) The Oxford English Dictionary includes the following possible interpretations of the words *innovate* and *innovation*: Innovate (verb)-to change (a thing) into something new; to alter; to renew. Innovation (noun)-the action of innovating; the introduction of novelties; the alteration of what is established by the introduction of new elements or forms.
ing give an overview of the five forms of strategic entrepreneurship. But first I think it is important once again to stress that there are different views regarding whether these five forms of strategic entrepreneurship are strategies or not. Covin and Miles (1999) are the most quoted scholars regarding these forms. They stress that it is strategies, but entrepreneurial strategies with uncertain outcomes, which are the main difference from more traditional views of strategy.

*Sustained regeneration* – is concerned with firms looking for a steady stream of new products to introduce onto the market, and the entry of existing products onto new markets (cf. Covin & Miles, 1999; Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). Morris et al. (2008) argue that sustained regeneration is most commonly employed as a basis for attaining or sustaining competitive advantage under conditions of short product-life cycles, changing technological standards, or segmenting product categories and market arenas. Similar, Kuratko and Audretsch (2009) have noticed that sustained generation is the most recognised and common form of strategic entrepreneurship.

*Domain redefinition* – is built on the idea of launching radical new products with the aim of gaining first-mover advantages or for the idea to be first onto a new market with a current product (Covin & Miles, 1999; Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). For example, Covin and Miles (1999) state that firms within domain redefinition proactively seek to create new product markets that competitors have not discovered, or undersupplied markets. Furthermore, Dess et al. (2003) argue that the focus is on exploration and what is possible rather than what is currently available, and on gaining first-mover benefits. According to Lumpkin and Dess (1996), to be the first with an offer in a new product category means that a firm redefines its domain in a proactive manner.

*Organisational rejuvenation* – is concerned with how firms improve their competitive position by altering internal processes, structures and/or capabilities (cf. Covin & Miles, 1999; Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). Morris et al. (2008) argue that organisational renewal in terms of changing existing activities in the value chain, mostly supporting activities such as process and administrative innovations rather than product innovation. Similar, Dess et al. (2003) argue that organisational innovation shows that firms can become more entrepreneurial through processes and structures as well as introducing new products and/or entering new markets with existing products.
Strategic renewal\textsuperscript{11} – focuses upon firms that fundamentally renew existing strategies to successfully ally with the external market and to better compete with rivals (cf. Covin & Miles, 1999; Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). According to Covin and Miles (1999), and Morris et al. (2008), strategic renewal describes new business strategies that significantly differ from past practices i.e. radically change the basis on which they compete. Furthermore, Covin and Miles (1999) note that strategic renewal can be observed in a variety of business scenarios.

Business model reconstruction – is built on the idea that firms design or redesign their core business model(s) in order to improve operational efficiencies or differentiate themselves from industry competitors in ways valued by the market (cf. Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). According to Kuratko and Audretsch (2009), common activities within business model reconstruction include outsourcing (i.e. relying on external suppliers for activities previously performed internally within the firm), and to a lesser extent, vertical integration (i.e., bringing elements of the supplier or distributor functions within the ownership or control of the firm).

The five forms of strategic entrepreneurship can also be interpreted as having a foundation in Schumpeter’s different ways of “carrying out new recourse combinations”. For Schumpeter (1934) the ability to identify new opportunities in the market is a central entrepreneurial activity which creates disequilibrium in the economy i.e. creative destruction. This suggests that it is more about radical innovations, which all of the five forms of strategic entrepreneurship more or less can be. However, it can also be more of an incremental innovation (Kuratko & Audresch, 2009). Thus the five forms also give room for imitations, and innovations through e.g. price reduction, which are in line with ideas based on Kirzner (1973), the second major economist in the field of entrepreneurship research.

\textsuperscript{11} There are many different uses of the term ‘strategic renewal’ and therefore it was important for Covin and Miles (1999) to clarify their intentions with the term, and they stress it simply means the implementation of a fundamentally ‘new’ business strategy.
Strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour

The third and final area to study further in this literature review is, as stated, strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this is a research area that addresses strategic entrepreneurship as the integration of entrepreneurship and strategic management through opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviour. For example, Hitt et al. (2001:481) are considered as pioneers regarding this “new” conceptual development of strategic entrepreneurship, and they state the following:

In short, strategic entrepreneurship is the integration of entrepreneurial (i.e., opportunity seeking behavior) and strategic (i.e., advantage seeking) perspectives in developing and taking actions designed to create wealth. There are several domains in which the integration between entrepreneurship and strategic management occurs naturally.

From the quotation one can tell that Hitt et al. (2001) build the concept of strategic entrepreneurship upon two distinct entrepreneurial and strategic perspectives. That is, opportunity-seeking behaviour as the entrepreneurial aspect, and advantage-seeking behaviour as the strategic perspective. These scholars also take their starting point in theories from entrepreneurship and strategic management, but restrict the strategic entrepreneurship concept to those two main behaviours.

The basic precepts begin with the firm as the basic unit of analysis, and include a need for simultaneous opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviours in order for firms to maximise wealth (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003). Scholars with this area like to draw upon the notion that opportunity is at the heart of entrepreneurship (cf. Ireland et al., 2003). In line with this, exploration and exploitation of opportunities become a key area to research into. Thus, for these researchers, opportunity-seeking behaviour is associated with exploration, and advantage-seeking behaviour is associated with exploitation (see e.g. Hitt et al. 2001, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011; Luke et al., 2011). Usually scholars start by positioning their work within March’s (1991) theories of exploration and exploitation. In short, exploration represents actions and attitudes pertaining to discovery and experimentation, which theoretically might enhance a firm’s efforts to identify entrepreneurial opportunities and create innovation (March, 1991; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). Exploitation mostly repre-
sents acts of refinement and gradual improvement, which theoretically might enhance a firm’s efforts to manage resources efficiently and strategically and enhance its efforts to execute and optimise current advantages (March 1991; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Scholars as Schindehutte and Morris (2009) are, however, sceptical of restricting entrepreneurship and strategy to only including opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. Furthermore, they stress that it is important to acknowledge that the entrepreneurship aspects in opportunity exploration differ from the entrepreneurship in opportunity exploitation. I will in the following part of this chapter try to show how different scholars in the field address opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour.

Exploration and exploitation of opportunities

When it comes to research in general on exploration and exploitation of opportunities, there has for a couple of decades been development in two quite different views: one that stresses that opportunities are discovered and the other that stresses that opportunities are created (see e.g. Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Discovery originates from theories about equilibrium and market imperfections, or as Companys and McMullen (2007) describe it from the economic school of thought, or as Chabaud and Ngijol (2005) describe it, as the classical approach. Creation theories of opportunities in turn can be seen as a more recent contribution to the field, and are built on the cultural cognitive school of thought (cf. Companys & McMullen, 2007), or as Chabaud and Ngijol (2005) call it, the empirical approach. I will under the next two headings discuss these two different views in terms of the economic school of thought and the cognitive school of thought.

The economic school of thought

The economic school of thought includes theories about opportunity recognition and/or discovery, more precisely the Austrian economics of, for example, Casson (1982), Kirzner (1973) and Schumpeter, (1934). Changing demographics, social change, the emergence of new market segments and changes in governmental regulations may represent conditions for entrepreneurial opportunities that can disrupt the competitive equilibrium that exists in a market or industry (cf. Alvarez & Barney, 2007).

There are plenty of scholars within strategic entrepreneurship who draw upon opportunity recognition in their work (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Morris et al. 2008; Kuratko, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010). According to Sarasvathy and Venkataraman (2002), opportunity recognition is based on an allocative view that concerns itself with the optimal utilisation of scarce resources, and an opportunity is any possibility of putting resources
to better use. Furthermore, at equilibrium, there are no opportunities, because resources have been optimally allocated. Sarasvathy and Venkataraman (2002) stress that profits can arise in two ways: Firstly, to the extent that a perfectly competitive market is not in equilibrium; thus opportunities for short term profits are available, but they quickly disappear when new firms enter the market attracted by the profits. Secondly, all information is seen as available in the system, but is randomly distributed, and therefore acquiring information involves a costly search process. Then the opportunity for profit is simply the difference between the benefit of the information and its cost.

There are also scholars within strategic entrepreneurship who explicitly position their work within opportunity discovery (see e.g. Mathews, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). Nevertheless, there are even more scholars who do this implicitly. Thus, as I have stressed, there is a tendency within this area of strategic entrepreneurship to position the exploration part of opportunities in terms of opportunity-seeking behaviour (see e.g. Hitt et al, 2001, Hitt et al. 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). According to Alvarez and Barney (2007), the opportunity-seeking behaviour is closely related to discovery when it comes to researching opportunities. Thus the seeking-behaviour implies a view of that there is something waiting to be discovered (Alvarez & Barney, 2007).

Within opportunity discovery, there are an assumption that competitive imperfections arise exogenously, from changes in technology, consumer preferences, or some other attributes of the context within which an industry or market exists (Kirzner, 1973). According to Kirzner (1973), the actions of the entrepreneur create a movement towards economic equilibrium by pursuing existing opportunities. Furthermore, markets vary considerably with regards to knowledge i.e. the imperfect distribution of information. The entrepreneur takes advantage of the imperfect distribution of information, and tries to profit from the superior information and knowledge they possess. This suggests that opportunities are not equally recognisable by everyone (cf. Kirzner, 1973; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2002). If all buyers and sellers were to possess identical opinions and expectations, the market would reach equilibrium, but such a scenario is unlikely, according to Smith and Gregorio (2002). Lastly, it is possible to state that there are those scholars within strategic entrepreneurship who draw on both opportunity recognition and discovery in the same paper (see e.g. Holcomb et al., 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010).
The cultural cognitive school of thought consists of several competing views. Thus, scholars have addressed it quite differently (see e.g. Gartner, 1985; Alvarez & Barney, 2005; 2007; Sarasvathy, 2001; Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2002). Nevertheless, according to Companys and McMullen (2007), the cultural cognitive school tends to posit that entrepreneurial opportunities are subjective phenomena, not objective as in the economic school of thought. Opportunities are subjective because they are contingent on the degree of ambiguity in the environment, and on the ability of social actors to develop the mental models needed to interpret and define them as opportunities (Chabaud & Ngijol, 2005; Companys & McMullen, 2007; Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Opportunities created by the actions, reactions and enactment of entrepreneurs explore ways to produce new products or services (Gartner, 1985; Sarasvathy, 2001; Alvarez and Barney, 2007). Alvarez and Barney (2007:15) stress the following:

The term ‘search’ has little or no meaning in creation theory. ‘Search’ implies entrepreneurs attempting to discover opportunities – like mountains – that already exist. In creation theory, entrepreneurs do not search – for there are no mountains to find – they act, and observe how consumers and markets respond to their actions.

Sarasvathy and Venkataraman (2002) describe it as if neither supply nor demand exists in an obvious manner; one or both have to be created, and several economic inventions in marketing, financing etc. have to be made, in order for the opportunity to come into existence.

Most scholars that adopt a creation view also seem to agree that there is a need for more empirical questioning. For example in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly within Babson College, there were many critical works focusing on opportunity recognition (Companys & McMullen, 2007). Thus, from these works the diversity of empirical behaviour in opportunity recognition was highlighted. In 1990s, Sarasvathy (2001) also highlighted the importance of empirical questioning with her effectual theory. A key principle of effectuation is that an entrepreneur does not begin with a precise venture in mind, but with a set of means that can be used to address a possibly good business opportunity or an ambition (Bjerke & Karlsson, 2010). Both scholars within Babson College and the ideas of effectual theory by Sarasvathy (2001) show a similar interest in methods of the empirical character and a focus on a phase of creation, which until then had been neglected (Companys & McMullen, 2007).

Alvarez and Barney (2007) argue that to search for opportunities has nothing to do with creation. The search aspect is, however as stated, very
prominent in strategic entrepreneurship, at least among those clearly positioned within the new developed concept discussed in this part of the chapter (see e.g. Hitt et al, 2001; Hitt et al, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). There are, nevertheless, scholars within corporate entrepreneurship who draw on the cognitive school of thoughts (see e.g. West, 2007; Marvel et al., 2007). There are also strategic entrepreneurship scholars who position their work within entrepreneurship and strategic management that draws upon this school of thought (see e.g. Baron, 2007; Shepherd et al., 2007; Busenitz, 2007). Within the area of opportunity and advantage-seeking behaviour, I could only find one paper by Ireland et al. (2009). There was also an issue in the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal on the behavioural characteristics of entrepreneurial activity in 2007 that included papers by Baron (2007), Shepherd et al. (2007) and Busenitz (2007) that adopted a cognitive view. When it comes to the effectual theory, I could only find the work of Venkataraman and Sarasvathy (2001) in a book chapter about strategy and entrepreneurship. However, they adopt a view that is similar to what I have presented in this chapter as strategic entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship and strategic management.

A balancing act
A recurring idea within strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour is the ability or practice among firms to balance between opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. This reasoning is most prominent in, for example, the work of Ireland and Webb (2007) who define strategic entrepreneurship as a value-creating intersection between strategy and entrepreneurship. See Figure 6. In order to understand strategic entrepreneurship as a balancing act, Ireland and Webb (2007) stress the importance of defining the terms of strategy and entrepreneurship. In line with the thoughts of Hofer and Schendel (1978), they argue that strategy is about a firm’s long-term development including, for example, decisions regarding scope, how resources are to be acquired and managed and intended sources of competitive advantage. Entrepreneurship is, rather, concerned with actions taken to create newness, for example by the creation of new organisational units or organisations, or the renewal of existing ones. Strategic entrepreneurship, according to Ireland and Webb (2007), is a result of combining attributes of strategy and entrepreneurship. Thus, the concept of strategic entrepreneurship combines exploration-oriented attributes (opportunity-seeking behaviour) with exploitation-oriented attributes (advantage-seeking behaviour) to develop consistent streams of innovation to remain competitive.
In sum, Ireland and Webb (2007) stress that it is about a firm’s actions intended to exploit the innovations that results from its efforts to continuously explore for innovation-based opportunities (i.e., new organisational forms, new products, new processes, etc.). To draw upon innovation-based opportunities, to explore and exploit, is in line with the thoughts of strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship. Hence the discussion about the five forms of strategic entrepreneurship discussed earlier in this chapter. Under the upcoming three headings the content of strategic entrepreneurship in Figure 6 are explored, which are the following: 1) balancing exploration and exploitation, 2) balancing resources between exploration and exploitation, and 3) continuous streams of innovation.

**Balancing exploration and exploitation**
In order for firms to engage in opportunity-seeking behaviour (exploration) as well as advantage-seeking behaviour (exploitation), there are some organisational aspects that scholars have identified to be of importance in
strategic entrepreneurship e.g. structure, culture and leadership (cf. Ireland et al. 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Morris et al., 2008). It emerges that the structural and cultural mechanisms required to support opportunity-seeking behaviour differ from those needed to support advantage-seeking behaviour (cf. Ireland et al. 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Morris et al., 2008).

When it comes to structure, Morris et al. (2008) stress that to support opportunity-seeking, firms need an organisational structure characterised by decentralised authority, semi-standardised procedures, and semi-formalised processes. Ireland and Webb (2007) explain that decentralisation of authority enhances the potential effectiveness of a firm’s opportunity-seeking behaviour in that it makes it possible for the firm to examine a relatively large number of potentially attractive market-related opportunities. On the other hand, to semi-standardise and semi-formalise some of the decision-rules used for guiding opportunity-seeking creates routines of knowledge search that have the potential to reduce the amount of financial and human capital that is inappropriately used or wasted (Ireland & Webb, 2007). However, too much standardisation or formalisation has the ability to stifle creativity among employees.

Ireland et al. (2003) argue that, if a firm is committed to opportunity-seeking behaviour, an effective entrepreneurial culture is one in which new ideas and creativity are expected. Moreover, risk taking is encouraged, failure is tolerated, learning is promoted, product, process and administrative innovations are championed, and continuous change is viewed as a conveyor of opportunities. Furthermore, they state that an entrepreneurial culture develops in an organisation where the leaders employ an entrepreneurial mind-set. According to Covin and Slevin (2002), people with an entrepreneurial mind-set search for entrepreneurial opportunities existing in uncertain business environments, and then determine the capabilities needed in order to successfully exploit those. In summary, the main idea is that an entrepreneurial mind-set can be seen as a growth-oriented perspective through which individuals promote flexibility, creativity, continuous innovation and renewal in firms (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Morris et al., 2008; Ireland et al. 2009).

Ireland and Webb (2007) argue that research shows that employees and other stakeholders prefer leaders who take a consistent path, but at the same time entrepreneurship is based on change and innovation. Similarly, Morris et al., (2008) stress that opportunity-seeking behaviour may lack appeal to several stakeholders, due to their experimental nature and the lack of certainty that positive outcomes will accumulate from them. From a leadership perspective, it may also be difficult to manage. Thus as Ireland
et al. (2003) point out, opportunity-seeking behaviour typically calls for employees to use new routines to perform their work instead of continuing to use the old patterns of organisational behaviour to which they are accustomed, and which they are therefore probably comfortable with. Moreover, this creates a situation in most firms where advantage-seeking behaviour is preferred at the expense of opportunity-seeking behaviour, which takes place by exercising non-custom routines.

Balancing resources between exploration and exploitation

The prevalent view within this area of research is that a strategy for established firms means a balance between the advantage-seeking behaviour of existing resources and acquiring and developing new ones. Audretsch et al. (2009) argue that the entrepreneurial leader’s ability to manage is of crucial importance in strategic entrepreneurship i.e. to structure, bundle, and leverage the firm’s resource portfolio. Ireland et al. (2003) stress, that in addition to fostering a collective entrepreneurial mind-set and culture, the entrepreneurial leader’s function of managing organisational resources provides the foundation for the firm’s opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. Contained in this conception is the premise of behaviours that constitute strategic entrepreneurship and cross at least three levels of analysis: 1) the leadership, capabilities, and human capital of individuals, 2) the operational structure, collective mind-set, and culture within firms, and 3) the availability of advantage-granting resources and new market opportunities from the firm’s external environment (Audretsch et al., 2009).

Scholars have a tendency to draw upon Barney (1991) and the resource-based view (RBV)(e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007). For Barney it is the strategic resources that are interesting and distinguish the firm from its competitors. This means, as previously discussed, that it is the strategic resource that is the competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Ireland et al. (2003) stress that there are three main critical resources for engaging in strategic entrepreneurship: 1) financial capital (a tangible asset), 2) human capital, and 3) social capital (intangible assets). According to Covin and Slevin (2002), human capital is the knowledge and skills of the firm’s entire workforce. With regard to intangible resources, Valle and Castillio (2008) argue that human capital can be considered as one element that explains wealth creation in firms. Ireland et al. (2003) also include social capital, and stress that human and social capital combined are the basis for obtaining and developing other important resources necessary for exploiting opportunities. They define social capital as the set of relationships between individuals (internal social capital), and between individuals and organisations (external social capital) that facilitate behaviour. According to Morris
et al. (2008), building social capital can be accomplished in a number of ways, including sharing information, creating opportunities for people to demonstrate their skills and competence, and building and using influence networks.

Continuous streams of innovation
When describing strategic entrepreneurship as a balancing act of opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour, scholars tend to draw upon innovation. Ireland and Webb (2007:50) state the following:

[...] strategic entrepreneurship (SE) is a term used to capture firms’ efforts to simultaneously exploit today’s competitive advantages while exploring for the innovations that will be the foundation for tomorrow’s competitive advantages.

Innovation is presented as the point-of-intersection between strategy and entrepreneurship (e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007; Morris et al., 2008). Thus, as Covin and Miles (1999) argue, strategic entrepreneurship initiatives represent the means through which innovation is capitalised upon. According to Kuratko (2009), innovations can happen anywhere and everywhere in a firm, and by an opportunity-driven mind-set management seeks to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage for the firm. Ireland and Webb (2007) also implicitly draw upon the five forms of entrepreneurship, earlier discussed, and parts of the Schumpeterian view by addressing innovation through new organisational forms, new products, new processes etc.

Strategic entrepreneurship scholars tend to discuss innovation in terms of an incremental discontinuous continuum about newness (incremental innovation) and novelty (discontinuous innovation) (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Firms pursuing discontinuous innovation (or as some scholars call it disruptive innovation) create new competitive space, produce entirely new forms of customer value, and reshape or destroy existing industries. Discontinuous innovation is closely connected to the Schumpeterian view and being proactive. Continuous innovation (or as some prefer sustaining innovation) is, according to Ireland et al. (2003), an innovation that helps firms to earn higher margins by selling better products to their best customers; therefore, it comprises both simple, incremental engineering improvements as well as break-through leaps up the trajectory of performance improvement. Furthermore, this kind of innovation is often oriented to developing new processes rather than new products or services, and is important to help the firm derive maximum value from its current capabilities. However, as Ireland et al. (2003) argue at some point, sustaining innovations result in incremental improvements to products or services that
Ireland et al. (2003) argue that too much emphasis on sustaining innovations (which is advantage-seeking oriented behaviour) prevents the firm from recognising and exploiting new entrepreneurial opportunities. On the other hand, too much emphasis on disruptive innovation (which is opportunity-seeking oriented behaviour) makes it difficult to sustain the competitive advantages they produce and fully appropriate the value from those innovations. The main idea is that effective use of strategic entrepreneurship leads to a comprehensive and integrated commitment to both sustaining and disruptive innovations as drivers of wealth creation (Ireland et al., 2003).

**Models of strategic entrepreneurship practice**

Among the newer contributions to strategic entrepreneurship there is an enhanced interest in studying strategic entrepreneurship as a practice of balancing between opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour (cf. Ireland & Webb, 2007; Ireland & Audretsch, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011), which represents a chief management concern (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) argue that successfully achieving this balance in practice has been labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. So far there are mainly two models of strategic entrepreneurship practice that are explicitly discussed within this new concept of strategic entrepreneurship. The first one is suggested by Ireland et al. (2003), and the second one is a development of the first by Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010).

**Strategic entrepreneurship practice (Ireland et al., 2003)**

Ireland et al. (2003) describe strategic entrepreneurship practice as a balancing act between opportunity-seeking (entrepreneurial) and advantage-seeking (strategic) behaviour. In this way they depict strategic entrepreneurship as a four-component model by which a firm alternates between episodes of entrepreneurial and strategic behaviour in to a process of strategic entrepreneurship practice. Its four components are labelled as: (1) an entrepreneurial mind-set for identifying opportunities, (2) managing entrepreneurial culture and leadership, (3) managing resources strategically, and (4) applying creativity and developing innovation. The successful completion of these components in turn should create value and wealth in ways far superior to a firm that is competent at entrepreneurship or strategy alone. Ireland et al. (2003) draw upon several theoretical bases; the RBV of the firm, human capital, social capital, organisational learning, and crea-
tive cognition are integrated in their model. They stress that this integration is important because it addresses how combining and synthesising opportunity-seeking behaviour and advantage-seeking behaviour leads to wealth creation. In the sections that follow I will summarise the content of the four components suggested by Ireland et al. (2003).

The first component in the model is employment of an entrepreneurial mind-set, entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial leadership in order to identify opportunities. Ireland et al. (2003:968) define an entrepreneurial mind-set as:

[…] a growth-oriented perspective through which individuals promote flexibility, creativity, continuous innovation, and renewal.

According to Ireland et al. (2003), an entrepreneurial mind-set recognises entrepreneurial opportunities, has an entrepreneurial alertness, real option logic (i.e. allocation of resources to the options of opportunities) and an entrepreneurial framework.

The second component is about entrepreneurial leadership. Ireland et al. (2003) stress that this component involves the ability to influence others to manage resources strategically in order to emphasise both opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviours. Moreover, leaders are responsible for developing and nurturing an entrepreneurial culture, a culture through which strategic entrepreneurship can be used successfully.

The third component is concerned with advantage-seeking behaviour such as structuring the resource portfolio, bundling resources in the portfolio into capabilities and leveraging the multiple capabilities needed to recognise opportunities and develop the competitive advantages to successfully exploit them. Ireland et al. (2003) argue that research has shown that resources are the basis of firms’ differential performances in terms of wealth creation. Furthermore, they stress that resources (financial, human and social) are managed strategically when their deployment facilitates the simultaneous and integrated use of opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviours.

The last and fourth component of the model is about applying creativity and developing innovations, thus drawing on Schumpeter (1934) and the view of new resource combinations and the entrepreneur as the creator of change. Ireland et al. (2003) suggests that these novel combinations of existing resources may result in new goods or services, new processes to be used to create or manufacture goods or service, new means of distribution, new supplies of raw materials or immediate goods or the creation of a new organisation. Innovations resulting from new combinations of production factors are seen as critical to firms’ wealth-creating efforts. In so doing,
they draw upon innovation as disrupted or sustained, and there needs to be a balance between those types of innovations.

Strategic entrepreneurship practice (Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010)
The model suggested by Ireland and Webb (2003) is questioned by Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010). They state that the model suffers from several limitations that compromise our understanding of how strategic entrepreneurship might be made to work effectively in practice. Thus, they state that even though strategic entrepreneurship is defined as the simultaneous pursuit of opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour, the model is linearly punctuated between episodes of entrepreneurial and strategic action and lacks a defined feedback loop between the two. Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) try to address this by suggesting a new model. In this model, firms have to iterate between episodes of opportunity-seeking, managing resources strategically – by bundling, re-bundling, acquiring and divesting resources – and opportunity exploitation through creating and deploying innovation. Notably, they retain the main structure of components in Ireland et al. (2003). However, their model also builds on the eight core components of strategic entrepreneurship that they identified in previous literature. These are: 1) opportunity identification, 2) innovation, 3) acceptance of risk, 4) flexibility, 5) vision, 6) growth, 7) dynamic capability and 8) resource management. It is important to note that each of the first six components is set against the common value of resource management and dynamic capability generation. The dynamic capability approach is what can be seen as the truly new component in this new suggested practical model of strategic entrepreneurship. However, the model has its limitations. As Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) express it, their model depends on the deployment of actions of practitioners but does not account for the internal conditions in the firm that provide the contextual and structural framework within which these activities take place.

Summary of the chapter
The arguments for conducting this kind of literature review are that there is still a great deal of confusion regarding the construction of strategic entrepreneurship and what it comprises (cf. Kuratko & Audresch, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). In line with the suggestion by Schindehutte and Morris (2009), I have chosen to treat strategic entrepreneurship as a set of contesting ideas rather than a settled issue. I have studied the discursive practices of scholars within three different areas of strategic entrepreneurship research: 1) strategic entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship
and strategic management, 2) strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship, and 3) strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. It is important to notice that the boundary between these is not sharply defined and that they are not mutually exclusive. This means that some scholars work can be positioned within two or more of these areas. The findings from the review showed that it was possible to distinguish ten recurring frames of reference (i.e. shared ideas, approaches, assumptions, statements etc.) that are commonly drawn upon by strategic entrepreneurship scholars. These are 1) the established larger firm, 2) focus on top-management, 3) entrepreneurship and strategy for growth and competitiveness, 4) a resource based view (RBV), 5) renewal through innovations, 6) entrepreneurship as part of strategy, 7) the entrepreneurial firm, 8) strategic entrepreneurship is a new concept, 9) opportunity recognition and/or discovery, and 10) entrepreneurship is part of strategic management. I will discuss these in greater detail under upcoming headings.

The established larger firm
When it comes to scholars who position their work as strategic entrepreneurship, it is possible to state that they tend to focus upon the larger established firm or corporation (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Ireland & Audretsch, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). There are those who also address the creation of new firms through theories of corporate venturing, but when doing so it is from the perspective of the established larger firm. Thus, addressing new venturing in terms of being internal or external to the larger established firm (see e.g. see e.g. Burgelman, 1983, 1984, 1985; Zahra, 1995, 1996; Zahra & Dess, 2001; Darroch et al., 2005; Kenney and Mujtaba, 2007; Kuratko, 2007; Covin & Miles, 2007 among many others). Worth noticing is that most scholars that draw upon venturing, however, mainly position their work as corporate entrepreneurship, not necessarily strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship. In the 1990s scholars also started to include established small- and medium sized firms in the research area of corporate entrepreneurship (see e.g. Naman & Slevin, 1993; Zahra et al., 2000).

Focus on top-management
There is a dominant approach to focus on top-management and its behaviour when discussing and conceptualising strategic entrepreneurship. An approach which has been apparent since the 1970s, in different studies of entrepreneurship and strategic management (see e.g. Westfall, 1969; Nor-
man, 1975/1999; Schendel & Hofer, 1979; Miller, 1983; Burgelman, 1983, 1984, 1985; Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Covin & Miles, 1999; Zahra et al., 2000; Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). There are, however, scholars who try to argue for the importance of also including middle-management and other employees (see e.g. Floyd & Lane, 2000; Kuratko, 2005; Adenfelt & Lagerström, 2006; Marvel et al., 2007; Kenney & Mujtaba, 2007). But so far, this has mostly been done by scholars who are positioned within corporate entrepreneurship. When it comes to the area of strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour, that is the newer contribution in the area, scholars still tend to focus upon top-management.

**Entrepreneurship and strategy for growth and competitiveness**

It is possible to state that one of the reoccurring ideas within all areas of strategic entrepreneurship research is that the combination of entrepreneurship and strategy will help the firm to grow and gain a better competitive position. Thus, most scholars stress that effective entrepreneurship in established firms leads to increased growth and competitiveness (see e.g. Burgelman, 1983; Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Zahra & Covin, 1995; Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003; Hayton & Kelly, 2006; Kenney & Mujtaba, 2007; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). To build their arguments, scholars tend to draw on earlier research within the field of strategic management. These studies are often conducted as large scale surveys in order to establish a connection between entrepreneurship, competitiveness and growth (see e.g. Guth and Ginsberg, 1990; Zahra & Covin, 1995; Elfinger, 2005). In most cases, growth is quantified and measured with regard to how profitable firms are. Competitiveness, in turn, is mostly about using entrepreneurship as a strategy to gain a competitive advantage over other market players.

**A resource-based view**

Most scholars, within all areas of strategic entrepreneurship research, use resources as their unit of analysis at the firm level. In doing so explicitly or implicitly, they draw upon ideas within the Recourse-Based View (RBV) (see e.g. Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Zahra & Covin, 1995; Mosakowski, 1998, Hitt et al. 2001, 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; McFadzean et al., 2005; Baron, 2007; Ireland & Webb, 2007; West, 2007; Smith & Cao, 2007; Yiu & Lau, 2008, Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011; Luke et al., 2011). Furthermore, quite a number of these scholars have a tendency to position their work within the entrepreneurial function...
of Schumpeter and his ideas about innovation as a driver for change i.e. the classical economic school of thought (see e.g. Hitt et al. 2001, 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2003; 2007). This function of entrepreneurship is closely connected to the RBV. Thus Schumpeter (1934) discusses the notion that new innovations could be found in new resource combinations. There is not really any competing view to the RBV that could be found among the scholars in this literature review. Thus, even when drawing upon other perspectives and/or theories, the resource view is still present in some respect.

Renewal through innovation
While conducting the literature review, it became apparent that renewal of established firms through innovation is one of the recurring ideas (see e.g. Miller, 1983; Covin & Miles, 1999, Zahra et al., 2000; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009; Ireland et al., 2009). Furthermore, in this context a large number of scholars within all three areas of strategic entrepreneurship like to draw upon the five forms of strategic entrepreneurship (see e.g. Covin & Miles, 1999; Miles et al., 2003; Morris et al., 2008; Kuratko 2007; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). The five forms are: sustained regeneration, domain redefinition, organisational rejuvenation, strategic renewal and business model reconstruction. There are, however, some different views regarding whether or not these five forms should be considered as strategies. Covin and Miles (1999), the first to discuss these forms of strategic entrepreneurship, argue they are strategies, but with uncertain outcomes. Moreover, innovation is often based on an incremental-discontinuous continuum about newness (incremental innovation) and novelty (discontinuous innovation) (see e.g. Kuratko, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Lastly, innovation is also discussed as a point of intersection between strategy and entrepreneurship (see e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007; Morris et al., 2008).

Entrepreneurship as part of strategy
In the literature review, it emerges that entrepreneurship in established firms has been seen as a part of strategy since the late 1970s (see e.g. Schendel & Hofer, 1979; Burgelman, 1983, 1984, 1985; Covin & Miles, 1999; Hitt et al. 2001; Ireland et al., 2009; Luke et al., 2011). It is interesting to note that this assumption is still made in all three areas of strategic entrepreneurship. There are, however, two competing views to how entrepreneurship is part of strategy. Ireland et al. (2009) explain the difference between the two: 1) A strategy for entrepreneurship which focuses on organisational behaviour that reflecting risk-taking, innovativeness, and pro-
activeness of the firm, what some scholars like to address as a firms’ Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) (cf. Covin & Slevin, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). In short, entrepreneurship provides a theme or direction to a firm’s entire operation, with a strong internal focus on organisational matters (see e.g. Miller, 1983; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). 2) **Entrepreneurial strategy**, which means that entrepreneurship can be pursued as an organisational strategy per se (see e.g. Meyer & Heppard, 2000; Ireland et al., 2001, 2003; Hitt et al., 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2007). The focus is on applying creativity and entrepreneurial thinking to the development of a core strategy for the firm and how entrepreneurship contributes to the strategy-making. The latter has a more market-oriented approach with a focus on competitive strategies rather than a purely organisational approach.

**The entrepreneurial firm**

From the conducted literature review it also emerges that the idea of the entrepreneurial firm is prevalent (see e.g. Zahra, 1995; Covin & Miles, 1999; Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003). Thus, the firm is the centre of attention, and the selected level of analysis in most research, even though it is often combined with the RBV. However, when doing the research, it is not always that clear how to regard the entrepreneurial aspect. For example, the entrepreneurial aspect emerges through individual entrepreneurs (see e.g. Thornberry, 2002; Thompson, 2004; Mathews, 2011), as well as through a team of individuals (see e.g. Mosakowski, 1998; West, 2007). Others refer to the entrepreneurial mind-set of the firm as a collective way of thinking (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al. 2003), and some see it as a process (see e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). When it comes to the process view, there is a growing body of work that has started to position strategic entrepreneurship within opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour, and the ability of balancing these (see e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007; Ireland & Webb, 2009; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011). However, it is not always clear whether it should be seen as one process or two processes (cf. Luke et al, 2011).

**Strategic entrepreneurship is a new concept**

Those scholars who clearly position their work within strategic entrepreneurship like to claim the idea that strategic entrepreneurship is a new concept (see e.g. Kuratko & Audresch, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011). A new concept that started to manifest itself at the beginning of the 2000s and has steadily been growing since (see e.g. Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Kuratko & Audretsch,
There are, however, some competing ideas as to the content of this new concept and how to view it. Nevertheless, it is possible to state that the prevalent idea is that strategic entrepreneurship is constructed by certain aspects of entrepreneurship and strategic management (see e.g. Hitt et al. 2001, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Baker & Pollock, 2007; Meyer, 2009). Furthermore, the integration or intersection where the two domains meet can be seen as a new research area and constitutes the new concept of strategic entrepreneurship (Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). Others prefer to stress that what is new in this concept is that it has only recently been crystallised into a construct of practice through the conceptual development of strategic entrepreneurship (Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010). In order words, there is a growing body of work that states that the concept of strategic entrepreneurship is moving towards a practice (see e.g. Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011).

**Opportunity recognition and/or discovery**

Scholars within all three areas of strategic entrepreneurship are more or less interested in putting forward different aspects of opportunity activities in firms (see e.g. Burgelman, 1983; Miller, 1983; Guth & Ginsberg 1990; Naman & Slevin, 1993; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland & Webb, 2007, 2009; Holcomb et al., 2009; Ireland et al., 2009). For a couple of decades, there have mostly been two schools of thought present, which are the economic school of thought, and the cognitive school. Most strategic entrepreneurship scholars, however, draw upon the economic school of thought, and opportunity recognition and/or discovery. This is especially the case among those scholars who clearly position their work within the area of strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity and advantage-seeking behaviour (see e.g. Hitt et al, 2001, Hitt et al, 2002; Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2011). When it comes to strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship, there are some scholars who draw upon the cognitive school of thought (see e.g. West, 2007; Marvel et al., 2007; Ireland et al., 2009). There was also a special issue in *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* on behavioural characteristics of entrepreneurial activity in 2007 that included papers by Baron (2007), Shepherd et al. (2007) and Busenitz (2007) that draw upon cognition.
Entrepreneurship is part of strategic management
In the literature review, there is a recurring idea that entrepreneurship and management theories over the years have developed in different directions. Moreover, that it is through strategic entrepreneurship and/or corporate entrepreneurship these areas are drawing closer to each other (see e.g. Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990; Hitt et al., 2001, 2002; Venkataraman & Sarasvathy, 2001; Ireland, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010). In this context, some entrepreneurship scholars express a concern that the domain of strategic management is trying to do a takeover of entrepreneurship (see e.g. Baker & Pollock, 2007; Meyer, 2009). The worry might not be unwarranted. Thus, from the review it emerges there is a practice of borrowing the style from the domain of strategic management when it comes to methodology, theories and methods (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). The focus has been on quantifying and building on multi-variables as a base for explanation of entrepreneurship and/or cause and effects, and the achievement of competitive advantages in established firms. Furthermore, when it comes to the unit of analysis used by scholars, they once again tend to draw upon the traditions in strategic management, where the most common approach is to use resources as a unit of analysis at the firm level, mostly leaving out the actions of humans. As stressed, the RBV is also the most common approach within strategic management.
CHAPTER 4

REFRAMING STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This chapter starts by discussing what discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered. In this way addressing the first stated research question in the introductory chapter. I will suggest that there is a need to broaden the view of strategic entrepreneurship by incorporating studies that take on a social constructionism view of social phenomena with a focus on qualitative features and practice-based approaches. In doing so, I will address what research into larger established firm seems to have excluded so far, but what is researched within the domain of entrepreneurship and studies on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME), especially European work. An alternative view of opportunities and advantages from a discursive psychology view will, thus, be suggested, and in doing so reframing strategic entrepreneurship into a collective process of social interaction in firms.

What discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered?

One way to capture the many versions of strategic entrepreneurship would be to talk about the different discourses that co-exist in the same discursive field (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Berglund & Johansson, 2007). A discourse may be seen as a set of metaphors, assumptions, representations, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of the world or a subject (cf. Nightingale & Cromby, 2001; Burr, 2003; Steyaert, 2004). For example, of strategic entrepreneurship and what it is, as such contributing to the fact that there is a particular picture that is painted of strategic entrepreneurship, a particular way of representing it in a certain light, and its practice of study. Berglund and Johansson (2007:79) argue the following:

Thus, conversation, language and text are not neutral transparent media; rather they generate effects, since they both define boundaries and constitute the resources for what it is possible to say, and to do. By way of communication we produce different “pictures” of the world, which makes language – in a figurative sense – our primary means of construction. However, there is always a diversity of versions, each telling a different story about the object in question. Some versions tend to become more dominating, fixed, and taken-for-granted than others. Simultaneously a dominating version can be challenged, questioned, and opposed by other alternative versions.
As shown in Chapter 3, there are a great number of competing ideas regarding what scholars label as strategic entrepreneurship research. It is not in any sense a settled issue (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). The results from studying the discursive practices of strategic entrepreneurship scholars in the literature review, however, show there are ten reoccurring frames of reference (i.e. shared ideas, approaches, assumptions, statements etc.), that scholars like to draw upon when positioning their work as strategic entrepreneurship research. These are: 1) strategic entrepreneurship as a new concept, 2) it is all about the management, 3) the established larger firm, 4) entrepreneurship and strategy for growth and competitiveness, 5) a resource based view, 6) renewal through innovations, 7) entrepreneurship as part of strategy, 8) the entrepreneurial firm, 9) opportunity recognition and/or discovery, and 10) entrepreneurship is part of strategic management. It is possible to state that these ten frames of reference are an established way of writing about and understanding strategic entrepreneurship within research i.e. they are part of constructing the scientific-discourse about strategic entrepreneurship. In other words, these ten frames of reference can be interpreted as discourses that have been privileged within research into strategic entrepreneurship. As I said, a discourse refers to a group of statements that provides a language for writing and talking about a topic, and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about that specific topic (Steyaert, 2004). In sum, by the results from Chapter 3 the first part of the question stated in Chapter 1 have been addressed regarding what discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship.

The second part of the research question is concerned with other discourses that could be considered, and in order to address this part, we need to take an even closer look at the assumptions that are taken for granted by strategic entrepreneurship scholars. Thus, as Berglund and Johansson (2007) argue, it is important to throw some light on these assumptions. They also stress that focusing on the way entrepreneurship, in this thesis strategic entrepreneurship, is depicted in research texts not only links together the different spheres, rationales and assumptions; but it also reveals them.

**The scientific-discourse of strategic entrepreneurship**

Inspired by Berglund and Johansson (2007), I have complemented the literature review with a closer analysis of fifteen published articles in which researchers have positioned their work clearly as strategic entrepreneurship research. In doing so, I intend to take an even closer look at the discursive practices of how scholars use and produce discourses within the field of strategic entrepreneurship, than in the literature review. As I said, in this
way gain a better understanding of the taken for granted assumptions in strategic entrepreneurship, and possible other discourses to be considered.

The articles have been selected by means of a ‘snow-ball sample’. I started by searching on the phrase ‘strategic entrepreneurship’ in the database; web-of-science\(^ {12}\). Then I selected the papers in which the researchers clearly said in writing they were doing research within strategic entrepreneurship. I also did the same with the help of Google Scholar and Summon\(^ {13}\). I also specifically checked the *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, but most articles discussed aspects of entrepreneurship and/or strategy without addressing these as strategic entrepreneurship research. In other words, these scholars did not position their work as strategic entrepreneurship and they are therefore not included. As stated before, the research field is quite new, so I ended up with the reasonable number of fifteen published articles to analyse. These articles then have represented the scientific-discourse of strategic entrepreneurship. I do not say that these articles are the only ones to be considered as it is possible that I have missed several more. The selection of these articles, however, should be able to give us some ideas of what taken for granted assumptions there might be in the research field of strategic entrepreneurship. I will also complement this with the knowledge we gained from the enhanced literature review in Chapter 3. In sum, to combine the literature review with a closer analysis of the selected fifteen articles should give us an idea of the construction of the strategic entrepreneurship discourse.

To make it easier to compare the fifteen articles with each other, as well as with the results from the literature review, I was inspired by Berglund (2007) and Berglund and Johansson (2007) to construct the following themes for the analysis:

- Name of the journal
- Title of the article
- Authors and academic residence
- Year of publication
- Country of study (were the empirical material was collected)
- Ontological and epistemological assumptions

\(^{12}\) Web-of-science provides access to the world’s leading citation databases and covers over 12,000 of the highest impact journals worldwide, including Open Access journals and over 150,000 conference proceedings.

\(^{13}\) Summon is the application that Örebro University Library uses for the databases, books, journals and so forth with which they provide their readers.
Strategic entrepreneurship as (a process, two processes, opportunity- and advantage-seeking, etc.)

View on strategy and entrepreneurship (e.g. entrepreneurship part of strategy, two processes that needs to be balanced etc.)

Methods used
Data source
Level of analysis (individual, firm, industry, society etc.)
Choice of theory or perspective
Reason given for writing the article.

Each article is also given a number from one to fifteen for ease of reference to the specific article in written text. The summarised results of the analysis can be seen in Appendix A. In the next section, I am going to conduct an analysis by comparing the results from Appendix A with the results from the literature review, in this way also discussing what discourses are potentially excluded in strategic entrepreneurship research. In doing so, address the second part of the research question about what other discourses can be considered.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions
In strategic entrepreneurship, there is a tendency to exclude discourses regarding other ways of viewing the world (ontology), and how knowledge is produced (epistemology) then from positivist assumptions. Of the fifteen articles analysed, there was only one (no. 10) that did not draw on positivist assumptions. Rather, this article by Schindehutte and Morris (2009) tries to compete with this view by introducing complexity science and a complexity approach that they state relies on a perspective in between postmodernism and modernism (positivistic). Objective ontological assumptions are the basis for the positivist and post-positivist perspectives that have dominated the field of entrepreneurship (Sarason et al., 2010; Alvarez & Barney, 2007), as well as strategic entrepreneurship (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). This is most evident when scholars in the literature review draw upon what I have identified as a prevailing discourse of ‘opportunity recognition and/or discovery’. For example, when scholars discuss exploration and exploitation of opportunities, there is a common approach, viewing opportunities as objects that exist irrespective of the entrepreneur’s actions or lack of action.

In other words, opportunities are seen as objects floating around in the market waiting to be found by the entrepreneur with the right information (cf. Chabaud & Ngijol, 2005; Barney & Alvarez, 2007). Hence, the entre-
preneur needs to be alert and seek for new opportunities. When scholars draw on these assumptions about opportunities, they are also positioning their work within the classical economic school of thought (see Chapter 3), that is essentially positivistic in its methodological stance, based on realist assumptions, and different aspects of equilibrium theories (cf. Chabaud & Ngijol, 2005; Barney & Alvarez, 2007). Thus, these thoughts have their foundation in a more objective ontology that assumes that a “real” world is out there, and that it is possible to know “how things really work” (Sarason et al., 2010). The same phenomenon can be seen in the articles analysed. Hence, all of the articles analysed, except for no. 10, draw upon different aspects of opportunities in trying to define what strategic entrepreneurship is. In doing so, a total of twelve articles (nos 1-8, 12-15) state that strategic entrepreneurship is about the opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour of a firm or individual level of analysis. According to Alvarez and Barney (2007), the seeking-behaviour is closely related to discovery when it comes to doing research on opportunities; thus the seeking behaviour implies a view that there is something waiting to be discovered. Moreover, if a human being is abstracted according to this definition of behaviour, the behaviour is seen as observable, that is, the behaviour can be perceived as factual (Bjerke and Karlsson, 2011). A factual tradition is based on positivistic assumptions, i.e. that there are objective or subjective observable facts that can be collected. In several of the articles, opportunity-seeking behaviour is also associated with theories about exploration, and advantage-seeking behaviour with exploitation (nos 4, 8, 15).

In the literature review, there is, however, some work done by scholars that can be positioned within the cultural cognitive school of thought and opportunity creation (cf. Venkataraman & Sarasvathy, 2001). Alvarez and Barney (2007:15) state that opportunity creation can be seen as a social construction formed out of the perceptions and belief of numerous other individuals. However, in the same paragraph they also stress that creation theory is founded on what has come to be known as the evolutionary realist perspective in the philosophy of science (Alvarez & Barney). This statement is for me a paradox, as social constructionism is often described as a counter-reaction to the realist perspective (cf. Burr, 2003). I can, however, easily see the connection to the evolutionary realist perspective (cf. Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2002) and the ideas of bounded rationality. Nevertheless, it is important though that Alvarez and Barney (2007) address a possibility of viewing opportunities as socially constructed, a perspective that has not been embraced, to my knowledge, by any strategic entrepreneurship scholar.
In sum, the positivistic view is so widespread and commonly used that it is hard to find other ways to view the world within strategic entrepreneurship research, except for article no. 10. This implies that there is a reductionist “one right way” position in strategic entrepreneurship research when it comes to philosophical aspects such as ontology and epistemology. Sarason et al. (2010), however, stress that in understanding complex social phenomena, such as entrepreneurial activity, it is even more important to considering numerous perspectives. In line with Fletcher (2006), I argue that these perspectives can be of ontological and epistemological concern, and I will return to this when arguing for an alternative view of strategic entrepreneurship.

Choice of methods, data and theories/perspectives

Scholars within strategic entrepreneurship have so far more or less excluded qualitative features. In fact, in the fifteen articles analysed I can only find one study by Luke et al., (2011), who conducted a case study of fifteen firms with the help of documents, observations and interviews with executives (no. 14). A total of four articles (nos 6, 7, 9, 15) have tested hypotheses through methods of large quantitative surveys, Chi2 tests and/or LISREL. In article no. 7, Audretsch et al. (2009) collected data from 127 CEOs in public documents about new ventures, while Meuleman et al. (2009) in article no. 9 collected data on buy-outs from three different databases. It is interesting to note here that these two articles did not draw upon the prevailing discourse of ‘the established larger firm’, which is the view from most of the other articles studied. When it comes to article no. 6 written by Monsen and Boss (2009) and article no. 15 written by Kyrgidou and Petridou (2012), these researchers are the only ones, except for Luke et al. (2011), who have collected data within organisations. For example, in article no. 6 scholars did this by conducting a survey that included 1,975 managers and staff in 110 departments, and in article no. 15 scholars conducted a survey with 144 CEOs in medium-sized to large firms. As in the literature review, the use of the identified discourse ‘to focus on top management’ emerges in these empirically-driven studies. Monsen and Boss (2009), however, also include parts of the staff.

When it comes to the literature review, the same discursive exclusion could be noted. Thus, I could only find a couple of articles within the field of corporate entrepreneurship that embraced these aspects. Most of these articles took on a case study approach, for example Covin and Miles (2007) studied fifteen firms by interviewing top managers. Bhardwaj and Momaya (2006), in turn, studied one firm by interviewing and carrying out observations of top managers. Guadamillas et al. (2008) conducted a single
case study by interviewing a top manager and through the collection of documents. This is also the case with Adenfelt and Lagerström (2006), who also used interviews as their main source of data. However, they did not only include top management but also employees. Marvel et al. (2007) in turn chose not to incorporate top management in their single case study, by interviewing a technician and a middle manager. This is also true of Kenney and Mujtaba (2007), when trying to understand corporate entrepreneurship in practice by in-depth interviews with an intrapreneur. These scholars do not by articulation position their work as strategic entrepreneurship. They rather address the more general view of corporate entrepreneurship, i.e. different aspects of entrepreneurship in established firms.

In sum, among those who clearly position their work as strategic entrepreneurship there is only one article, no. 14, who conducted a qualitative study.

A possible explanation for the exclusion of qualitative features could be that the research field of strategic entrepreneurship, methodologically as well as regards the choice of methods, and the ways of doing analysis, draws upon strategic management (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). As a result, studies of entrepreneurship in established firms have mainly focused on quantifying, multi-variables and why-questions, while how-questions and qualitative features connected to actions by humans, are mostly left out (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). In the literature review, I also identify that ‘entrepreneurship is part of strategic management’ as a prevailing discourse. Another explanation could be that most of the researchers that clearly position their work as strategic entrepreneurship also have an academic residence in the USA (nos 1-8, 10, 12), a country that draws heavily on traditions of quantifying in different ways, while European traditions within entrepreneurship research tend to conduct studies that focus more on qualitative features. Schindehutte and Morris (2009) state the following:

SE’s [strategic Entrepreneurship’s] most pertinent features are better considered qualitatively, rather than the dominant quantitative approaches that reduce SE [strategic Entrepreneurship] to the same set of numbers that are emphasized in strategic management.

They also argue that key qualitative features in strategic entrepreneurship (e.g. newness, change, renewal) are not subservient to quantities underlying financial performance (e.g. profit, revenues) or growth (e.g. new products). Rather, if the qualitative features of strategic entrepreneurship are attained, the likelihood of a substantial payoff increases, even though this might not immediately be apparent (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). The need to
focus on the qualitative features regarding the generation of empirical material is thus evident. Hence, such an approach can provide for a better understanding of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in established firms (cf. Kuratko, 2007), and strategic entrepreneurship (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). I will return to this.

It also emerges in the literature review that there is a growing interest in practice, i.e. the strategic entrepreneurship practice of balancing between opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. There is, however, a discursive exclusion towards of practice-based approaches, or turning towards practice in order to conduct empirically driven research. This observation is in line with Luke et al. (2011:315), who stress that:

 [...] research on strategic entrepreneurship is essentially theoretical.

Similar, Kyrgidou and Petridou (2012:699) argue:

Research related to strategic entrepreneurship to date remains primarily theoretical in nature.

This is also the case with two-thirds of the fifteen articles analysed, as most of the methods used to conduct research are based on previous literature to further conceptualise strategic entrepreneurship (nos 1-5, 8, 10-13). Between 2001 and 2009 there were only conceptual papers written (nos 1-5). Consequently, there is a call for more empirically driven research anchored in practice. The only studies I could find that expressed an interested in strategic entrepreneurship practice, and that have turned to practice were carried out by Luke et al. (2011), and Kyrgidou and Petridou (2012) (nos 14-15). Monson and Boss (2009) also turned to practice in order to conduct their study, but they do not explicitly state that they are interested in strategic entrepreneurship practices (no. 6). The countries of study in the collected data have been quite different, and include USA, Germany, Great Britain, New Zealand and Greece.

A possible reason as to why scholars do not turn to practice is because they tend to draw upon a discourse about ‘a resource-based view (RBV)’, as shown in the literature review. The same results are shown among the fifteen articles analysed, except for article no. 10, which is the only one that does not adopt this perspective. As such, scholars again tend to lean towards the traditions in strategic management (Schindehutte & Morris, 2009), where the most common approach is to use resources as a unit of analysis at an aggregated industry and/or firm level (Herrmann, 2005). As Herrmann (2005) says, the centre of attention in strategic management involves utilisation of resources in order to enhance the performance of firms in their external environment. Such an approach tends to leave out
the actions of people. However, the tradition in entrepreneurship is also to have a strong interest in human actors (the individual entrepreneur or the individuals in the entrepreneurial process) and their actions. The level of analysis is mostly the individual or the firm (the processes of establishing new organisations or the process of exploration and exploitation of business opportunities by individuals and not only by firm actions)(cf. Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001; Hjorth, 2004). However, this is done with a strong focus on heuristics models or cognitive aspects (cf. Sarason et al., 2010). The approach including the individual level when analysing also emerges in nine of the fifteen articles (nos 2, 4-8, 10-12); however, the unit of analysis is still mainly resources, and as such the actions of people are still left out, by addressing people as a resource and/or by their capabilities to manage resources. The RBV is also described as static and does not support an approach to conducting empirical studies in practice (Herrmann, 2005). Hence, it is hard to use the RBV on empirical material, and there are really very few studies that have managed to do this kind of studies at all (cf. Herrmann, 2005). Rather, the RBV supports theoretical conceptualisation from theory.

In the literature review, it emerges that there is a prevailing discourse that emphasises that ‘entrepreneurship is part of strategy’; this is also the case in five of the articles (nos 1-2, 5-6, 12), expressing a view on strategy and entrepreneurship such as entrepreneurial action with a strategic perspective (nos 1-2), entrepreneurship integrated in strategy (no. 5), entrepreneurial strategies (no. 6), and entrepreneurial action with a strategic perspective (no. 12). However, among the fifteen articles analysed most researchers adopt a process view, mostly by addressing strategy as one process and entrepreneurship as one process (nos 3-4, 8, 13-15), but also as an entrepreneurial process where strategically new resources are developed (no. 7), and a process of how entrepreneurs reach and make strategic decisions (no. 11). Another theoretical perspective that emerges in the articles is connected to the identified prevailing discourse of ‘entrepreneurship and strategy for growth and competitiveness’, thus explicitly stating that they use theories about sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (no. 9) and competitive advantage (CA)(nos 5, 8, 11). It is important to notice that the RBV is also built on ideas about growth and competitiveness. Lastly, it is possible to state that the discourse about ‘renewal through innovation’ emerges in the theoretical perspectives in seven of the articles (nos 1-6, 10).
A discourse approach to strategic entrepreneurship

The discussion so far about what discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and by analysing the scientific-discourse of strategic entrepreneurship, makes it possible at least to envision that there is a discursive exclusion within three areas. Thus, scholars who position their work as strategic entrepreneurship tend to exclude a view of social phenomena as socially constructed, qualitative features and practice-based approaches. I will draw upon these findings under this heading, and in so doing argue my way towards a view of strategic entrepreneurship as a collective and interactional process of organising renewal through opportunity and advantage activities. As such, I will address what other possible discourses that could be considered within strategic entrepreneurship. There is also a call among scholars in the field of strategic entrepreneurship for a more diversified view that embrace, rather than exclude, different perspectives (cf. Kuratko & Audresch, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009; Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). Also Sarason et al. (2010) suggest that the best approach is one of ontological and epistemological pluralism, where it is not a question of which ontology might best “fit” the field, but of what we might learn from each. Drawing upon this I will in this part of the thesis suggest an alternative understanding of strategic entrepreneurship with the help of discursive psychology and by addressing research mainly within entrepreneurship, but also strategy, that builds on the linguistic turn. Thus, in the introductory chapter I addressed an interest in reframing and reconstructing entrepreneurship through more than merely an economic discourse for managers by introducing an interest in studying the discursive practices that take place within an organisation. In this part of the chapter, I will explore how strategic entrepreneurship, as part of the enterprising discourse, could be reframed and reconstructed.

A collective process of social interaction

As I concluded in this chapter, opportunities have a central place in strategic entrepreneurship research, and produce an objectivist view that suggests that opportunities are objectively real and exist independent of human perception and thus are available for everybody’s enactment (cf. Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Gartner et al. (2003) argue that this view only tells one side of the story and perusing this line of reasoning, exclusively, may ignore important features of opportunity as a phenomenon. As such, they suggest that we talk about ‘opportunity enactment’, a perspective that incorporates the view that opportunities emerge out of the imagination of
individuals by their actions and interactions with others. In this way, drawing upon emergent cognitive and social processes, which can be positioned within the subjectivist view (cf. creation view), that suggests that opportunities are created in entrepreneurs’ minds and do not exist independently of the perceptions and beliefs of people (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). This perspective brings on aspects of social interaction which is interesting from a discursive psychology approach. Nevertheless, discursive psychology entails the view of mental processes (cognitions) and categories as constituted through social, discursive activities rather than as “internal” (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards, 2005) as within ‘opportunity enactment’.

Another interesting suggestion is made by Bjerke and Karlsson (2011), who talk about ‘opportunity formation’ that builds on social constructionism assumptions. With a social constructionism view of opportunities, it is rather suggested that opportunities are constructed through social and discursive activities in interaction with others. Thus, as Bjerke and Karlsson (2011:13) stress:

When applying a constructionist approach, this does not mean that opportunity formation is an activity that occurs because of special cognitive processing capabilities occurring “inside” the person as implied in the opportunity formation models either according to the rational view or the effectuation view. This would result in more thoughts on the opportunity formation than the creation and discovery are the discourses today. Which would mean that no opportunities can be viewed as individual items from the individual, without opportunities is something that is constructed in social interaction with others.

Fletcher (2006:436) is another entrepreneurship scholar that takes on a social constructionism view on opportunities and states the following:

[...] utilizing social constructionist ideas means that the enquirer moves beyond an examination of individual opportunity-seeking processes to consideration of the relationality between peoples’ actions and their cultural, societal, economic and political situational context. This enables a distinctive theoretical understanding of opportunity emergence as relationally and communally constituted. It also challenges linear, individualistic and descriptive models of opportunity discovery.

The quotation by Fletcher (2006), as well as Bjerke and Karlsson (2011), suggest that opportunities and entrepreneurship is a social undertaking. That is, it must be carried out, and therefore understood, within the context of social systems (see e.g. Johannisson, 2003; Sarason et al., 2006; Johannisson, 2012). The interactional aspect and the view of social con-
structionism also address another area of concern, namely a view of entrepreneurship as a collective phenomenon (see e.g. Holmquist, 2003; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2003; Fletcher, 2003; 2006; Johannisson, 2011). This has also been noted by Foss and Lyngsie (2012), who argue that strategic entrepreneurship is a collective practice on the firm level.

Similarly, when discussing entrepreneurship in established firms (through a terminology of corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship), Johannisson (2003) addresses it as a collective process. He stresses, nevertheless, that social constructionism approaches have a tendency to neglect the individual. Hence, most constructionists end up as institutionalists, with little belief in individual initiative. However, to focus on entrepreneurship as organising renewal\(^{14}\) must therefore recognise both individualistic and collectivist images of entrepreneurship. Thus, Johannisson (2003) argues that there will be no interaction without an individual initiative, which is in line with a discursive psychology approach that draws upon interpretative repertoires. As stated earlier, a repertoire\(^{15}\) does not belong to an individual, as it is a culturally and organisational resource, however, repertoires are studied through individuals social interaction and positioning work.

The quotation by Fletcher (2006) also puts emphasis on the process aspect, by addressing opportunities as emergent. As the literature review in Chapter 3 and the analysis of the fifteen articles shows, the view of strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour, also take on a process view. I conclude though that it was not always clear whether the scholars talked about opportunity- and advantages as two processes or one process. In the analysis of the fifteen articles, it is however a tendency to view entrepreneurship and strategy as two different and sometimes conflicting processes that need to be balanced.

**A process view**

Ketchen et al. (2007) argue that the formal concept of strategic entrepreneurship has been introduced in recognition of the dual, interwoven challenges that executives face in simultaneously pursuing both advantages and opportunities. Agarwal et al. (2010) in turn state that strategic entrepreneurship requires a dual focus on creating change, exploiting or appropriating the value through the change. This dual view of entrepreneurship and

\(^{14}\) I will return to entrepreneurship as organising renewal in upcoming headings.

\(^{15}\) As stated in chapter 2, this thesis take an interest in how people uses repertoires (a meso-discourse) as a flexible discursive resource in their construction work of positioning opportunities and advantages in an organisation.
strategy also emerges in the strategic entrepreneurship models of its practices. Thus, the suggested models have a tendency to approach opportunity (an aspect of entrepreneurship) and advantage (an aspect of strategy) as contradictory and opposite states. For example, Ireland et al. (2003) describe the act of balancing as a linear and sequential process that: employs an entrepreneurial mind set in order to identify opportunities; applies creativity and innovation; manages resources strategically to engage in the opportunity; and generates a competitive advantage in operating strategically entrepreneurially. In other words, the model suggests going from a state of entrepreneurship to a strategic stage. This model of strategic entrepreneurship practice has been questioned. Firstly, Luke et al. (2001) state that there is a lack of clarity in the model regarding how organisations may employ strategic entrepreneurship in practice. Similarly, Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) argue that the model suffers from limitations that compromise our understanding of how strategic entrepreneurship might be made to work effectively in practice. Secondly, Luke et al. (2011), argue that there is a lack of guidance on how strategic entrepreneurship actually may be achieved. Thirdly, Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) write that, despite that, strategic entrepreneurship is defined as the simultaneous pursuit of opportunity and advantage activities. The model is linearly punctuated between episodes of entrepreneurial and strategic activities. It also lacks a defined feedback loop between the two activities. Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) try to address these issues by suggesting that firms have to iterate between episodes of opportunity identification, managing resources strategically – by bundling, re-bundling, acquiring and divesting resources – and opportunity exploitation through creating and deploying innovation. This further developed model of strategic entrepreneurship practice is not linear as is the previous one by Ireland et al. (2003). Rather, it suggests an idea of iteration between opportunity and advantage activities inside a firm. Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010) however, still reinforce the idea of dualism by addressing opportunity and advantages as contrasting states. It is interesting, however, that they try to establish more of a process-view of strategic entrepreneurship by discussing the dynamics in the interaction process.

The entrepreneurship domain in general has been lacking a stream of process theories. But, according to Steyaert (2007), it has started to grow and come to show great potential for future theorising. He also argues that one of the perspectives that have shown great potential is ideas of social constructionism and its narrative, dramaturgical and discursive offspring. When reviewing twenty-years of process studies in entrepreneurship, Steyaert (2007) comes to the conclusion that these kinds of studies have mostly been enacted in metaphors of development and growth, from an
equilibrium-based understanding (this is also the case within strategic entrepreneurship research, as the literature review in Chapter 3 shows). To distinguish between these kinds of studies, he suggests the concept of ‘entrepreneuring’, thereby approaching entrepreneurship as a verb. Johannisson (2011) has also drawn upon the concept of entrepreneuring and associate it with movement and processes in practice. He state that a relational perspective is close at hand when approaching entrepreneuring as an organisational phenomenon, whether the entrepreneurial processes concerned originate in individual initiatives or emerge as a collective social effort.

I do not intend to conceptualise entrepreneuring, but to take up on viewing entrepreneurship as a verb i.e. as something we do and that is action-oriented. Thus, I adopt a view of entrepreneurship as organising renewal. For example, Hjorth (2004, 2012) describe entrepreneurship in established firms and the relationship between entrepreneurship and management in formal organisations as organisational entrepreneurship. Gartner (2012) suggests that entrepreneurship must, in some sense, have some kind of ‘organising’ component. Thus, whatever the entrepreneurial activity entails, it must in some respects involve the organisation (‘organising’) of something, e.g. an opportunity, a market, a process, technology, group, businesses, etc. He also says that his thoughts are in line with a process view of entrepreneurship, and positions his work as in line with the process view of Steyaert (2007).

Entrepreneurship as organising renewal
Why focus on the organisation of renewal, one might ask. In the literature review, it emerges that different aspects of renewal are present in several of the prevailing discourses about strategic entrepreneurship, but that so far renewal has mostly been considered quantitatively through aspects of growth and profit. In line with Schindehutte and Morris (2009), I argue rather that renewal (i.e. change, newness and innovation) should be considered as a key qualitative feature, as such also meeting up with some of the discursive exclusion regarding qualitative features. Thus, by the study of entrepreneurship as organising renewal, it opens up for the possibility of another more processual approach to entrepreneurship in strategic entrepreneurship, though not by focussing on the managerial challenges of controlling aspects of renewal (cf. Hjorth, 2004), which is the common approach in strategy research. Rather, my selected approach illuminates the construction work carried out by people in interaction when constructing opportunity and advantage positions in a context of organising renewal. This in line with a discursive psychology approach that is processual and action-oriented.
As I have said, I would also like to reframe entrepreneurship to become less of an economic discourse (cf. Steyaert & Katz, 2004) and a managerial tool (cf. Hjorth, 2004, 2012). By viewing strategic entrepreneurship as organising renewal, I have the potential to do this. Thus, when it comes to renewal, I refer to the act among people of organising renewal in organisations, not as an outcome of a process (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Nevertheless, renewal as a concept can be seen as abstract and sometimes hard to concretise, as it is related to different aspects of change, newness and innovation. For example, Hjorth (2012) argues that entrepreneurship is about ‘organisation-creation’, and in that sense it affirms the new, i.e. interactions-in-the-making, and by doing so addresses aspects of change and innovation. The word innovation is derived from the Latin *innovare* which can be interpreted into a context of renewal\(^\text{16}\). I will, however, not use the terminology of innovation and go into the discussion about whether or not an act can be seen as innovative or not, or whether an introduction of a new product, service, method etc. is an innovation or not, as such a discussion goes beyond the stated research questions and the purpose of this thesis. This means that organising renewal in firms from a perspective of strategic entrepreneurship is limited in this thesis, due to the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. Strategic entrepreneurship (as the discursive practice of constructing opportunity and advantage positions) in a context of organising renewal is then about the emergence of becoming something other than before. As such, there is still a broad view taken on renewal, considering that any aspect of what people within a firm account for is new in the context of the organisation. As stated in Chapter 2, within discursive psychology it is not appropriate to a great extent to bring upon theories. Rather it is more about letting the empirical material speak and guiding the researcher towards theory. Not as much the other way round.

**Strategy as a discursive and socially constructed**

Last, I will address strategy and the discursive aspect of advantage construction. I have so far mostly argued for a view on strategic entrepreneurship that brings in a different view on entrepreneurship and how to view opportunities. My intention in doing this has been to reframe entrepre-

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\(^{16}\) *The Oxford English Dictionary* includes the following possible interpretations of the words *innovate* and *innovation*: Innovate (verb) – To change (a thing) into something new; to alter; to renew. Innovation (Noun) – The action of innovating; the introduction of novelities; the alteration of what is established by the introduction of new elements or forms.
neurship from only becoming a strategic tool for managers to use in an economic context of the firm. It is, however, also important to address the fact that there are other ways to study strategy than by the traditional positivist assumptions mostly used by strategic management scholars.

To study strategy and advantages as discursive and socially constructed is not the ‘norm’ in previous strategy research, but there is, however, a small but growing area that has started to embrace social constructionism ideas. For example, Mir and Watson (2000) argue that there is a constructionism tradition in strategic management, but more of an epistemological than an ontological one, that often draws on realism assumptions. They also stress that the manager is an active participant in the construction of his/her own environment, thereby generating elements of this environment through organisational routines, discourse devices (or rhetorical devices), shared values and ceremonies. They also argue that managers are part of e.g. constructing discourses of success or failure in firms by taking on a view that organisational policies, strategies, and cultures are constructed through social interaction (Mir & Watson, 2000). Similarly, Hardy et al. (2000) have noticed that a recent perspective has been added in strategy literature by the study of discourses through language, rhetoric and narrative. Furthermore in these studies, strategy is emphasised as a social and linguistic construction, which suggests that advantages also are. As said an advantage can be seen as an aspect of strategy. A strategy in its essence could be seen as a story narrated to delimit and grant a place of its own, and a strategy would then be a narrativisation of life-to-come that is composed and communicated for the purpose of managing people and resources (Hjorth, 2012). Another example is given by Eccles and Nohria (1993) that argues for the development of a more action-oriented perspective of management, focusing on an area which they think has been neglected, namely language and people, language as rhetoric and people through identity. A last example is by Vergne (2008), who argues that a competitive advantage is socially constructed, at least in part.

As I have said, within strategic entrepreneurship there is a tendency to incorporate entrepreneurship within strategy or to discuss entrepreneurship as a part of strategy. There is a commonality to focus on strategy as a plan for the future direction of the firm, and if entrepreneurship is introduced in this context, it can help a firm to reach its goal quicker (cf. Kuratko et al., 2009). However, a strategy can also be considered as something people ‘do’ rather than something that firms “have” (see e.g. Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008). In other words, a strategy can be seen as a social practice (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 2006), which I intend to draw upon thus it brings on a collective, processual and interactional view which is in
line with what I so far has argued for. From this perspective, strategy could be defined as (Jarzabkowski et al. 2007, 7–8):

[...] a situated, socially accomplished activity, while strategizing comprises those actions, interactions and negotiations of multiple actors and the situated practices that they draw upon in accomplishing that activity.

In this context, Johnson et al. (2003) call for strategy research to be refocused explicitly on human activity. As said, this has been a problem also in strategic entrepreneurship and by a discursive approach through discursive psychology I have the possibility to address this issue.

In sum, when it comes to strategic activity, it can be considered strategic to the extent that it is consequential for the strategic outcomes, directions, survival and competitive advantage of the firm (cf. Johnson et al., 2003), even where these consequences are not part of an intended and formally articulated strategy (cf. Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). This means that not only those micro-activities that draw on strategic practices, e.g. strategic planning, annual reviews, strategy workshops and their associated discourses, are in focus in this thesis. Or expressed differently, what people consider as having a consequence for the firm’s strategic outcomes, directions, survival and competitive advantage is considered as constructing an advantage position.

**Important assumptions**

I have argued that I see strategic entrepreneurship as a collective and interactional process of organising renewal through opportunity and advantage activities. With the perspective taken in this thesis this means that I am interested in the interactional aspects of people in a firm, and how they construct opportunity and advantage positions. In line with the discursive psychology approach, this means that I do not refer to entrepreneurship, or strategy for that matter, by the study of the actions of one individual as the entrepreneur, or an individual’s specific actions through other individuals’ statements. In this sense I not only challenge the economic school of thought that is prevailing with its positivist assumptions and tendency to objectify opportunities, but also challenge the cultural cognitive school of thoughts that from a discursive psychology approach puts too much emphasis on the subject.

In this thesis, the view is that different aspects of strategic entrepreneurship practices emerge when people in text and talk construct opportunities and advantages by positioning activities within different repertoires (a meso-level of discourse). A repertoire, as expressed in Chapter 2, is not seen as belonging to an individual. Rather it is a flexible and culturally
resource available to people to use in interaction. As such, I view strategic entrepreneurship as a collective process of social interaction. In this view, opportunities do not exist a priori, waiting to be recognised or discovered, rather opportunities are socially constructed through processes of social interactions in firms, in this way reframing the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. It is still opportunity and advantage activities that are in focus, but not the behavioural aspects, cognitions or the recognition or discovery part of exploration and exploitation of opportunities, as in previous research within the economic school of thought or the cognitive school of thought.

In order to embrace the suggested view on strategic entrepreneurship it becomes important to include more of a micro-level of analysis that so far has more or less been neglected among those scholars who clearly position their work within the concept of strategic entrepreneurship (cf. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). In order words, it becomes important to study people’s discursive actions in order to understand the discursive practice of constructing opportunity and advantage positions, which introduces a practice-based approach in at least two ways. Firstly, by studying what people are actually doing with repertoires i.e. the discursive practices. Secondly, the study of discursive practices means an interest in the construction processes made by people in practice. In this way, I also address the discursive exclusion of practice-based approaches as well as meeting up with the call for more empirical studies.

**Summary of the chapter**

I have in this chapter intended to answer the first stated research question in Chapter 1, namely what discourses have been privileged within strategic entrepreneurship and what other discourses can be considered. In doing so, I have suggested that the results of the literature review and the positioning activities made by strategic entrepreneurship scholars could be considered as there are ten prevailing discourses of: 1) strategic entrepreneurship a new concept, 2) it is all about the management, 3) the established larger firm, 4) entrepreneurship and strategy for growth and competitiveness, 5) a resource based view, 6) renewal through innovations, 7) entrepreneurship is part of strategy, 8) the entrepreneurial firm, 9) opportunity recognition and/or discovery, and 10) entrepreneurship is part of strategic management. In order to address the second part of the research question – regarding what other discourses could be considered – I complemented the literature review made in Chapter 3 with a deeper analysis of fifteen articles in which the researchers clearly positioned their work as strategic entrepre-
neurship research. In this way, I approached ontological and epistemological assumptions that had been made, as well as choices of methods, data and theories/perspectives. From this analysis it emerges that there is a discursive exclusion of viewing social phenomenon as socially constructed, to embrace qualitative features and practice-based approaches. By reframing strategic entrepreneurship as a collective process of organising renewal through opportunity and advantage activities, I have tried to link together parts of the discursive exclusion. In this way I have also suggested other possible discourses to consider within the field of strategic entrepreneurship. Lastly, by reframing strategic entrepreneurship I have adopted a new set of assumptions regarding the construction work of opportunity and advantage positions that will have consequences in trying to answering the second stated research question in Chapter 1.
CHAPTER 5

LINE-OF-ACTION

In this chapter, I will primarily discuss the line-of-actions taken when conducting the empirical study in this thesis. The methodological assumptions are already addressed in Chapter 2 and methods used for conducting the literature review were addressed in Chapter 3 and 4. I will describe my line-of-actions taken by drawing on Potter and Wetherell (1987:160-175), and their ten steps regarding doing research on interpretative repertoires from a discursive psychology approach. The ten steps are the following: 1) research questions, 2) choice of sample selection, 3) collection of documents and records, 4) interviews, 5) transcription, 6) coding, 7) analysis, 8) validation, 9) the report, and 10) application. I will not, however, present the methods used and the lines-of-action taken using exactly these headings, but refer to relate the content to all of these steps. I will also take some help from Phillips and Hardy (2002), who are conducting organisational studies on discourses and also refer to the content of these ten steps. Lastly, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) have been a major inspiration in writing this chapter, and they say that it is important to mention that discursive psychology deploys many of the same methods as other qualitative approaches. There are, however, some differences that I will point out during this chapter.

Research questions

Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that the questions asked by discourse analysts can be many and varied. However, Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue that there are four factors that are important in shaping the research questions: 1) the research philosophy of the researcher, 2) the nature of the object of study, 3) the body of theory on which the researcher is drawing upon, and 4) the particular contribution that the researcher hope to make. If we go back to Chapter 2, I have argued my way towards the philosophy of discursive psychology by using the approach of interpretative repertoires, with a non-ontological social constructionism, that focuses on epistemology. As stressed, interpretative repertoires can be seen as a meso-level of discourse. Furthermore, it means that my interest is founded on the construction work and the micro-dynamics of discursive practices, not on the broader context. Thus as Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:119) say:

[...] discursive psychology differs from other qualitative approaches in being interested in how meanings are produced within the discourses or reper-
toires that people draw on as recourses in order to talk about aspects of the world. Thus the question asked lead up to study of how people, through discursive practice, create constructions of the world, groups and identities.

The first research question in this thesis was concerned with the discursive practice of how scholars position their work within different discourses, and was stated as followed: *What discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered?* This question was answered in Chapter 4, and laid the foundation for how to further approach strategic entrepreneurship through an empirical study. Hence, the second research question is concerned with the discursive practices of people in an organisational and is stated as followed: *How are opportunities and advantage positions constructed?* In sum, it is this second stated research question and the lines-of-action taken to answer this question that this chapter is mainly concerned with.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) note that in discourse studies the phenomenon being studied, and how it is conceptualised, will influence the research question. Furthermore, defining the object of study in terms of existing literature and then framing a research question around it is a critical step in designing a study. The object of study in this thesis has since day one been entrepreneurship in established firms, as it was this area I was employed to do my research on as a PhD student in August 2007. From the beginning, I also had an interest in the process of construction of social phenomenon in business contexts. When reading through the literature on entrepreneurship in established firms, I became interested in one of the newer contributions to the research area, namely strategic entrepreneurship. This area was under exciting development, and scholars in the field called for different perspectives to study the activities labelled strategic entrepreneurship practice. There was also a call for conceptual clarity, which made the first research question relevant, and in answering that question, it emerges that there have been an discursive exclusion of social constructionism views, qualitative features and practice-based approaches. This gave me an opportunity to introduce social constructionism ideas and a practice-based discursive approach, through discursive psychology, as an alternative perspective in studying strategic entrepreneurship. As such meet up with parts of the discursive exclusion. In this way, the research questions have also been anchored within the theoretical concerns of strategic entrepreneurship. By doing this, the results of my research will be of greater interest to the broad community of entrepreneurship scholars as well as within strategic entrepreneurship, and not only to discourse theorists (cf. Phillips & Hardy, 2002).
There are discourse theorists that reject the idea of using theories to frame research questions. Thus, they argue that we should allow the data to “speak for itself” so as to avoid academic imperialism (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). There are, nevertheless, also many discourse theorists that argue that this is the best way to do discourse research (see e.g. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). I have, however, taken the critique into consideration. I use strategic entrepreneurship as a theoretical perspective that will help me to limit the study of what I will focus on in the process of social construction. I have not, however, intentionally introduced concepts or categories to the data. Rather, the intention has been to let the data speak for itself within the chosen perspective, by the study of the discursive practices of position opportunities and advantages within a repertoire. Thus, within discursive psychology it is important to work close to the empirical material and its context (see e.g. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Edwards & Potter 2005; Potter & Edwards 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). I will discuss this more thoroughly under the next heading in conjunction with the collection and generation of empirical data. Important though it is, as Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue, if one uses a particular body of work it should be shown in the research questions. As stated, this is the case with this thesis and the stated research questions.

In sum, addressing how my philosophy, object of analysis and theory interact will help me to ascertain the contributions of the study conducted in this thesis, and what the use of discourse analysis can bring. It is, according to Phillips and Hardy (2002), crucial if discourse analysts are to realise its potential, and achieve a sustainable position within areas such as organisation and management. I will return to this thesis contribution in Chapter 9.

Choice of sample

Regarding the choice of sample, the selection of site becomes important (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). As Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue, there are two major aspects of concern regarding site: 1) theoretical considerations, and 2) practical considerations. In this thesis, it will be argued that the selected sites are in line with what scholars consider to be important aspects regarding strategic entrepreneurship. For example, the site of study is a well-established firm showing signs of renewal, aspects of growth, one that is considered a market leader, and with good profitability. To choose sites from a theoretical stance can be seen as reasonable in the context of discourse studies. As Phillips and Hardy (2002:68) state:
discourse studies are oriented toward theory creation rather than theory testing, choosing site with particular characteristics, which make it more likely to produce certain differences or similarities that can be related to particular theoretical position, is sensible.

In the next section I will address how in this study the selection process of industry, firms and participants took place.

Selection of industry

In this thesis, I have chosen to study strategic entrepreneurship in two quite different industries: an old and mature industry and a young and upcoming industry. I will explain why I made this choice, but in order to understand it you first need some background information. In the literature review, it appears that strategic entrepreneurship is closely related to a context of a changing environment that engenders a high degree of uncertainty. An industry that can easily be put into such a context is the IT-industry. As Brynko (2008) express it:

If one word can sum up the IT-industry it is "change".

Hence, in the IT-industry the product lifecycle is short, which means that a great deal happens in a short period of time compared to e.g. the industrial sector, where lifecycles are considerably longer (cf. Davidson & Leavy, 2008). To be able to manage these rapid changes, this suggests that firms acting in the IT-industry are dependent upon different aspects of renewal in order to stay competitive. This in turn makes it interesting to study the IT-industry from the perspective of strategic entrepreneurship to enhance our understanding about how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed.

I also wanted to include a firm that was acting in a more mature and "classical" industry. Thus, it is suggested that older and mature industries are facing a different competition than before. Firms acting in such a context for a couple of decades have probably been changed and renewed in several ways. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how a firm in this context constructs opportunity and advantage positions. My choice of mature industry fell upon the food industry, an industry that has been around for a couple of hundred years. I also chose it because this industry has gone through many changes due to the Swedish entry into the European Union in 1995 (e.g. growing competition and changes in regulations). In sum, the choice of different industries also gives the researcher the possibility to compare and contrast, and contrasting results could be understood with reference to discourse theory (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).
Selection of firms

Within strategic entrepreneurship, scholars take an interest in firms that have a high growth rate, with an interest in still growing and having good profitability, as they are more likely to renew themselves. As said in Chapter 4, organising renewal is also a central aspect of this thesis, and from this point of view I have taken the factors of growth and profitability into consideration when selecting which firms to include in this study. Furthermore, strategic entrepreneurship is about the established firm, mostly the larger firm, even though some scholars include small and medium-sized firms. But when may we consider a firm to be established? This question is not directly addressed by scholars within the literature about entrepreneurship in established firms or in strategic entrepreneurship. Therefore, in this thesis I have made an assumption that firms with a high growth rate and high profitability for at least ten years can be seen as established. When it comes to the size of the selected firms included in this thesis, the choice is based on which can be argued to be the most interesting firms to study and which firms we can learn much from (cf. Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Hence, the choice fell upon middle-sized firms because of the interesting situation they are in – “the land of in-between” – they are still in need of entrepreneurial activities to grow, but, as they grow, the need to become more strategic and administrative increases (cf. Lövstål, 2008). Furthermore, previous research in the area of entrepreneurship has focussed a great deal of attention on new venturing and/or start-ups (cf. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012), and in strategic management the focus on entrepreneurship has mainly been concerned with large firms to giant corporations (cf. Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001). This suggests that middle-sized firms are less studied. In the EU, there is a policy to consider firms with 100-499 employees as middle-sized firms (Henreksson & Johansson, 1997), which also has been the case in this thesis.

How the firms were chosen

To find possible firms of interest (that fit with the theoretical requirements discussed) I started in 2008 to read different listings of growth firms in Sweden e.g. Arhen’s growth list and the Dagens Nyheter gazelle list. From these listings, about ten firms from the IT-industry seemed interesting. I then studied these firms’ web-sites, annual-reports and press-releases, and ended up with four firms that were contacted by e-mail for a meeting. One of these firms was really enthusiastic about participating, and had the time to invest in giving me the opportunity to learn more about them. After

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17 See the literature review in Chapter 3.
meeting with the CEO for about two hours, I decided to meet this firm again, and after three meetings (two with the CEO and one with the chairman/owner), I decided to include this firm (from here on it will be called ‘System Novelty’) in the study. As I have said, except for theoretical considerations of sites, there are also practical considerations (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The final choice of System Novelty was partly based on practical considerations of accessibility and the interest of the firm members in participating. But mostly System Novelty was chosen from theoretical considerations, as they had been growing for more than ten years, still wanted to grow, were market leaders in their niche of the IT-industry, and had been profitable since day one. A more detailed presentation of the firm is given in Chapter 6.

When it came to find a firm from an old and mature industry, I was in contact with an organisation that was working with firms with a high growth rate. I also read business news and used Google. In this process, I stumbled upon a press release about a firm that had received a prize for the Best Export Company of the year in Sweden. I started to do some research on them and contacted the CEO. Thus, the firm was a good example of a well-established firm in a mature industry i.e. the food and beverage industry. They were market leaders in their niche, had a high growth rate and had been profitable since day one. They also continuously worked to renew their product range, and were interested in finding new markets. The CEO of the firm had also stressed the need to keep on growing and looking for new opportunities. A meeting was set up in 2009 with the CEO, and we came to an agreement that I could include the firm in my thesis. Later on, however, when I tried to set up further appointments with the CEO, it appeared that he might have changed his mind. After a meeting with the chairman of the board in 2010, it was confirmed that they did not want to participate. Therefore, the process of trying to find a new firm to include in the thesis started all over again in year 2010.

After having been in contact with a couple of different firms, but still not having found a firm that could meet up with my theoretical criterions set in this chapter, my luck turned. At the beginning of 2011 I came into contact with a firm through a colleague of mine at the Business School of Örebro University. He had met with the former CEO of a firm, someone still active as a senior adviser, who had expressed an interest in participating in research. After researching the firm on Google, on the firm’s website, and after a 90 minute meeting with the senior adviser, I decided to include them in my thesis. Thus, the firm was a good example of a well-established firm in the food industry, they were market leaders in their niche, had a high growth rate and profitability. I will from here on call this
firm ‘PREM Food’. As with System Novelty, the decision was based on both practical and theoretical considerations. A more detailed presentation of the firm is given in Chapter 7.

Selection of participants
Adopting a discursive analytical approach to empirical data takes quite a large amount of time (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). With respect to size sample, it is often sufficient to use a sample of just a few texts, for example, fewer than ten interviews (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:161). The reason for this is that discursive patterns can be created and maintained by just a few people (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:161). Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), however, also stress that some scholars have used larger samples, because they have been interested in accessing different and varied discursive practices. This is the case in this thesis. As Potter and Wetherell (1987:162) write, there is basically no correct or natural limit. What is important is that the researcher clearly describes and justifies their choices based on research questions and methodology. Below I will argue for my choice of sample.

Regarding the selection of participants in the two chosen firms, this has been done in co-operation with the Chief Executive Officers (CEO). But the chairman of System Novelty (the major owner and one of the founders) was also asked who to include or not, and at PREM Food the senior advisor was asked. Guth and Ginsberg (1990) argue that, if entrepreneurial initiatives are to be achieved in organisations, strategic leaders are important and their values and beliefs are often decisive. This is one of the arguments why the CEO and others in top management have been selected as the first entry point.

I also decided to include middle managers in this study, so as to be able to study differences and variations in discursive practices and the processes of social construction. A fair question though is why the middle managers? 

**Firstly**, there is a strong concern with management within strategic entrepreneurship, and it has been noticed that middle managers are important to study, but most scholars within strategic entrepreneurship more or less only include top management. **Secondly**, middle management are the ones to see the decisions through within a firm and therefore become important (cf. Floyd & Lane, 2000; Kuratko et al., 2005). **Thirdly**, this thesis takes an interest in the process of social construction and renewal. As such, Floyd and Lane (2000) have interesting arguments when stressing that

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18 See the literature review in Chapter 3.
renewal processes are best understood as a system of social exchanges involving crucial interactions between the levels of management. In sum, in this thesis both top and middle management were included in the study of System Novelty and PREM Food. I will return to who the participants are in the next section.

Collection of documents and interviews

As I have said, I adopt a discursive approach of interpretative repertoires, a specific branch within discursive psychology with a practice of using interviews in conjunction with the collection of different documents\(^\text{19}\) (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr 2003; Whittle, 2006; Reynolds et al., 2007; Whittle & Mueller, 2010 among many others). This is also the approach in this thesis. It is, however, important to state that there is a group of scholars within discursive psychology that is quite critical to the use of interviews. Potter and Hepburn (2005) as well as Alvesson (2011) state that the choice of doing interviews is taken-for-granted. For example, Potter and Hepburn (2005) write that there is very little explicit justification for the use of interviews and their appropriateness for the relevant object of study. The important point in this statement, as I see it, is that the texts that best provide data depend on what the researcher is studying. An argument for using interviews in this thesis is that interpretative repertoires is about identifying culturally and organisationally available linguistic recourses that speakers (people in a firm) use in building their accounts rather than the specific rhetorical moves that they make in interaction (cf. Burr, 2003). As Smith et al. (2005) argue:

"I agree interviews should not be the automatic choice for the qualitative researcher but in many cases they still will be the best choice."

Potter and Hepburn (2005) state that interviews of the kind in which participants are answering questions verbally, and where there is some attempt to capture their words have gone by many names e.g. conversational, active, qualitative, open-ended or even sometimes semi-structured. In this thesis I will refer to ‘conversations’ or ‘interview conversations’.

Within discursive psychology, researchers like to talk about naturally occurring texts, and within this concept they include everything that should have appeared in the normal day-to-day activities of the research subjects. This means that interview conversations are not seen as naturally occurring. Moreover, naturally occurring texts are generally considered a better

\(^{19}\) Documents are often referred to as naturally occurring texts among discursive psychologists.
source of data for discourse analysis, because they are actually examples of language in use (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). However, which texts occur ‘naturally’ in any particular situation depends on the research question (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). For example, if the research question concerns the discursive construction of an organisation, then naturally occurring texts might include the different kinds of archival data that organisations store, such as e-mails, memos, internal reports, annual reports, etc. It can also be texts accumulated outside the firm, such as media articles, government reports, advertisements etc. (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). In line with these thoughts, in this thesis I have used naturally occurring texts such as written documents about the two firms in this study e.g. annual reports, firm websites, and firm presentations for external purposes, press-releases and articles. I have also, for example, used texts to understand the industry the two firms compete in, research reports and governor reports as well as documents about regulations and changes in laws. For the analysis, however, I have only used naturally occurring texts accumulated by people in the firm, such as annual reports, firm website and different presentation material of the firm.

The set-up of the interview situation
Potter and Hepburn (2005:10) point out that the set-up of the interview is potentially critical in at least two ways. Firstly, under what category have the participants been recruited? This includes how these categories are constructed in the various parts of the recruitment (including the introduction to the research, ethics procedures, administrative arrangements, and so on). Secondly, what is the task of understanding offered to the participant? This involves, for example, questions such as: what are they told what the interview will be about, what it will be for, and what the task of the interviewee will be? Potter and Hepburn (2005) write that these are complicated issues in several ways, but recommend that the researcher at least makes some attempt at recording and representing what went on. For example, textual materials relating to recruitment could be included in the write-up, and an attempt could be made to at least try to make visible the interaction between the participant and researcher prior to the interview. With this in mind, I will in this chapter try to make the recruitment set-up of my interviews as transparent as possible. But in the analysis of the ex-

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20 I will not go into these in detail here; for those who are interested I recommend reading the article as a whole.
tracts from the interview conversations in Chapter 6 and 7 I also discuss some of its possible implications.

System Novelty
When it came to System Novelty, I sent an e-mail to the current CEO. To interest him in reading the e-mail, I wrote on the subject - *Impressed by your growth! Do you want to tell me about it?* In what I wrote, I presented myself as a PhD student at Örebro University School of Business, and a participant in the Research School of Management and IT at Uppsala University. I expressed my interest in the firm from reading about them in the media, and that I was doing my research on entrepreneurship and strategy. Furthermore, that I was interested in getting in touch with middle-sized growth firms in the IT-industry. I asked him to reply to me if he was interested in participating, or just wanted to meet me to learn more about what I did my research on. I also offered him the possibility of being anonymous. When we later on met up for the interview conversation, I again presented myself in the same terms as in the e-mail, but before moving on into any deeper conversations I asked for permission to record the conversation, which was accepted. It was important that I could start the recording as quickly as possible, so what I said to the participant, or did not say, was recorded. This is in line with the recommendations of Potter and Hepburn (2005). I was therefore able to reproduce what I have said in written materials, which provided the possibility of analysing my potential impact on the conversation from the start, and what categorises I had brought in to the conversation.

At this first conversation with the CEO, in the spring of 2009, my intention was to acquire some contextual information to better understand the firm and the possibility of them becoming part of the study in this thesis. I had beforehand read media material, and had written down some possible questions to ask if it went too quiet, which I did not have to worry about. I did not need to ask a lot of questions, as my role became to mainly show an interest in what he was telling me, and respond with some questions when I did not understand something. The CEO was very talkative and eager to tell me about System Novelty. He covered topics on the firm’s background, strategy, organisation, products, competitors, customers, and his own background. At the end of the conversation, the CEO gave me some materials regarding the firm, its organisation and strategy, such as a power-point presentation that he had presented earlier to the board. This presentation also included private notes from the CEO. At the next meeting, this power-point presentation formed the foundation for further conversation. Topics in the presentation were; 1) introduction and investment
considerations, 2) market overview, 3) overview of System Novelty 4) financial overview, and 5) business plan. At this second meeting the CEO suggested I talk with the Chairman of the board, also the largest owner of the firm, an offer that I accepted.

A couple of days later I received an e-mail from the CEO telling me that the Chairman would be happy to meet up with me, and that I could contact him to set up a date. If we put this in relation to Potter and Hepburn (2005), this approach meant that I did not know how I was positioned by the CEO in his conversation with the chairman. So I was not able to know what categories were brought in that could have an impact on the interview conversation that took place later on, which Potter and Hepburn (2005) stress is important. My third conversation with the CEO took place in the spring of 2010. On this occasion he started the conversation by telling me what had happened since the last time we saw each other in the autumn of 2009. I let the CEO steer the conversation, and mostly asked follow-up questions on what he brought up, such as why they had done what they did, why he thought some aspects had worked better than others, and so on.

I sent the Chairman an e-mail in the spring of 2010 where I presented myself in the same terms as in the e-mail to the CEO, with one exception, adding a couple of potential dates for a meeting. When meeting up, I quickly got the chairman’s acceptance to record the interview. The conversation started with the fact that he wanted to know why I was interested in System Novelty. I explained I was interested in growth firms and to my knowledge they had been awarded a prize as a fast-growing firm. He then started to talk about his view of growth. Once again I did not need to ask a lot of questions, rather to show my interest by nodding my head, and respond to what he brought up in the conversation. This led to our covering subjects such as the start-up phase, development of the firm, growth, entrepreneurship, opportunity, innovation, strategy, the decision to hire an external CEO, and to establish a middle management team. In other words, I did not use any subject guide or pre-written questions. At the end of the conversation the chairman suggested that I talked to the middle managers and listen to what they had to say about working at System Novelty. This was in line with my intentions, and also something I had discussed with the CEO at our third meeting. A couple of days later I got the middle managers’ e-mail addresses with a forwarded recommendation letter by e-mail.

In the recommendation letter, the CEO positioned me as a researcher from Örebro University School of Business, interested in growth firms. Furthermore, he wrote that I had met with him several times, and the
Chairman, so now I was ready to take the next step, and meet with others at the firm. I approached each of the seven middle managers by e-mail during the early summer of 2010, and set up appointments to meet all of them individually during the summer and early autumn of 2010. In the e-mail to the middle managers, I presented myself in the same terms as I had to the CEO and Chairman. In that way I tried to re-position myself as a PhD student, not as a researcher as the CEO did. It was important for me that they did not get the idea that I was a senior researcher. I also stressed that I had met with the CEO and the Chairman, and that I was interested in learning about their experience at System Novelty. My intention was to have one conversation with each middle manager for about one hour to one hour and a half. However, I met one of the middle managers – the Head of Communications - twice. This is because I had some trouble with my recording device, and therefore needed to see him again, as to carry out a discourse analysis from a discursive psychology approach you need every word recorded. I did, however, take notes from the first conversation after the meeting, but they have only been used for contextual purposes. A total of eleven interview conversations have been used in the analysis; for details see Table 2.

When meeting with the middle managers at System Novelty in a small conference-room, my role in the conversation became more active especially at the beginning. I started by asking them about their background such as education and previous work experience, following up with questions about when they started working at the firm and what it was like to start working there. I asked these kinds of questions as a ‘warm up’ in order to get the participants to relax, but also to give me an insight into what contexts they came from. For example, it was interesting to know whether they came from a previous context of a larger firm or had an academic education as that could then be an explanation as to why they might draw on certain discourses when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. I then moved on to asking them about their experiences in the firm, what they did and what they thought worked for them in their work. I did not need to ask a lot of questions after the warm up questions. The focus was rather on responding to what they were telling me, and asking questions such as why, how and ‘can you develop that further’, regarding what they chosen to discuss.
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<th>No of occasions</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Head of Customisation</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>17,25 (1,45)</td>
<td>11 (12(^{21}))</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
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*Table 2 - Interview conversations at System Novelty.*

**PREM Food**

When it comes to PREM Food, the approach was rather different. One can say that I was recruited instead of recruiting somebody to the study. As I have said, the senior adviser of PREM Food contacted Örebro University School of Business through a colleague of mine. The colleague, who had established the contact, sent an e-mail to the senior adviser, presenting me as a PhD student in Business Administration with a focus on entrepreneurship. Furthermore, that I was going to contact him, which I did. In that e-mail I presented myself as a PhD Student in Business Administration who was doing research on entrepreneurship in established firms, and that I would be interested in meeting up with him. I also gave some suggestions of possible dates for the meeting. He responded quickly, and wrote that he thought that there were a lot of aspects to work on in that area, and we decided to meet.

\(^{21}\) Important to note is that I have only used the eleven recorded interview conversations in the analysis.
The first meeting with the senior adviser took place in the spring of 2011 in a meeting room at PREM Food. As with previous interviews, I asked for permission to record the conversation, even though it was ‘only’ a meeting where we discussed the possibilities of me using the firm in my study, and what he wanted out of it. At the second conversation, which I also recorded, the senior adviser told me about the history of the firm. It is important to note here that he was eager to put the history of the firm in a context of entrepreneurship. Thus, he drew a lot on the ‘public/general’ view of entrepreneurship as the entrepreneur who starts a firm, and over the years was able to make it grow. This is not my theoretical perspective on entrepreneurship, so one can say that I did not enforce my theory into this conversation, which was very driven by the participant himself. My role was more to ask follow-up questions on the subjects he was discussing. At the third and fourth conversation the senior adviser talked from the position he then held at PREM Food. These conversations have been included in my analysis. The other two conversations have been used for the historical context of the firm.

If we go back to the second conversation with the senior adviser, it ended in a discussion of which other people I was interested in meeting for further interview conversations. We decided to take it chronologically. Firstly I would meet with the technician employed by the founders. Thereafter I would move towards the present by having a conversation with each of the previous CEOs (including the senior adviser in his role of CEO) who had been working at PREM Food. This was to gain a better understanding of the context, and what had happened over the years. The senior adviser stated that he wanted to approach the former CEOs himself, and set up meetings. The argument for this approach was that these former CEOs were older and retired, and it would have been hard to get them to meet me without the senior adviser’s involvement. If we once again bear in mind the advice of Potter and Wiggins (2008), this meant that I did not know how the senior adviser positioned me to the previous CEOs. In that way, it was not possible to analyse what impact his presentation of me might have on the interview conversations. These interviews, however, have only been used for the contextual understanding of the firm’s history. In short, I met up with three of the former CEOs in an office at PREM Food; one I met at a café in his home town. As usual, I recorded the conversation as quickly as possible to get the conversation in its early stages.

When it came to the conversation with the present CEO, I established a contact with him by e-mail. I had, however, briefly met with the CEO at an earlier stage, when I was interviewing the senior adviser, and we were introduced to each other. I then presented myself as a PhD student from
Örebo University School of Business, which I also did in the e-mail to him. Also in the e-mail I drew upon my contacts with the senior adviser, and said that I wanted to know about his experiences as a sales and marketing manager, and about his current position as CEO of PREM Food. A couple of dates for a potential meeting were also suggested. I met with the CEO twice, as he did not have time to finish his account at the first conversation. At the first interview conversation, he wanted to know more about what I was doing, and what I was interested in. I stated as in the e-mail that I was interested in his experiences as a CEO, and as a former sales and marketing manager at PREM Food. Then I suggested that we could start with why he decided to work at PREM Food, and his previous experiences. The CEO then started to talk, and during his account he more and more moved along into talking about his involvement, and what he thought worked. He was talkative. I did not have to lead the conversation, more than by asking follow-up questions regarding the subject he had already addressed, or if I did not understand something. The conversation ended in that I was researching entrepreneurship and strategy. As a response to this the CEO suggested that, at the next meeting, we should go through the strategy, which we did in early 2012. I also got his permission to interview the middle managers for one hour each.

The CEO was the one that set up the contact with all the middle managers, except for the product developer manager, who I had already met through the senior adviser. I met with four of the middle managers in the end of 2011, and one of them at the beginning of 2012. The schema for the day with the four middle managers was set by the CEO, who had arranged it with the managers beforehand. However, I set up a meeting with the finance manager, also appointed deputy CEO, by e-mail, presenting myself in the usual terms (a PhD student interested in his experience of PREM Food). I met with each participant in their own offices.

I do not know how I had been presented by the CEO, as he set up the meetings, and therefore I could not take it into consideration in the analysis. However, as with the middle managers at System Novelty, I started the conversation by asking their permission to record, which they agreed to. Then I asked them about their background e.g. education and previous work experience, following up with questions about when they started working at the firm, and what it was like to start working there. I then moved on to asking them about what they did and their experiences of what they thought worked. It is important though that in these conversations I generally had to be more active than in most of the interview conversations I had done before for this thesis. I could also sense that two of the participants were a little uncomfortable to have me there, said that they
did not have much to say, and referred to the fact that they did not have an academic background. They were, nevertheless, very nice and accommodating towards me, but the conversation was more driven by me. I tried, however, to avoid bringing in theoretical concepts, finding other ways to make them talk about their experiences, and what they thought worked in their work. I present an overview of the sixteen interview conversations at PREM Food in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time (h)</th>
<th>No of occasions</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO/ Senior Advisor</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>4 by himself (3 as a participant)</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO Former</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Sales Director /CEO</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO current</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2011/2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Director</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>2 (1 for contextual purposes thus he was employed already 1978)</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Sales Director</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Chain Director/logistics</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT &amp; Business Developer Director</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFO</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa: 11 top and middle managers</td>
<td>21.30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 - Interview Conversations at PREM Food.

It is important to note that, of the sixteen interview conversations, only ten interviews were used in the analysis of interpretative repertoires, positioning and discursive devices. The other six were, as I have already said, used for contextual purposes.

Transcriptions

When it comes to choosing a transcription system, Potter and Wetherell (1987) stress the importance of a system that enables the researcher to analyse the interview as social action. If an interview is to be regarded as social action, both questions and answers needs be transcribed word for word and analysed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Hence, the conversations for the analysis were recorded with the help of an mp3-player and transcribed word for word by
the help of a computer-based program called Express Scribe. I did not take notes during the conversations, as I wanted to give the person my full attention, to be able to listen, and respond to what they said without interruption. In other words, I wanted it to be as close to a ‘normal’ conversation as possible.

I have used the basic notions of the transcription conventions that are usually used in discursive psychology based on Jefferson’s transcription system, but not entirely, as it can be argued that there are some differences in transcriptions of naturally occurring conversations and interview situations. This approach, as Potter and Hepburn (2005) have noticed, is not unusual, and it has been common among discursive psychologists to advocate a kind of ‘light’ version of the Jefferson transcription system. This approach for interview research is often called Jefferson ‘Lite’ and was introduced by Potter and Wetherell (1987) for analysis of interpretative repertoires. The ‘Lite’ transcription captures the words and some of the grosser elements of stress and intonation, but leaves pauses untimed and does not attempt to capture more subtle elements such as closing and continuing intonation, latching, and so on (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Arguments for this ‘Lite’ approach are mostly based on that analysis of the broader repertoires (or ideological content of talk), where the key thing is the words, categories and repertoires used; the representation of features of speech delivery will only get in the way (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). In sum, the ‘minutiae’ of conversation will distract from the ‘broader’ organisation of the talk that interpretative repertoires are concerned with.

However, even though Potter and Hepburn (2005:9) state that there is some “power to this observation”, they still think that analysis of broader patterns and ideological talk should be able to deal with the specifics of what is going on in the talk, rather than a reconstructed, simplified and distorted version of it. From reading many articles and books on the subject, one can tell that there is a divide between scholars that advocate a ‘Lite’ version and those who are against it. I will not, as I have said, use the full-length transcription system of Jefferson in this thesis. This is for several reasons I will discuss, but first I would like to state that there are constructive arguments made by Potter and Hepburn (2005) about the advantages of using the full-length version. For example, the full Jeffersonian representation of talk makes jointly constructed talk more apparent, including the

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According to Potter and Hepburn (2005), naturally occurring conversations as the activity (being recorded) would have happened as if it had been in every-day life, that is not influenced by the researcher.
close dependence of how the interviewee responds to the interviewer’s question (and vice versa) in all its specifics. With this approach, scholars also have a better foundation of validity for the repertoires or broader categorisations of discourses from the interview. Thus, it shows how your claims can account for the specifics of the talk, not just its broad themes (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). This is one of the main arguments for why I am going to employ a fuller version than the ‘Lite’ transcription style. I will come back to exactly what features of the orthographic\textsuperscript{23} transcript that are used in this thesis. But first, we also have to look at some of the negative aspects of using a full length Jeffersonian style of transcript.

To use the full-length transcription method is arguably very time-consuming. Potter and Wetherell (1987), as well as Potter and Hepburn (2005), stress that with this system one hour of interview will take at least twenty hours to transcribe. In other words, two hours of interview will take a whole working week to finish, and that is as long as the quality of the sound is excellent. If the sound, or some of the talk is blurry or expressed in a lower voice, it will take even longer. Potter and Hepburn (2005) state that if the researcher’s overall time for a study stays constant, as with the work of writing up a thesis, they will need to make sacrifices with the full length Jeffersonian transcription system, probably as regards sample size. I had already acquired a large sample for this kind of study, and had only a specific amount of time to use, which favoured the use of a ‘Lite’ version.

There is also the aspect that fine grain details could be lost in translation. Thus, the interview conversations is made in Swedish, and then translated to English. To my knowledge there is none of the previous researchers in the area of interpretative repertoires to address this issue. Nevertheless, it would be sound to expect that some of the fine grained nuances of shift in talk and some choices of wording get lost in the translation process. This in turn speaks for a more of a ‘Lite’ version of transcription and focussing on the broader level of discourse\textsuperscript{24} i.e. the interpretative repertoires within the conversations. Also, the research question about how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed is concerned with a broader

\textsuperscript{23} Orthography means a standardised way of using a specific writing system (script) to write the language.

\textsuperscript{24} Potter and Hepburn (2005) consider interpretative repertoires as a broader level of discourse. It is important here to remember that, in discursive psychology, interpretative repertoires are at the highest level of analysis. However, compared to other discourse analysis approaches interpretative repertoires is considered as a meso-level of analysis (see the discussion in Chapter 2).
level of discourse. Therefore, in line with Potter and Wetherell (1987) I would not need to focus on the fine details, thereby going for the ‘Lite’ version. I will, however, argue for an extended form and bring in some more details. I will do so by drawing on those discursive psychologists that are inspired by conversational analysts, and work in presenting transcripts in a way that makes it easier to follow when the analysts anchoring interpretative repertoires in the empirical material of a conversational text. In this sense I will also address some of the criticisms of using interpretative repertoires as an approach to discourses. Because, as I said in Chapter 2, scholars using interpretative repertoires have been criticised for a lack of transparency of how they come to their conclusion on certain repertoires (cf. Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Furthermore, I will also address some of the criticisms, namely that many interpretative repertoire analysts work with too broad discourses (repertoires) (cf. Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Thus, the repertoires have a tendency to include too much. However, I will return to this when discussing how I carried out my analysis. The transcription system used in this thesis can be seen in Table 4. This version includes several of the conversational features often missing from the orthographic transcript when transcribing interviews in a Jefferson ‘Lite’ version. The conversational features often missing in the orthographic transcript when using a Jefferson ‘Lite’ version are presented in Table 5.

As one can see, by comparing the chosen transcription system for this thesis with the features often missed in the ‘Lite’ version, I have incorporated the following features: elevated pitch, elevated and lower volume, elongated sound, overlaps lined up with square brackets and laughter particle. But I do not, however, take most micro-aspects into consideration such as the exact timing of pauses, speeded-up talk, a ‘squeaky’ vocal delivery, pitch movement, over and above normal rhythms of speech etc. This is in line with the arguments by Smith et al. (2005), who emphasised not shifting the focus too much onto the micro-aspects of analysis so that the broader level-of-discourse comes into the foreground (i.e. in this thesis the interpretative repertoires). The main idea is still to analyse the interpretative repertoires people draw upon in their accounts (from the transcribed text). But also to anchor the repertoires in a transparent way in the accounts so that it clearly shows how the interpretative repertoires are drawn upon as a flexible resource. In so doing, the approach should become more valid and transparent for the reader.
Example Features
[ and ] Square brackets mark the start and end of overlapping speech. They are aligned to mark the precise position of overlap.
[Yeah. ]
Underlining Indicates emphasis; the extent of underlining within individual words locates emphasis and also indicates how heavy this is.
((stoccato)) Additional comments from the transcriber, e.g. about features of context or delivery.
Er:::m Elongated sound (number of colons describes the length of the sound).
heh heh Voiced laughter. Can have other symbols added, such as underlinings, pitch movement, extra aspiration, etc.
sto(h)p i(h)t Laughter within speech is signalled by h’s in round brackets.
() Short pause.
(...) Long pause, the length described by the number of points.
[ . . . ] Where material from the tape has been omitted for different reasons.
YEAH Elevated volume (capitals).
"kids" Lowered volume (enclosed in ° °).
↑well Elevated pitch.

Table 4 - The transcription system chosen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>stressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing stop intonation</td>
<td>Stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing intonation</td>
<td>Stressed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlaps lined up with square brackets</td>
<td>[ and ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Yeah. ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause lengths timed in seconds</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated pitch</td>
<td>↑well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated volume (capitals)</td>
<td>YEAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowered volume (enclosed in ° °)</td>
<td>° kids°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elongated sound (colons)</td>
<td>Er:::m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeded up (enclosed in &gt; &lt;)</td>
<td>&gt; Not always in the &lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One turn ‘latches’ onto another with no discernible pause</td>
<td>Er:::m= =Mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbreath</td>
<td>hh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughter particle</td>
<td>huh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 - Conversational features often missed from the Jefferson ‘Lite’ version. Source: Potter and Hepburn (2005).
Coding
Wiggins and Potter (2008) describe analysis in discursive psychology as an iterative process that involves repeated listening to recordings combined with repeated readings of transcripts. Furthermore, that the coding25 stage is the precursor to the analysis, and involves going through a large amount of material for instances of a phenomenon. Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that coding is quite different from doing the analysis itself, thus the goal is not to find results but to find a way to manage a really large amount of text. Furthermore, they argue that this is done by thematisation or categorisation, and it can be described as an analytic preliminary preparation. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) stress the importance that the themes or categories used in coding should be closely connected to the research questions, which I have taken into consideration, as in this thesis the work has been to search for instances containing opportunity and advantage positions in a context of organising renewal.

I started the coding process by going through all the text documents that I had collected, including texts from the firm’s websites, and by copying every instance of text that could be related to a context of organising renewal. I saved these copied instances in a separate document. I then started to listen to the interview conversations, first once, then once more, and on a few occasions I listened a third time. In this way, I tried to understand and learn the material as a whole before I started to write everything down, which would have taken a tremendous effort and time, and would not have given me the feeling of the context as a whole in the same way. At the second listening, I started to make notes of where I could find a possible instance of organising renewal. I then went back in the sound file again and started to transcribe every instance I had identified word for word, and then saved it in a document. At this stage, it was important to be as inclusive as possible (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987, Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002;

25 Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:137) stress the following about coding: “It is important to distinguish between this form of coding and the form of coding that is done in research (both quantitative and qualitative) based on positivist epistemology. In positivist research, it is important that the coding is as standardised as possible. Big differences in different coders’ ways of coding challenge the reliability. ‘Inter-coder reliability tests’ are carried out to check if different coders’ codings look enough alike each other. In discourse analysis these tests are criticised for not recognising that the coding process is not only a question of the use of pre-constructed categories, but also that the coder draws on his or her discursive impressions of the interview as social interaction in order to understand the interview.”
Wiggins & Potter, 2008). It is, thus, important to note that I did not transcribe just a sentence or two, but the complete context surrounding each instance, including the previous question I had asked. In this way, I acquired about a couple of hundred pages of transcriptions that I read and re-read in the next phase in search for possible instances of opportunity and/or advantage positions. This meant that I created a second document in which I included every instance I found that indicated a possible connection to opportunity and advantage positions. This second document was then transcribed in detail with the chosen transcription system in Table 4 by re-listening to each instance of talk once again. This file, and the file with instances from text documents, has later served as a basis for the detailed analysis (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

In discourse analysis, Phillips and Hardy (2002:74) stress that the more standardised methods that exist in quantitative approaches are not appropriate for discourse analysis, as the aim is to:

[…] identify (some of) the multiple meanings assigned to texts, which means that systematic, laborsaving forms of analysis (such as traditional content analysis) are counterproductive because they aim at rapid consolidation of categories. […] “Recipes” for successful data analysis are therefore difficult to provide. […] the form that analysis takes will vary from study to study. As a result, researchers need to develop an approach that makes sense in light of their particular study and establish a set of arguments to justify the particular approach they adopt.

In line with these thoughts, I have argued for my research strategy of interpretative repertoires in Chapter 2, and the choice of frame of reference in Chapter 4. I have also argued for my methods chosen in this chapter, and how I have worked with the coding process. In the next section, I will argue for how I have analysed the accounts from the participants in this study.

Analysis
In the detailed analysis, I have focused on identifying what repertoires top and middle managers draw on when positioning opportunities and advantages in different accounts of text and talk. The aim of the analysis was not, however, to categorise people (e.g. as strategists, opportunists, or entrepreneurs etc.), but rather to identify the discursive practices i.e. of how people construct opportunity and advantage positions within a particular repertoire. In their construction work, top and middle managers as people cannot be expected to be consistent. It is to be expected that their texts and talk vary as they draw on different repertoires in different contexts.
(Wetherell & Potter, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Hence, the analysis also places emphasis on the content of repertoires in social interaction as something important in itself, not just as a reflection of underlying psychological processes (Wetherell & Potter, 1987; Whittle, 2006). To reframe strategic entrepreneurship, as I have done in Chapter 4, brings a set of specific assumptions of importance to the analysis:

Firstly, it is important to state that the main focus is towards the study of the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions.

Secondly, opportunities and advantages are positioned in different ways within specific repertoires for specific functions, thus positions are arranged and occasioned by how the social context and the interaction is ordered, are made relevant and actively serve the participants in the conversation (see e.g. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003; Korobov, 2010).

Thirdly, the work of positioning opportunities and advantages within specific repertoires are action-oriented. Hence, repertoires are an important form of social action that has an impact on the ways opportunities and advantages are perceived and constructed by people within an organisation. Therefore, it is not just “talk” (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Furthermore, in line with Burr (2003), I assume that the things people say or write are manifestations of repertoires and appear in their descriptions and accounts when they are trying to explain what they are doing and why within a context of organising renewal.

Fourthly, repertoires do not originate from a person’s private experience, but from in the discursive culture of the firm, and from the wider context of the social life that these people inhabit (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This means that the things that people say or write can be thought of as examples of repertoires, as occasions where particular discourses are given the possibility of constructing an event in one way rather than another (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Pieces of speech and writing can be said to belong to the same repertoires to the extent that they are painting the same general picture of the object in question. However, the same words, phrases, pictures, expressions and so on can appear in a number of different repertoires, each time contributing to a rather different narrative (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Fifthly, both variability and repetition are features that I have been searching for in the empirical material (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). Thus, variability was expected within a single interview conversation, because people can be expected to make use of different repertoires to suite their current purposes. Repetition
across different interviews was expected because the same repertoires will be used by different people, but not necessarily in the same way.

Sixthly, words or sentences do not by themselves belong to any particular repertoire. In fact, the meaning of what we say rather depends on the discursive context, the general conceptual framework in which our words are embedded. In this sense a repertoire can be seen as a frame of reference, a conceptual premise against which our utterances can be interpreted (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Lastly, there is a two-way relationship between repertoires: 1) the actual things that people say or write, and 2) the things we say and write, in turn are dependent for their meaning on the discursive context in which they appear (cf. Burr, 2003:66). If we put this in a context of strategic entrepreneurship, drawing on Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), three basic assumptions regarding repertoires appear:

- Repertoires are both constructive and constitutive, and drawn upon by people in interaction when constructing opportunity and advantage positions in a context of organising renewal.
- Repertoires are seen as having an epistemological orientation and is action oriented (it perform specific functions).
- Repertoires are understood as being organised rhetorically to ratify one version of an opportunity- and advantage position, and practices effects or appropriate use, in the face of competing versions.

As a first step in my analysis, I started to look for possible opportunity and/or advantage positions, and how the participants in text and talk constructed these positions. Plenty of opportunity and advantage positions were quite easy to find, for example, as when the CEO at System Novelty stated that they saw an opportunity when the market was deregulated and that they decided to take an advantage of this opportunity by releasing a new product. At other times, it was harder, because the participants were not that explicit in their language, and did not use the terminology of ‘opportunity’ and ‘advantage’. Therefore, I had to address the context as a whole and interpret with the help of the selected frame of reference (in Chapter 4) what possibly could be considered as an opportunity or not and vice versa with an advantage. In these cases, I have been explicit about this in the analysis and point to this fact in the text. An example is when the CEO at PREM Food stated in Extract 2 that they developed new products with their customers, and in this way they have a ‘sure’ customer, which enhances the possibility of success of the new project. In this case, I interpreted the emergence of an opportunity position in being able to create
new products, with the advantage position of having a secured customer and a better chance of success.

When working with finding instances of opportunity and advantage positions in text and talk, I also started to note recurring pieces of speech and writing, for example, that the firms are so flexible and changeable towards their environment, in their technology, towards their customers, etc. In this way, I started to get a first idea about what repertoires were in use in the two firms, which I wrote down. I then questioned the first set of interpretative repertoires I interpreted, and I went back over the transcribed text again and again to see whether I could reinterpret them in other ways. This led to my readjusting the repertoires on several occasions before the final interpretation presented in this thesis emerged. It is, however, important to say that other interpretations of repertoires, as well as with regard to the positioning activities and the use of discursive devices could be interpreted differently. It is important though that the interpretations made in this thesis are understandable to the reader, and that I present enough material in the extract for the reader to make their own interpretations and to be able to make up their own minds regarding whether my interpretations seem valid or not.

At a second stage, I started to analyse how the managers made fact constructs when constructing opportunity and advantage positions with the help of discursive devices, and what the function was by using the specific repertoire when doing so. As I have said, by examining interpretative repertoires, the researcher has the possibility of studying how managers in action describe, explain, justify, request, command, assume, encourage, praise, blame, persuade, influence and make sense of their work etc. (cf. Whittle, 2006). Furthermore, insights into positioning have been gained by an analysis of the way managers, through positioning themselves and being positioned by others, construct, negotiate and challenge different accounts that represent different understandings of the world, including different attributions of responsibility for actions and events (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). As I have said earlier, discursive devices are an important part of the positioning activities that take place (Korobov, 2010). With the help of discursive devices as an analytical tool, it was possible to study what top and middle managers observably did with repertoires i.e. what they actually said. This is without making speculative assumptions about a person’s state of mind and without formulating propositions about the causal impact of talk or text (cf. Mueller & Whittle, 2011). Based on the three overall themes discussed in Chapter 2, see Table 1, and inspired by work carried out by Mueller and Whittle (2011), I chose
to address the following discursive devices: category entitlement, stake, footing, externalisation, nominalisation and vagueness.

Wetherell and Maybin (1996) argue that children develop their sense of self by internalising their position in categories within different narratives and repertoires. By listening to accounts of the world, children learn appropriate modes of talking about themselves and others, including talking about thoughts and emotions. And, through the stories they tell themselves, children represent, try out and negotiate aspects of the self. In a similar way, one may expect that people in an organisation develop a sense of self and of the firm by their positioning activities in different repertoires. By listening to other firm members’ accounts of what is happening in the firm, and what is a right or wrong way of doing things in the organisation etc., people learn appropriate modes of talking about themselves and others in that specific organisational context. Furthermore, through the stories they tell themselves and others’ in that organisational context, they negotiate not only aspects of the self but also of the firm. The identity work is encountered by individuals and understood as social beings embedded in the organisational context of the firm (cf. Alvesson et al., 2008). In the identity work 26, or as I describe it the positioning work, it was possible to interpret what repertoires top and middle managers in System Novelty and PREM Food draw upon when constructing opportunity and advantage positions.

With a discursive psychology approach through interpretive repertoires, it has also been possible to examine how repertoires are used when positioning opportunities and advantages, without necessarily being overtly labelled. Thus, it was possible to explore how fact constructs regarding opportunities and advantages were built, made available, or countered ‘indirectly’, through descriptions of actions, events, objects, persons and settings (cf. Edwards & Potter, 2005). In other words, with the help of interpretative repertoires, it was possible to study how people report and explain actions and events, how they characterise people in those events, and how they managed various implications generated in the act of reporting. For example, accounts that position opportunities and advantages within a particular repertoire were examined for the local contrasts and interactional work for which they were used (cf. Edwards & Potter, 2005).

Another important aspect I took with me to the analysis from Chapter 2 is that people actively take up positions within different and sometimes

26 It is important to note here that identity and the identity work of the self is not the focus in this thesis. Rather it is a means to understanding the discursive practice of position opportunities and advantages within a particular repertoire.
competing repertoires when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. Furthermore, positioning also includes the audience to whom the account is addressed, in this thesis me. The audience (me) is important, because any accounts have to be negotiated between the teller (the participant) and the listener (me) (cf. Potter, 1996). Therefore, as stressed earlier in this thesis, I have also addressed my own positioning activities in relation to the interview participant, when analysing and interpreting possible consequences of my positioning as regards the participant, and the stated accounts. In this way, I also responded to some of the earlier discussed criticisms by Potter and Hepburn (2005).

Lastly, each analysis of the positioning activities within a particular repertoire has been summarised in a table in Chapter 6 and 7, this in order to gain a better view of the repertoire and its use. The table shows what extract (Ex) is analysed, the source of the extract, the main function of using the repertoire, what opportunities and advantages that have been positioned within that particular repertoire, what discourse devices (DD) have been used to make fact constructs of their work, and what could be considered to be the opportunities and advantages. See Table 6 and the example by Ex 1 of how the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ was used as a flexible resource in System Novelty.

An example from repertoire 1 – ‘we are agile and flexible’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex 1</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Firm website</td>
<td>Justify they have the ability to turn change into a competitive advantage.</td>
<td>OP: changes in market, technology and regulations. Responding to customer needs as well as coming up with their own products. AD: acquire a competitive advantage by responding quickly to changes.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 - An example of the use of repertoire 1 ‘we are agile and flexible’ in System Novelty.

In sum, the analytical approach taken in this thesis is based on three linked analytical tools developed within discursive psychology, namely: 1) interpretative repertoires, 2) positioning, and 3) discursive devices. By the use of interpretative repertoires, it was possible to analyse managers’ discursive practices in a firm. By analysing the positioning activities of opportunities and advantages, I have been able to move further down in the analysis towards the managers’ own construction work. Then, with the help of discursive devices, I could identify micro shifts in talk and how the...
managers in the two firms made fact constructs when positioning opportunities and advantages. This approach of discursive devices has also been of help to better anchor the interpretative repertoires on a more micro-level of analysis. In line with Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:153), I see analysis as a circular movement between an overall understanding of the firm context and their discursive practices, and closer textual analysis of text and talk in interaction.

**Determination of validity and writing up the report**

Validity is closely connected to how the research report (in this case the thesis) is written up, as it can help to support the validity in several respects (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). I will in this section start to discuss the view of validity and reliability in discourse analytical research. Thereafter I will discuss how I have written up the report to support the validity aspect. It is important to note that the terminology of validity and reliability as normally understood in traditional positivist or post-positivist research is not appropriate in social constructionism work as discourse analysis (Burr, 2003:158). In short, reliability is about whether the research findings are repeatable, and validity is the requirement that the researcher’s descriptions of the world matches what is really there, independent of our ideas and how we talk about them (Burr, 2003). In positivistic epistemologies, it is assumed that knowledge can reflect reality without bias, and criteria are developed to ensure such reflection. In discourse analysis, this assumption is rejected (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003 among many others). However, as Jørgensen & Phillips (2002:172) stress:

[...] but there is no agreement about which criteria to apply instead.

I would like to state that this issue is partly the explanation of why there is a common critique of discourse analytical approaches (as well as with lots of qualitative research) from scholars that draw on a positivist epistemology. They often argue that discourse analysis research is less stringent and hence less valid (cf. Burr, 2003). However, this is not necessarily true, thus there are several analytical techniques that can be used to validate the findings of this kind of research (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). In short, validity is about the question of what standards the researcher must meet in order for their work to count as qualified academic research (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Validity can, for example, be applied in terms of the researcher meeting the standards of the chosen research strategy in order for their research to be counted as qualified academic research, and there are some aspects to draw upon in making
sure of this. As Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:173) argue, there are no definite answers, but they suggest the following rules of thumb when it comes to analysis:

- The analysis should be **solid**. It is best if interpretation is based on a range of different textual features rather than just one feature.
- The analysis should be **comprehensive**. This does not mean that all aspects of the text needs to be analysed in all the ways possible – which would be impossible in many cases – but the questions posed of the text should be answered fully, and any textual features that conflict with the analysis should be accounted for.
- The analysis should be presented in a **transparent** way, allowing the reader, as far as possible, to ‘test’ the claims made. This can be achieved by documenting the interpretations made and by giving the reader access to the empirical material or at least by reproducing longer extracts in the presentation of the analysis.

I will return to these aspects of **solid**, **comprehensive** and **transparent** in conjunction with a discussion on writing up the report.

When it comes to writing up the report, this also becomes an issue of how I finally selected those accounts from the two documents of coding that have been the object of the detailed analysis presented in this thesis. Thus, it was not possible to present all of the instances of opportunity and advantage positions that I found in the data corpus. The number of instances found would have taken up several hundred pages when analysed, which meant that I would have to make a selection of what to include or not. This issue is closely connected to the aspect of **solid**, and in order to make the selection I studied what arguments other scholars in the area had made, and on what basis they selected their accounts. I have to say that there were only a few papers that made this process transparent. Those that did, however, focused on the accounts that most clearly showed the repertoire and the use of the repertoire as a flexible resource (see e.g. Whittle et al., 2010). With this in mind, I have selected extracts of accounts that not only showed how an interpretative repertoire is used when positioning opportunities and advantages, but also different ways the same repertoire is used when positioning opportunities and advantages. As I said earlier, a repertoire cannot be seen as belonging to an individual, as it is a cultural resource that is drawn upon that is both constructive and constitutive (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003 among others). This means that the reper-
toires presented in this thesis can be seen as constructed by the members of the firms, but belonging to the specific context of the firm. Therefore, the analysed extracts and the repertoires are seen as representations of the firm, not of the individuals. Moreover, this suggests that there should be less of a problem to present only a couple of extracts as examples in relation to each interpretative repertoire. I have also incorporated at least one extract from the text documents, in this way showing that the interpretative repertoire is also used in other situations, which is not inflicted by the specific interview conversation.

What differentiates scientific knowledge from most other forms of knowledge is, according to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), the attempt to adhere to one or other set of explicit rules. Therefore, they think that within specific research projects it is important to make explicit the foundation for the knowledge produced. In line with these thoughts, I have with a set of arguments clearly positioned myself and my research within discursive psychology. Within this approach there comes a set of rules that are recommended to be followed in order for the work to be classified as good research. These rules have been discussed in Chapter 2. In sum, to clearly position the research, also applies to the more general rules about transparency, and coherence (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

Potter and Hepburn (2005:11) argue that the challenge in analysis is to show how your claims can account for the specifics of the text and not its broad themes. This is closely related to the aspect of transparency. They give some suggestions, however, on how to present the interview conversations that I have used, including the following: 1) I have considered the relation between the question construction and the answer, including the topic initial question as well as any follow-ups or ‘prompts’. 2) I have transcribed the extracts at a level that allows interactional features, thus transcribed in more than a Jefferson ‘Lite’ way. 3) I have clarified how participants were recruited and approached, and how I have positioned myself in the conversations. 4) I have used line numbers and short lines that allow discrete connections to be made between elements of talk and analytic interpretations. As it avoids presenting larger blocks-of-text, this is often the norm in qualitative research in form of quotations. The line numbers allow a further specificity of reference to be achieved, as it becomes easier to clearly link to specific elements of the text (Potter & Hepburn, 2005), thereby also better anchoring the interpretative repertoires to the specific text.

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27 What discursive psychologist refers to as naturally occurring text.
When it comes to *comprehensiveness*, I have used three important analytical tools: interpretative repertoires, positioning and discursive devices. These chosen tools evoke a particular type of question that needs to be addressed by the researcher when analysing the text. As I have said, comprehensiveness is about making sure that all the questions asked of the text are answered accordingly. Interpretative repertoires evoke the question about how people draw upon repertoires as a flexible resource is answered. Positioning evokes the question about how people position themselves or their work in relation to repertoires. Discursive devices, in turn evoke the question about what rhetorical strategies are used by people when positioning opportunities and advantages. I have also discussed aspects of my own positioning, and possible influences it might have on the analysis and the results.

**Applying research results**

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987:174), the last step in application is often ignored as the whole issue of application is vexing. They argue that it is important, though it is difficult, that the researcher pays more attention to the practical use of their work. Similarly, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:126) argue that the communication of discourse analytical insights to people outside the research field is an important challenge, and the write that:

> The researcher needs to choose whether the target group for the research results should be the scientific community, the people the investigation concerned (for example, the people that was interviewed), the group to which these people belonged (for example, a particular subculture), and/or people in general. One possibility is to choose the mass media as medium.

In this thesis, the main target group is the scientific community. I primarily address scholars who are interested in learning more about entrepreneurship in established firms and strategic entrepreneurship. But scholars concerned with opportunity and advantage activities in smaller firms or new ventures would also benefit from reading this thesis and its results. Thus, in Chapter 8 and the result discussion I suggest an alternative way of viewing opportunity and advantage activities. In Chapter 9 the contributions of this thesis will be addressed and what research areas who could contribute from the results in Chapter 8.

The analysis of each firm and the results in Chapter 6 and 7 may also be of relevance for the firms studied. In this way it gives these practitioners an insight into what repertoires that are in use within the organisation and how these repertoires are used in different ways by the practitioners. Fur-
thermore, by reading this thesis practitioners in general can gain an understanding of the complexities surrounding entrepreneurship and strategy in firms. But they will also hopefully gain a better understanding of the importance of text and language in use and its possible constructive and constitutive matter. I will address possible practical implications in Chapter 9.
CHAPTER 6

SYSTEM NOVELTY

In this chapter I intend to discuss and analyse the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within a particular repertoire. I start by giving a background description of System Novelty narrated in documents and in my conversations with the participants in this study. Also, specific contextual aspects of potential importance are presented so as to better understand the accounts by the participants. Then I move on to explore opportunity and advantage positions by analysing the participant’s discursive practices. This is done by using the three analytical tools of: interpretative repertoires, positioning, and discourse devices discussed in Chapter 5. Each interpretative repertoire is presented under its own heading, with extracts from the participants accounts analysed by the chosen analytical tools. The intention in putting each repertoire under its own heading is to be able to clearly show the construction work done by the participants. By discussing the content of each repertoire and the discursive practices, I hope to show how opportunities and advantages are positioned within that particular repertoire. By using discursive devices, I also analyse how each repertoire was built through different fact constructions by the use of discursive devices. In this way, I try to show what the participants observably did with the repertoire, i.e. what did they actually say and on what did they build their fact constructions. As stressed in Chapter 5, this is without making speculative assumptions about their state of mind or discussing possible casual impact of text and talk. Last, I will summarise this chapter and discuss the results of the analysis. Later, in Chapter 8, these results, as well as the results from PREM Food, will be discussed at a more aggregated level. As such, I meet up with the second research question in Chapter 1.

Background

Under this heading I will present some background information on the firm and its context. Thus, within discourse psychology the context is of great importance and is needed in order to better understand the discursive practices. To preserve the anonymity of each participant, as well as that of their firm, they are given a fictitious name. At the time of the study, System Novelty had a top management of three people including; Sebastian the CEO, Jonas the CTO/owner and Ove the executive chairman/owner. The middle management consisted of seven people: Eva, the Head of Customisation, Karin, the Head of Human Resource, Patrik, the Head of Support...
and operation, Stefan, the Head of Corporate Communications, Karl, the Head of Sales and Sofia, the Head of Finance. Jonas is also part of the middle-management as the Head of Products. In Table 7, an overview and a short presentation is given of each participant.

**System Novelty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonas was positioned as the CTO/Head of Products /Owner</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Jonas is one of the four that originally founded the firm. He has a technology degree from the university and has worked his whole life in big corporations. At his last employment he met with the former CEO and previous owner of System Novelty. Jonas was in the beginning hesitant to start a business, because he was not financially independent and the risk was high. But he stressed that he was also tired of working for the big corporations and spend most of his time in meetings instead of developing new technical solutions. He is described as the driving force behind the technology in the firm. Jonas wanted first and foremost to be positioned as a technician and developer, not a manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ove was positioned as the Chairman of the board/owner</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Ove was at the time of study the largest owner, and was seen as one of the earlier founders. Thus, Ove was part of the start-up but in a different position. A larger firm had invested money in System Novelty and he was their representative looking after their interests. When this firm sold their shares in System Novelty Ove bought them and became one of the owners. He has a university degree in industrial economy. Previous to System Novelty Ove had worked as a technician and project manager in larger corporations. But he also stated that he had experience from working as a CEO in a small growth firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian was positioned as the CEO and president</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sebastian was the first external CEO at System Novelty. He has a university degree as a certified accountant, with a background in larger corporation groups were he had worked as an economist and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
accountant. Over the years he moved on to work with more business administrated tasks and management. Arriving at System Novelty, he implemented a line of middle managers, a board and steering committee.

**Patrik** was positioned as the Head of Support & operation 2002

Patrik has a university degree in economics. He has mostly worked in larger firms, but has also some experience of working at a small and fast-growing firm. Patrik has had a number of different roles at System Novelty e.g. as a project leader, key account manager, business developer, hosting and support. He was also temporarily the CEO when Sebastian was on a longer sick leave.

**Eva** was positioned as the Head of Customisation 2007

Eva has a university degree and started her working career as a software developer and consultant in a variety of different industries. Over the years her work experience developed more into different leadership positions with staff responsibility. Before entering System Novelty she worked for about twenty years in a larger corporation. At System Novelty Eva had overall responsibility for customer projects, had six group managers reporting to her and was responsible for a total of 80 employees.

**Karl** was positioned as the Head of Sales 2007

Karl started his working life as a consultant and a specialist in software programming, moving on to become a sales manager in larger corporations. At System Novelty he has mostly been working with sales, but also with questions on recruitment. For example, he was the colleague that followed through the idea of recruiting students from KTH by giving them project work for their thesis. Karl has a university degree as a mechanical engineer.

**Sofia** was positioned as the Head of Finance 2007

Sofia is a certified public accountant. Before entering System Novelty she worked for 9 years as an accountant at one of the bigger accounting firms in Sweden. When she was employed at System Novelty her first position was as a
controller, but after a year she became Head of Finance. She stated that she did not want to work with accounting for the rest of her life, and therefore changed job and started at System Novelty.

Karin was positioned as the Head of Human Resource 2008

Karin has a university degree and has worked her whole life as an HR manager at large to medium-sized firms. At System Novelty she is mainly working with HR questions and comes up with strategies for e.g. health, information flow, ergonomics, and procedures for the employees to be seen and heard. When entering System Novelty, she quite early noticed the need to improve the processes regarding information flow. Karin also developed procedures for regular dialogues on the employees’ possibility of developing their competence and salary.

Stefan was positioned as the Head of Corporate Communications 2008

Stefan has a college degree with a business administrated focus. Previously to System Novelty he had worked for fifth teen-years in a fast growing firm. The firm developed from three to four-hundred employees. Stefan stated that one of the reasons why he was employed at System Novelty is because of his experience with growth firms. He also argued that marketing do not need to cost that much, so one needs to be creative.

Table 7 - An overview of the participants from System Novelty.

System Novelty acted in a market that is described as consolidated. From the mid-1990s the EU commission has worked to find different ways to deregulate the market with the purpose of promoting competition by opening it up for more actors. Within this time frame, markets also became digitalised, and the internet was taking over in many markets. In this context, four friends who had occasionally worked together saw an opportunity to start a new firm, resulting in that System Novelty was born in the late 1990s. In a press release, the first CEO and founder stressed the following:

When the Internet wave came, we thought that this is the opportunity, and that it was time to start a business.
In the accounts by the participants it emerged that the vision of the four founders was to develop a state-of-the-art platform. Hence, in the late 1990s they developed their main technology platform, an IT-system based on one joint technical platform. The main idea of having a joint technological platform for their product range is explained in terms of being able to work with layers of code that are customised to customer requirements. Sebastian, Ove, Jonas, Patrik and Karl argue that this gave the firm a competitive edge, as the platform can be put into operation faster than competing solutions (often tailor-made from scratch). The first release of their system was meeting three different sets of requirements, delivered to three major players in their market niche. In the firm’s documents it is emphasized that System Novelty has a goal of bringing maximum quality through the entire process from first delivery, and the key words are:

Faster – time to market, quality - critical business systems, custom - we know the market, we are cruel and flexible product is in its flexibility, product - the precondition for everything listed above.

These first years of development into System Novelty were described in the firm presentation material as their “start-up phase”.

At the beginning of 2000, System Novelty started to grow extensively, and they acquired some important new customers that were described as having a significant impact on the further development of the firm. For example, when working with one of these customers on customisation of the platform they produced a new functionality that upgraded the system to a new level. Therefore, the documents of System Novelty described the years 2002 to 2003 as the start of the “development phase”. In 2004/2005, the third generation of the system was developed, including more flexibility. During this period they had also grown so much that they received a well-known prize for being the fastest growing firm. Since then the firm has continued to grow organically as well as through partnering, and the acquisition of business shares in other firms.

During 2006 an external CEO was appointed by the founders, as the former CEO wanted to move on to other things. Firm presentation material reports that, with the new CEO, they went into an “expansion phase”, and in 2007/2008 they adopted a global focus when entering the Asian market. During these years, top management explained, they also expanded their customer base and continued to take advantage of new evolving technology in order to make important system improvements, which lead to a new generation of the platform being developed by working together with customers. The year 2009 is said to be a record year for System Novelty in terms of sales and profits, despite the generally harsh market
climate. The financial year 2010 is also described in terms of strong sales growth, and a profit improvement. A reason given for this by Sebastian and Karl was that existing customers’ continued to have confidence in them, but also new customers had chosen System Novelty as their system technology provider. Furthermore, Sebastian stressed the following with a laugh:

It is currently very difficult to make a forecast for a longer period, so right now I don’t do that!

During 2009/2010/2011 System Novelty also engaged in some exclusive partnerships with small high-tech firms. The partnerships are said to have led to new product lunches and some changes in the offering to the customer. Furthermore, they went from being ‘only’ a system provider of a software platform to become a full system provider including services such as hosting, surveillance and support. Sebastian stressed:

With these newly added services we can keep the firm running without a single new customer.

The explanation given is that they wanted to market System Novelty as entrepreneurs, and they wanted to be strong enough to take on new risk projects, for example, build new products and enter new markets. In this context, new services are seen to be important, as they enabled the firm to take on risk-projects. In relation to the new services, Sebastian stressed:

[...] we should be able to afford to take a fall sometimes when taking business risks.

Furthermore, he argued that because the new services cover the firm’s costs, they are able to take more risks and can engage in more entrepreneurial activities then before. The argument given in the firm’s presentation material, and by Ove, Karl, Patrik and Sebastian, for being able to engage in opportunity activities is because of their strong liquidity. The described goal of the firm:

[...] is to be the most innovative provider with the shortest delivery time of IT-based solutions, making the world’s [naming their market] core operations more efficient.

During this time frame, the management explained that they had also gained a great deal of new business deals and attracted new markets and customers. Furthermore, Ove once again went up on the stage to receive a prize and he stated the following in a press-release:

I’m taking the liberty to not consider this a personal award but something System Novelty as a firm has received. With our passionately engaged teams
and our highly competitive products we are ready to continue our interna-
tional expansion and to continuously innovate for an ever-changing market.

Firm-specific context
System Novelty position themselves as a medium-sized IT-firm and market
leaders in their niche of the IT-industry, selling software products and sup-
porting services. When this study was conducted, they employed about
two-hundred people. Top management stated that they had been profitable
since day one, and have continuously kept on growing both in employees,
market shares, product range and profitability etc. since they started in the
late 90s. The work in the organisation is positioned as project-oriented,
with an expressed culture based on transparency, respect, promotion of
innovation and team-work. Top management said that the organisational
structure has been flat since day one and they have been working hard to
keep it flat.

A fear of bureaucracy has been explicitly stated on several occasions
among top management, especially by Ove and Jonas as owners, but also
partly by Sebastian as CEO. This fear has sometimes been expressed as a
problem among the middle management that has expressed some difficu-
lities when beginning their work as middle managers. Similarly, the owners,
Ove and Jonas, have said that they realised there was a need to manage the
firm in a different way in order to go forward. But there have been a lot of
tensions in the firm among the earlier employees and the new management
team. It have been said that the middle managers have been fostered in a
culture of larger firms where the main focus in their work was on ma-
agement, long-term strategic planning, structure and the setting of goals.
Aspects described among the owners and CEO as not always working that
well within System Novelty. However, parts of the middle management,
for example, Eva, Karin and Karl, stated that new employees of recent
years had expressed a concern for the lack of a formalised structure and a
lack of explicit work descriptions. Furthermore, they said that there was a
lack of interest in long-term strategic thinking in the firm among manage-
ment and owners. Thus, the management-team is positioned more as ‘do-
ers’ that are really good at managing what is happening here and now, not
long-term.

Their work of keeping the firm structure flat is also accounted for
through the organisation of the work-stations. Everybody has the same
type of desk and sits together in an open landscape environment. The deci-
sion to do this is explained in terms of decreasing bureaucracy, but also in
terms of information sharing, stimulating creativity and making accessibil-
ity easier to help each other out. Moreover, this concerns everybody in the
firm and it does not matter whether you are a developer, engineer, manager, CEO or owner etc., as nobody is given extra privileges. It is stressed that if somebody needs privacy or has a meeting, there are a number of designated meeting rooms to fulfil that function.

Another firm-specific context worthy of mention is that System Novelty has developed what the top management calls an economic tool to make the employees want to stay. This economic tool is termed ‘a bonus programme’, and its function is described as a way of keeping the firm structure flat and stimulating everybody to work together, not to individual ends. Thus the bonus program is built on equal shares for all of the employees’. No matter whether you are the CEO, a developer or an assistant, you receive the same amount of money. Sebastian and Ove stressed that one year everybody got an equal share of SEK 150,000 each. It is, however, also expressed in documents that System Novelty does not only believe in financial rewards. For example, the employees have a below average wage, but they still have a low employee turnover. Other ways articulated by Sebastian to make the employees want to stay include keeping them occupied with challenging tasks. In this way, he argues, they further develop their skills and gain satisfaction by learning. Furthermore, one of his most challenging tasks as a CEO is to find new projects that are interesting enough so the developers remain content.

The main base for System Novelty’ regarding their offering to customers is a joint technology-platform based on JAVA programming, that can be turned into many different products with a new layer of customised code. As a complement to these products, they also sell different add-on services. To be able to continuously launch new products is expressed in the firm’s documents as leveraging on their capabilities. A way the management argue their leveraging on capabilities is to be involved in customers’ processes, and they do this by holding extensive discussions with a number of existing customers about further development and system platform upgrades. The developers are also expected to work closely with the customer in daily and/or weekly interaction, and to be responsive to changing customer needs. In doing so the management said that they got lots of great ideas for new system features and the opportunity to test and release new products. These features are based on what the customers thinks they are in need of, and on what System Novelty see as an opportunity to enhance and further develop their current range of products based on their platform. However, as can be seen in the analysis, it is also accounted for by the fact that System Novelty also likes to be proactive and release new products that are not necessarily based on customer needs.
Exploring opportunity and advantage positions

In this part of the thesis I will present a selection of exemplifying extracts from the participants’ accounts based on interview conversations, but also naturally occurring texts i.e. documents, annual reports, firm website and the like. These extracts will be analysed by exploring the discursive practices of how these participants draw upon particular repertoires when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. Each of these interpretative repertoires will, as I have said, be presented under its own heading. Then under each heading extracts are presented that are intended to show the discursive practices and the function of using the repertoire. With the help of discourse devices the discursive practice is discussed in detail by addressing how the participants make different fact constructions to support, for example, claims made. In this way I provide a basis for how I concluded that what I present may be seen as repertoire.

Repertoire 1 – ‘we are agile and flexible’

Several sources for opportunity and advantage positions were constructed within the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’, both in the accounts from the participants themselves, but also in the documents. After listening to the recordings and reading and re-reading the transcribed text of the interview conversations, it is possible to state that there were none of the participants that did not use this repertoire at least once. In most cases, it was used several times and for different functions within the same interview conversation. It is even possible to say that this is the most commonly used repertoire in the firm and it can be seen as dominant over other repertoires. As can be seen throughout the analysis in this chapter, the repertoire is also frequently drawn upon in conjunction with other repertoires. When this is the case, this will be pointed out (cf. Juhila, 2012).

The selection of the exemplifying extracts within this heading has been made to show both representativeness and how the participants used the repertoire in different ways to position opportunities and advantages. A total of five extracts are used to exemplify the variations in discursive practices. It is important to notice that I could have chosen to analyse further extracts of this repertoire in order to show differences in use. However, I will return to this repertoire several times in connection with other repertoires. Therefore, I chose to restrict the number of extracts to five examples not shown when used in conjunction with other repertoires. According to the Oxford English dictionary ‘agile’ is to be able to move quickly and easily, while ‘flexible’ means being able to be easily modified to respond to altered circumstances, or of a person ready and able to change so as to adapt to different circumstances. Similarly, Merriam Webster dictionary
state that, ‘agile’ is to have a quick resourceful and adaptable character, while being ‘flexible’ is characterised by a ready capability to adapt to new, different or changing requirements. As you will see in this analysis, the different extracts also draw on these aspects when referring to the fact that System Novelty are agile and flexible.

First I am going to explore how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed within the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ from the firm website (see Extract 1). On the website System Novelty positioning the firm in terms of “who we are” in the following way:

Extract 1

1. There will be a continuously growing demand for a flexible and independent technology partner that can deliver mission-critical solutions to changing markets all over the world.
2. We see a future where perpetual change will create great opportunities, again and again.
3. Turning change into a competitive edge. We see great opportunities in the continuous changes that challenge (mentions their market niche). Changes driven by rapidly developing technology, new (mentions their market niche) patterns and evolving regulation.
4. In this ever-changing financial landscape, entry barriers have decreased, and technology has become increasingly decisive. This opens endless possibilities for both new and established actors to take radically new positions.
5. The key to System Novelty’s success is that we are agile and flexible towards changes on the (mentions their market niche). We haven’t been afraid to look for new markets or to come up with new products on our own. This is the key to flourishing in a changing world.
6. We are always accessible, flexible, and able to respond quickly in an open-minded and collaborative way.

From Extract 1 it is possible to stress that there are several opportunity constructions positioned within the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’. These are however, mostly based on aspects of change (lines 2-3, 5-6, 8, 14). From these changes, System Novelty constructs advantages in gaining a better competitive edge (line 5), for example by being accessible, flexible and responding quickly (line 16). Thus, it is by being “agile and flexible” towards changes that System Novelty has succeeded so well (line 12). With the help of the discursive device of categorisation, the firm is positioned as successful because they are agile and flexible towards changes (line 12).
This implies that firms not qualifying for this category are stiff and inflexible, and therefore also less successful. To use categorisation as a discursive device can be an effective way to separate people or actions from one another and implies there is an ‘us’ and ‘them’, those that are included or not in the category (cf. Edwards, 1995, Potter, 1996).

The opportunities are positioned as deriving from changes from mainly three sources; 1) technology, 2) the market and 3) regulations (line 7). Furthermore, System Novelty categorise themselves as a partner that is flexible and independent (lines 1-2), and construct an opportunity in the growing demand (line 1) for their products that is described as mission-critical solutions (line 2). They do not, however, explicitly state who their customers are for these mission-critical solutions. Hence, only addressing potential customers as the market (line 3), in this way they are saying that it is the market they want to have as a flexible and independent partner (line 1). By this statement, the discursive devices of vagueness and nominalisation are used, which is usual when creating fact constructions that are independent of the speaker or writer and that are hard to undermine (cf. Potter, 1996). The same vagueness also appears in lines 16 to 17.

The narratives regarding how they “respond” to changes (line 16) and act upon “demand” in the market (line 1), suggests there is market determinism. However, System Novelty also tried to position the firm as being proactive i.e. not only responding to changes and market demands. Thus, in the extract they tried to position themselves as proactive to these changes by looking for new markets and coming up with products of their own (lines 13-14). The account of coming up with products of their own (line 14), suggests that no one has asked for the product in advance i.e. that there has not been a market demand.

Extract 2 is based on an account made by Sebastian as CEO. Prior to the extract he had described how the market System Novelty act on was functioning. Then, he went quiet for about ten seconds. This gave me the possibility to ask if he would say they were acting on an uncertain market. I asked this question as a way to check whether I had understood him right when he was explaining the market. In the Extract 2 it appears that Sebastian draws on the repertoire in a slightly different way from that in the previous extract. By using the repertoire, he was justifying the small customer base at System Novelty. Sebastian stressed the following:
In the extract, Sebastian assumes that System Novelty is not the only firm in the market that draws upon the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ by addressing the fact that you need to be agile and move quickly (line 2). By the use of “you” (line 2) he categorises others as also being included in the category, even though he is vague about, who is included or not, still it suggests that being agile and moving quickly is not only a concern for System Novelty (line 2). To make this fact construct he used the discursive devices of, categorisation, vagueness and nominalisation. An opportunity is positioned in the possibility of a growing customer base (line 3), with the advantage of becoming less dependent (line 6) on specific customers. When discussing the customer base, he changes the member categorisation by footing from “you” to “us” (line 3), thereby only including System Novelty. This in turn suggests that this might not be a problem for others in their market. At the same time, he tries to defend why they did not have a larger customer base (lines 8-12) by stressing that they need to customise the system (line 8) for each new customer (line 9). Customisation is about changing the system and can be seen as an aspect of flexibility. Furthermore, because of these changes, System Novelty is not able to take on more than a maximum of four customers a year (line 10). The shift from the member categorisation of “we” to speak on behalf of the market by saying “this will never be a volume market” (line 11) shows the use of footing and externalisation. The use of these discursive devices – externalisation and footing – to build fact constructs can be seen as a tool for Sebastian to justify that this is how the market is, and that the responsibility is not his or System Novelty’s that they are dependent on a small customer base.
Extract 3 is based on the interview conversation with Jonas. Prior the extract, he talked about System Novelty having changed by growing, and there is a difference from being thirty people to being one-hundred and seventy. In this context, I asked Jonas about the pros and cons about growing (line 1). Why we were discussing growth in the first place is a result of me positioning an interest in growth firms at the beginning of the interview conversation as well as in the first contact with him through e-mail. The following came through in Extract 3:

Extract 3

1. L: What are the pros and cons of growing?
2. J: The only advantage of growing is that you can take on more customers,
3. otherwise internally you get less effective and bureaucratic.
4. People do not know each other as before (. ) values changes
5. L: You have still worked a lot to try and keep [ your ]
6. J: [ absolutely ]
7. and I think we have succeeded with this
8. we are so many, we are totally flat
9. L: yes
10. J: And I still know everybody and know their names in almost all cases
11. L: Yes (. ) I thought 170 [ people ]
12. J: [ but it is like this ]
13. I know who they are. I have talked with everybody and this to approach people (. )
14. to stay (. ) everybody must feel that it still (...) we are stationed at different work places
15. we are shifting people as soon as we get a new project
16. when it is a new project then we regroup people
17. L: m::m
18. J: it is in the culture (. ) the static do not exist, you can take too long to get this dynamic
19. L: m::m
20. J: There are ways to manage it (. ) but you can’t compare it to being 20 people.

The main function for Jonas to use the repertoire of “we are agile and flexible” can be interpreted as a way of persuading me that System Novelty is a flat firm (line 8), even though today they are so many (line 4). Jonas draws upon the repertoire by constructing opportunity and advantage positions mainly from an internal view (line 3). The advantage construction is explicitly based on the fact that you can take on more customers by growing (line 2). Most likely, the growth aspect is regarding the number of employees which the context of the extract is concerned about (lines 8, 10,
However, if we look at the extract as a whole, the advantage position is more about becoming less bureaucratic (line 3), hierarchical (line 8) and immobile (line 18). Thus, an opportunity position emerged in being flat in the organisational structure and by shifting people’s work places, as well as shifting people between new projects (lines 14-15) in to form new group constellations (line 16). In doing so, he stressed that System Novelty is not static (line 18). To move around and regroup people (line 16) can be seen as part of an agility and flexibility repertoire, thus incorporating the character of adaptability to new and changing circumstances.

Jonas categorised System Novelty as a flat organisation, which for him is a firm that is not ineffective and bureaucratic (line 3). To exemplify what he meant by a flat organisation structure, he stressed that he knows everybody personally (line 10), which can be interpreted that there is no hierarchy between him as a manager and owner and the employees. A strong hierarchy can be associated with bureaucracy and several layers of management, which Jonas claims as ineffective (line 3).

If we look at some of the other discursive devices used by Jonas, he starts by taking in general terms of “one can” and “one gets” (lines 2-4) which is a form of vague formulation. Thus, he is not being specific in who may or may not be included in the categorisation of being less effective and bureaucratic. A shift in footing occurs to “I think” (line 7) and, “we” (lines 7-8), positioning himself within the membership categorisation of the firm when arguing that “I think we have succeeded with this”. From the context of the extract, it is possible to interpret that the firm has succeeded in still being flat even though they have grown from twenty people (line 20), to “we are so many” (line 8). I tried to state that they are 170 people (line 11), which Jonas did not confirm or deny (line 12). Once again Jonas shift in footing to “I” (lines 10, 13) to make his argument that they still are flat. Thus he has talked to all the employees and knows them by name (line 10), thereby emphasising his own role in making the firm flat. Further on, Jonas downplays his role by shifting back to the member categorisation of “we” (lines 14-16); thereby it is not he alone who is responsible for the shifting and regrouping of employees when they get new projects. Lastly, he ties his arguments by shifting to the first footing position and is once again vague in formulation by “there are ways to manage it” (line 20). However, Jonas did not express who is capable of doing this.
Extract 4 is from the firm website and explains how the technology works, in doing this, System Novelty stated the following:

Extract 4

1. Fast and agile with ((mentions the system platform)) we are thus able to adapt quickly to new technological advances and evolution.
2. This means, for example, that we are always able to use the fastest and most cost-efficient hardware and databases in the market.
3. It is the flexibility and openness of the platform that allows our system solutions to offer extreme performance in terms of low latency, high throughput and scalability.
4. [...] (mentions the system platform)) provides a robust, fully redundant and scalable infrastructure, enabling high-content, customised solutions.
5. The logic of each specific business module is added on top of the platform layer additional unique customer adaptations – including integration with proprietary code – can be added on top of that.
6. Given this flexibility, we can apply our technology and business knowledge to support unique business models in any ((mentions their niche of the market)) using one and the same platform.
7. An area where we consider ourselves unique suppliers within our sector.
8. [...] (mentions the system platform)) provides a robust, fully redundant and scalable infrastructure, enabling high-content, customised solutions.
9. The logic of each specific business module is added on top of the platform layer additional unique customer adaptations – including integration with proprietary code – can be added on top of that.
10. Given this flexibility, we can apply our technology and business knowledge to support unique business models in any ((mentions their niche of the market)) using one and the same platform.
11. An area where we consider ourselves unique suppliers within our sector.
12. [...] (mentions the system platform)) provides a robust, fully redundant and scalable infrastructure, enabling high-content, customised solutions.
13. Our commitment, flexibility and agility mean we always deliver on time, on plan and on budget.

The main function for Mikael in using the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ can be interpreted as a way of describing how the technology is changeable. Thus, what is accounted for in making System Novelty agile in this extract is the technology platform (line 1) and the hardware (line 4). Furthermore, it is possible to interpret that several opportunity positions were warranted by the use of this repertoire as a flexible resource. For example, the fact construct that the platform is changeable makes it possible to quickly adapt (lines 1-2) to “new technological advances and evolution” (line 2). As previously stressed, flexibility is about adapting to new and changeable requirements. This also comes out by stressing that it is the “flexibility and openness of the platform” (line 5) that makes the system scalable (line 6), and makes customised solutions possible (lines 9, 11). Advantage positions are justified in System Novelty by their being committed, flexible and agile, which give them the advantage of “deliver on time” (line 18), “on plan and on budget” (line 19).
An opportunity is also positioned in that the same platform (line 15) can be applied to different business models (lines 13-15). From this, an advantage appears by positioning System Novelty in the category of “unique”; thus nobody else can deliver this within their sector (line 16). This suggests that other actors in their sector are ordinary when compared to System Novelty. The category entitlement of “unique” is partly justified by the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’, but also by their commitment. Possible reasons for using this categorisation are to differentiate System Novelty from its competitors in a positive way. That they have something that nobody else has. In this way they attract potential customers. They also use the category of “unique” to position their ability to make customer adaptations (line 11). Lastly, the category entitlement of “we” (lines 1, 3, 13, 16, 18) and “our” (lines 5, 13, 16, 18) is consistently used, thus not indicating a shift in footing.

Extract 5 is taken from the interview conversation with Karin. Prior to the extract she stressed that there are some employees that had said that there is a lack of structure and long-term thinking at System Novelty. Drawing upon the fact that Karin stated that the firm needs to have a clearer vision, thus lacking in this today, I then asked her if she had noticed any differences between those recently employed and those who have been in the firm from the start regarding these questions. Karin stated she had seen some differences and that the older employees were more content with the situation as it was. I then asked her if she had the support of the owners and the CEO or if she had experienced some resistance (lines 1-2). It is possible that Karin draws upon long-term thinking, an aspect of strategy, because I introduced it with my questions (lines 1-2, 4-5). However, I did not bring in aspects of agility and flexibility, thus my questions should not be that much of a concern for the use of the repertoire. From the discussion about long-term thinking and having clearer visions, the conversation led on to the following:

Extract 5

1. L: Do you feel e::um when discussing in this way (.) do you feel support for your way of thinking from the owners and Sebastian?
2. K: m:::m
3. L: Or do you feel there is some kind of resistance towards the more long term thinking
4. K: [ m:::m I think I do] but in general I think we have a good agreement on how to understand life. But of course there are elements of (.) not
Karin uses the repertoire of ‘we are dynamic and flexible’ in quite a different way from the others by position an opportunity also to become more strategic by applying long-term thinking. Thus the advantage would then be that a large number of people would benefit from it (line 15). She stressed that, if there is some kind of plan (line 11), it would be “easier to adapt than if its jerky” (line 12), which suggests a wish for some kind of stability for the employees by planning in advance (lines 11-12). Furthermore, she does not see this as conflicting with the idea of flexibility (line 10), rapid responses (line 23), to have simple and fast decision-making (line 24). Rather that it is about finding the right perspective, even though it is not always that easy (line 26). She also stressed that “we shall keep” this way of thinking but that it can always be better (line 25). Rapid responses and being able to make fast decisions can be put into a context of agility. Thus, as stressed ‘agile’ is to have a quick, resourceful and adaptable character.

It is interesting to note that Karin uses the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ for different purposes than the previously discussed extracts. For example, the discussion that took place before Extract 5 can be seen as quite the opposite of how the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ has
been described in the extracts. Thus, she used the repertoire in order to discuss the lack of structure and long-term thinking. Moreover, if we look at the larger context of the extract, she described her way of thinking as undermined. Karin said she was not always understood (line 8) or if “you present that view of life, you might not be flexible” (lines 9-10), as such categorised her view of life as something that conflicts with the idea of flexibility. If we again look at the context of the extracts as a whole, it is possible to interpret that her way of thinking is constructed upon long-term and strategic thinking. However, this category is introduced by me (lines 4, 5), when trying to summarise what we had talked about earlier, it is however confirmed by Karin (line 6) and the context of the extract as a whole. Furthermore, by shifting footing from the category entitlement of “I” (line 8) to “you” (line 9) implies that she is not the only one with this view. This also come through when she made a fact construct in trying to legitimise here way of thinking. Thus, positioning herself within the category of a human resource manager, that “people within my profession do see it as I see it” (line 13). Furthermore, she also tries to legitimise that her way of thinking would benefit a large number of people within System Novelty (lines 15, 17). Karin once again changed in footing, this time from “I” to “we” by expressing “we shall not force upon something that do not suit us” (line 21). As a result changing membership categorisation, thus spoke in the interest of the firm not her own.

Summary of repertoire 1
If we look at the results of analysing the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’, it was used as a flexible resource by all of the participants as well as in the documents with the function of justifying, defending, explaining and persuading (see Table 8). The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ were warranted by: turning changes into a competitive advantage, how the market is constructed, flat organisational structure, changeable technology and strategic thinking. It is possible to stress that the repertoire is the most frequently used, and is drawn upon in all the text and talk at least once. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, it could also be interpreted that a set of discursive devices was used to build fact constructs. The most frequently used discursive device was categorisation, used by all the participants. Thereafter, footing was the most frequently used discourse device, closely followed by vagueness and nominalisation. I have in Table 8 summarised the results of the repertoire ‘we are agile and flexible’. ‘Ex’ is an acronym for Extract,
‘DD’ stands for discursive devices. ‘OP’ in turn stands for opportunity and ‘AD’ stands for advantage.

**A summary of repertoire 1 – ‘we are agile and flexible’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Firm website</td>
<td>Justify that they have the ability to turn change to a competitive advantage.</td>
<td>OP: changes in market, technology and regulations. Responding to customer needs as well as coming up with their own products. AD: gain a competitive advantage by responding quickly to changes.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sebastian</td>
<td>Defend their small customer base by how the market is constructed.</td>
<td>OP: growing the customer base. AD: becoming less dependent on specific customers.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, nominalisation, footing, externalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jonas</td>
<td>To persuade me that the firm still is flat even though they have grown.</td>
<td>OP: flat organisation structure. Take on more customers. AD: becoming less bureaucratic, hierarchal and immobile.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Firm website</td>
<td>Explain how the technology is changeable.</td>
<td>OP: a changeable and scalable system platform. Fits different business models. AD: delivers what nobody else can, and on time, plan and budget.</td>
<td>Categorisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 - The use of repertoire 1 - ‘we are agile and flexible’.

**Repertoire 2 – ‘close interaction with customers’**

As with the previous repertoire, it is possible to state that the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ was used by all sources, from the readings of the documents as well as the accounts of the interview conversations. Furthermore, the use of the repertoire was, as with previous extracts drawn upon in different ways and for different functions when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. I have once again chosen to exemplify the use of the repertoire as a flexible resource by chosen extracts that are representable, but also show the different functions in use. A total of five extracts will be used to fulfil this purpose. Extract 6 was taken from the annual report of System Novelty and in the section where they describe their work with their customers the following emerged:
The repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ comes through in several ways in this extract by describing the customer as a partner (lines 1-3), “a high level of internal and customer engagement” (lines 5, 20), “close collaboration” (line 9), and “close customer contact” (line 16). These accounts position the firm within a category of a partnership with the purpose of indicating that they are close to their customers. As you will see, this is argued for in different ways throughout the whole extract, for example, when position opportunities and advantages. An opportunity is positioned within this repertoire in building a partnership (line 3) by being agile and flexible (lines 1, 6, 8, 10, 14, 15, 22), as such the previous discussed repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ is also drawn upon to justify how they build their partnership with the customer. An advantage position can be interpreted within this repertoire as meeting the expectations of the
customers (line 21). In the extract, it is also argued that partnership and close interaction with the customer (lines 1-3, 5, 9, 16, 20) has proved to be a successful formula (lines 2-3), in that account positioning the way System Novelty does things in the category of successful, which suggests that firms are unsuccessful if they do not treat their customers as partners. The function of the repertoire can be interpreted as justifying how System Novelty works with the customer, by accounting for what they can give their customers, how they interact with them, and why. For example, it is argued in the extract that this approach has the benefit of “capture ideas and changes that can surface at any moment”, “trust” (line 3), “transparency”, “shared knowledge” (line 4) and “goals” (line 2), “short decision-making” (line 11), and meeting customer expectations (line 21). The extract also positions the firm within the category of responsible (line 11), thus making a fact construct that firms that do not partner with their customers are irresponsible.

Extract 7 is from the interview conversation with Jonas. Prior to the extract he was talking about the start-up of System Novelty, as a response to my question whether he could tell me about the start-up years at the firm. He explained that in the beginning they were working more as consultants, doing work for other firms as developers. This was because they did not themselves own the rights to the technology they developed, but this has changed. Jonas said the following:

Extract 7

1. L: Ye::hh
2. J: Then at ((mentions a firm)) they wanted a function to connect the member towards
   ((mentions a system)), then we sold the function, but the code was ours then.
3. L: Ye::e
4. J: According to the agreement we could keep everything we developed.
5. Then we started to develop the platform we have today. Then it has been like this with
6. every customer we got that (…) everything of common functionality is our property.
7. What is business-critical for the customers is theirs.
8. L M:::m
9. We have let the customer see everything we have done all the time.
10. L: So I have understood.
11. J: This is a very good business idea.
12. L: I was about to state that this is very smart [ heh heh ]
13. J: [ heh heh heh ]
14. An(h)d t(h)e(h)re is no p(h)rob(h)lem, the customer do not have any problem with this
The main function for Jonas to draw upon the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ was to explain how System Novelty went from a consulting business to developing their own products. He positions an opportunity in creating the foundation of the system platform they use today (line 6). Thus, they had come to an agreement with the customer to keep everything they developed (line 5). An advantage is positioned by the development costs being funded by the customers (lines 10). It is expressed when interacting with the customer to develop new business critical functions for them (lines 3, 8, 18), System Novelty can keep everything that is of common functionality (line 7). Moreover, this has been the approach since then with all new customers (lines 6-7). This statement can be interpreted as a construction of an emergent strategy, i.e. their strategy towards how they interact with the customer. Jonas stated that this strategy is a very good business idea (line 12). Hence System Novelty had their product development costs funded (line 10). He justified their strategy by the statement of “the customer do not have a problem with this” (15). However, as one of the owners, Jonas has an interest in portraying that the customer is content in paying for their product development. Throughout the whole extract he is also categorising himself within the category of “we” (lines 3, 5-7, 10), thus speaking on behalf of the firm. To speak on behalf of somebody else can also be a way of avoiding blame or other moral dilemmas (cf. Potter, 1996). For example, that they in fact construct profit advantages from one customer which can be used to benefit another customer. To legitimise their strategy, Jonas described that the customers gain an advantage from this approach, because the customer acquire new business-critical functions (line 8). Moreover, as System Novelty is doing the same with other customers it can be an advantage also in regard that this customer gained improved functionality (line 20).

Extract 8 is from the first meeting with Sebastian. About thirty minutes into the interview conversation, he was telling me about their product portfolio, how their technology platform was built, and that they were about to release a new product. He then started to talk about their strategy regarding product development. My question, asked previous to this extract, was

16. L:  okey
17. J:  because they want functionality.
18. They do not care about functionality that is not business-critical.
19. They only want it to be great and
20. and it is to their advantage if it can be improved by other customers.
if the new product he was taking about was also based on Java (a programming framework). He stated the following in Extract 8:

Extract 8

1. S: Of course! It is quite erm
2. Our usual strategy is that product development primarily occurs within,
3. within customer projects. We have a competent product platform and
4. we think it contains everything that a modern ((mentions a market niche)) needs
5. (.) but the customer has specific requirements.
6. If you have the world’s best market-intelligence unit, you can build things in advance
7. and say this (.) dear customer you will need in about two years!
8. There are countless examples, however, of firms that have tried this and failed.
9. What we do instead is to have a great contact with the customers and
10. within customer adjustments there will always be innovations,
11. clever new ways of solving things that the customer wants.
12. The customer can get it from two models.
13. You can get the IP rights on what we develop, but then it is this price tag (.)
14. or we keep the IP, but give you a license and then it is this price tag.
15. In the end everybody takes the lower price tag.
16. L: They do? Then you can integrate it into the system and sell it?
17. S: Then we can incorporate it into the next release of the product.
18. We usually call this customer-funded development.
19. ((mentions the name of the new product)) is an exception.
20. We are so firmly convinced that this market segment is facing a revolution,
21. so we built on speculation a product and commit time and skills to it.

The main function for using the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ is to explain how System Novelty works strategically with product development (lines 2-3). At the beginning of the extract, Sebastian used the repertoire in a similar way to Jonas, by underlining that their strategy is mainly to let the customer pay for the development of their new products. Thus, Sebastian positions an opportunity in creating and releasing new functionality within customer projects (lines 10-11, 17), with the advantage construction of “customer-funded development” (line 18). He stated that they have great contact with the customers (line 9) which enables them to innovate (line 10) and add new functionality to their existing products (line 17), which are then sold to other customers, in this way reducing the risk of failure (lines 6-8).
It can also be interpreted that Sebastian tried to legitimise and justify how System Novelty takes advantage of the opportunity to let the customer pay for their product development in at least two ways: 1) that they are forced to do what they do by the fact construct that the customer has specific requirements (line 5). Using discursive devices of vagueness by not addressing what these requirements are. 2) They offer to let the customer buy the IP-rights to what they have developed for them (line 13), but they chose not to by taking the lower price tag (line 15). At the same time, Sebastian credited the customer (they are working with in the development) for helping System Novelty to come up with clever new ways of solving things (line 11) that the customer wants. The last formulation is, however, vague in its context. Thus he refers to the customer they are interacting with in the development or the potentially buyers of what they have come up with?

Sebastian also implicitly expressed that they do not know themselves what the customer wants. He categorises System Novelty as not having the world’s best market-intelligence unit and thereby not able to build products in advance (line 6). But, later on in the extract, he repositions his statement by mentioning a product as an exception they were working on right when the conversation took place (line 19), thus accounted for the fact that they are building in advance and upon speculation (line 21). As such Sebastian also positioned an opportunity in releasing a new product. Hence, the market segment is facing a revolution (line 20), accounting for the fact that “we” are so firmly convinced and therefore want to take an advantage of it by allocating time and resources to releasing a new product (line 21). Sebastian never described the work in the firm as something he does, rather, he used the discourse device of categorisation by positioning himself as “we” or “our” (lines 2, 3, 4, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21.). Categories can be used to justify a person’s entitlement and qualification for making a claim about something (Mueller & Whittle, 2011). In this extract, he is accounting for the work of the firm, not his own work, thereby also withdraw any responsibility of his own.

Extract 9 is taken from the interview conversation with Ove, where I asked him directly about his contact with the customers. As such, the purpose for using the repertoire ‘close interaction with customers’ in the extract was to answer my question. This means that I have potentially evoked parts of how the repertoire was used. Ove argued the following:
Extract 9

1. L: If I understand you right er:m you have a really close contact with your customers?
2. O: yes
3. L: That you are really responsive to (..) e:::rm new customer needs?
4. O: Yes we have never lost a customer
5. L: no
6. O: I’m wrong, we have lost two customers
7. Both have been acquired and the acquirer have as you often do
8. chosen their own technology
9. L: M:m
10. O: E:::e but one can go on forever and talk about how good you are in a sales process
11. but it will not impress the customer because everybody does that
12. No matter whether you are good or bad (,) everybody does it.
13. What will impress the customer is when we tell them e:::rm we have no reference list
14. we have no references (...) but we have a list of customers here
15. L: okey
16. O: e::::e if it is so you know any of these customers and then it is worlds. (..)
17. It is really (..) that
18. L: m::m
19. O: really good well-known firms in our sector (...) everybody
20. do you know so:::omeone who works at these firms contact them
21. It is our reference↑ the person you know is our reference↑
22. L: m::m
23. O: But how do we know that? We KNOW because we do not have any people
24. who work for our customers who have a poor relationship with us
25. At least it is our opinion and as long as it is our belief we will not send
26. out some rigged reference list. It does (,) it does e:::e attach itself

The main function for Ove to use the repertoire of ‘close interaction with the customer’ was to emphasise that System Novelty does not use customer reference listings. Ove stressed that System Novelty has never lost a customer (line 4) to a competitor (lines 6-8). He argued that there are no people at their customers that have a “poor relationship” with System Novelty (lines 23-24), thereby categorising System Novelty as being good at customer relationships. Moreover, because of their ability to interact with the customer, it is possible to use them as a direct and personal reference (lines 14, 16, 20-21). By doing this he positions an opportunity in gaining customers in a new way based upon personal references from existing custom-
ers, not through reference listings (line 13). By the use of category entitle-
ment, Ove categorised System Novelty as a firm that does not need to use
rigged listings of references (lines 26), and that does not need to use listings
of references at all (line 13). This suggests there are those who can be cate-
gorised as using rigged listings and reference listings, but that System Nov-
elry is not one of them. This might be a way of subtly suggesting that their
competitors do, without pointing out any specific actor.

To legitimise their doings, Ove used vague formulations and the catego-
risation of “everybody” can tell the customer how good they are in a sales
process (lines 10-11). However, Ove separates System Novelty from this
category, by giving the customer the choice of speaking directly to a person
at the customer’s firm that they already knew (line 20). This can be seen as
a way of creating an advantage position by the credibility of the customer’s
own recommendations (line 21), a person they might know from before
(lines 20-21). He explains that they can do this because he knows that
System Novelty does not have any poor relationships with their customers
(line 24). To build credibility for this statement, he uses stake confession by
admitting that this might only be an opinion by System Novelty (line 25).
Stake confession can be a powerful tool to construct credible facts (Potter,
1996). Lastly, there is no shift in footing, thus he consistently positioning
himself as a spokesperson for System Novelty in terms of “we” (lines 4, 6,
13-14, 23, 26) and “our” (lines 19, 24-25), in this way evading his own
responsibility.

Extract 10 is based on the interview conversation with Karl. About
twenty minutes into the conversation, he started to talk about the impo-
rtance of choosing customers that have the ability to pay well. Thus, oth-
ewise the risk is of your not being able to give them great service, thereby
risking System Novelty’s reputation. Furthermore, these customers will not
be as satisfied as previous customers. Karl also stressed that they always
have been able to afford to give great service. The conversation then took
the following direction:

Extract 10

1. L: Can you give some examples of um when you put the customer in focus and
give everything to the customer as you said?
2. K: Well it is when the customer has an operational problem,
3. L: Yes?
4. K: and you don’t know if it’s our fault or somebody else’s. (..) It is not that we are like,
well can you really show that it’s our fault because we believe it is something else.
5. L: m::m
It is possible to state that the extract as a whole is constructed to describe how System Novelty has a close interaction with its customers. Thus, the main function of drawing upon the repertoire is to explain how System Novelty puts the customer in focus and gives everything to the customer.
Categories brought in by me, when I asked Karl to develop his argument that System Novelty does not hesitate to help their customers. In doing so, Karl draws upon the repertoire of ‘close interaction with the customer’ by positioning an opportunity for being flexible and adapting to customer needs, even though it is not in the agreement (lines 31-32, 34). Karl described these kinds of actions with the customer as an “interactive process” (line 35), following up with an advantage position of delivering exactly what the customer wants (lines 32, 35-36, 38) when going into operation (lines 32, 38). Thus, Karl made a fact construct by nominalisation and vague formulation by stressing that “plenty might say no”. It is possible to interpret this that he is referring to possible competitors and that they would say no to change what they have already agreed upon (line 28), at least not until later (line 29). In this way, Karl categorised System Novelty as unique in their work, as many would not give the customer the option of change (lines 28-29).

Karl constructed his arguments on the fact that it is a learning process for the customer (lines 23-26, 37), and so, to get them what they want when are going into operation one needs to be flexible and responsive (line 31). This is to justify why System Novelty agrees to change things during the project (line 20) when customers realise that they want something else (lines 25-26). He used footing to shift between categories of “we” (lines 5-6, 8-9, 11, 20, 29, 31-32, 35) and “our” (lines 6, 38). Thus, speaking on behalf of the firm when making his fact constructs of how they work with the customers in System Novelty, in this way detracting from his own responsibility. Karl also uses the category of “you” (lines 5, 11, 30-32, 35-38) quite often, which is a vague formulation. Thus, who is included or not in this category is not always clear, but in most cases it is possible to interpret this as including the customer in the use of “you”. Lastly it is possible to state that the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ (lines 31-32) is also drawn upon, especially when constructing an opportunity position.

Summary of repertoire 2
As with the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’, it is possible to state that the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ was also used by all sources in this study. These two repertoires are also drawn upon in conjunction in Extract 6 and 10. Furthermore, the repertoire was drawn upon in different ways and for different functions when positioning opportunities and advantages (see Table 9). In sum, the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ were warranted by: product development; how they work with the customer; how they put the customer in
focus, and not using customer reference lists. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, it could also be interpreted that a set of discursive devices was used to build fact constructs. The most frequently used discursive device was categorisation, used by all the participants. Thereafter, vagueness was mostly used to construct facts. It is interesting to note that footing was not that obvious when using this repertoire, only being used by Karl. Also, different kinds of stake attribution emerged. A summary of the repertoire ‘close interaction with customers’ is presented in Table 9.

**A summary of repertoire 2 – ‘close interaction with the customer’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>OP and AD positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Firm website</td>
<td>Justify how they work with their customers.</td>
<td>OP: building a partnership with the customer by being agile and flexible. AD: meeting customer expectations.</td>
<td>Categorisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jonas</td>
<td>Explain how they went from being consultants to developing their own products.</td>
<td>OP: creating the foundation for the system platform. AD: customer-funded development.</td>
<td>Categorisation, interest attribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sebastian</td>
<td>Explain how they work with their product development.</td>
<td>OP: innovate and release new functionality within customer projects. Releasing a product upon speculation. AD: customer-funded development. Know what the customer wants. Dedicate time and skills to the new product.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>Explain how they put the customer in focus.</td>
<td>OP: flexible and changeable towards customer needs and requirements. AD: deliver exactly what the customer wants.</td>
<td>Nominalisation, vagueness, categorisation, footing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 9 - The use of repertoire 2 - ‘close interaction with customers’.*
Repertoire 3 – ‘we are a competence-driven firm’

As in previous repertoires, the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ is used by all of the participants and documents for different functions. The extracts under this heading position System Novelty as a competence-driven firm where the knowledge and skills of the people are what makes the firm successful. The technology is also described as important but it cannot become a reality without the people in the firm. Thus, all of the participants came back to the fact that the competence of those who work there is a very important aspect of their success, while not as frequently drawing upon the success of the technology. In other words, such repertoires could also be interpreted as present, for example, in extract 11, but to a much less extent and only by a few participants. I will once again use five extracts to exemplify the discursive practice of position opportunities and advantages within this repertoire, thereby showing both representability and differences in use.

Extract 11 is based on accounts made by Ove, who is positioned as the largest owner and chairman of the board. The question asked by me about one minute before the extract was - *You have been with the firm almost since the start-up?* Thus, previous to the extract, we had discussed how he became one of the owners of System Novelty, that he had been part of the firm since the start but in different roles. Then the discussion took the following direction:

**Extract 11**

1. O: System Novelty has since (.) day one focused on the people
2. not the technology.
3. We hired the very best people we knew existed in the market u::m
4. the best technicians and the best developers in our narrow sector . (...)  
5. Because we had a really talented gang that got together and e::rm that we
6. was not too pompous (.) in the beginning . Rather humbled by the opportunities
7. it , (.) it opened up so many doors (.) wide open. (...) We had no product.
8. But we had an idea and we knew what we were building and
9. we knew that we would take advantage of the new technology.
10. L: okey
11. O: The guys had been playing with what was to come for a year (.) and
12. found that this ((technology)) is something that will revolutionise our market
13. and still DOES ten years later.
14. The technology choices we made then are still considered to be at the cutting edge.
The main function for Ove to use the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ was to argue that System Novelty has a competence advantage in its people. Thus, he stated System Novelty had a “competence advantage from day one” (line 22) by the hiring of “the very best people we knew existed in the market” (lines 3-4). He also argued that System Novelty since day one “has focused on the people, not the technology” (lines 1-2), even though they saw an opportunity in the new technology (line 9). Moreover, that they had an idea (line 7) and knew what they were building (line 8). Ove described one year of work by this “talented gang” (line 5) as playing (line 11). By the use of the metaphor of playing he downplays the importance of the work of the people. In this way, the discursive device of stake attribution is evident by discounting the significance of the actions taken by others (cf. Potter, 1996). However, the reason for this might be explained in that Ove have an interest in portraying the employees and himself as not being pompous, rather humble (line 6). In that way, building a legitimate foundation for the statement that what they had developed when they played revolutionised the market (line 12), and still does ten years later (line 13). He also tried to build a fact formulation for this statement in stressing that the choices they made regarding technology are still considered to be cutting edge (line 14). This can also be seen as an advantage position. It is a vague formulation that does not give away who thinks this by using nominalisation as a discursive device.

Ove positions System Novelty within the category of risk-takers, thus claiming that “there are firms today who do not dare to take the steps we did ten years ago” (line 15). From line 16 it is possible to interpret that he think the secret to becoming successful is only in the risk-taking (line 17). However, if we look at the whole of the extract, it can rather be interpreted that he argues that the secret lies in the competence (lines 21-22), networks (line 20) and reputation (line 21). By stressing what the secret is not, Ove is downplaying the importance of marketing (lines 17-18). Lastly, he does not use a shift in footing, thus consequently positioning himself.
within the category of System Novelty by the use of “we” (lines 3, 5-9, 13-14, 17) and “our” (lines 8, 12, 20-21). In this way he does not hold himself responsible for the actions taken by the firm.

Prior to Extract 12, Jonas told me about this major world leading customer they managed to acquire in the earlier stages of the start-up phase. Moreover, he stated that it was this customer who made it possible for the firm to grow. Thus with this customer on board, others also started to show an interest in buying their services and products. This conversation was a response to my question about growth. In this context we started do discuss the following:

**Extract 12**

1. L: Pretty hard work?
2. J: Yes, *and* it presupposes that there are great people (…)
3. So the people who existed *then*, many of them are still [here. ]
4. L: [yes]
5. J: *it* is certainly those who make it *happen* ([landing the big customer])
6. *that we* had such talented people and still *have*.
7. L: M::m
8. J: *These systems are so tricky* it would not have worked otherwise.
9. L: No (...) I thought it might be so [*ha ha ha ha ha]*
10. J: [*ha ha ha ha ha ha ha*

Jonas draws upon the repertoire of ‘*we are a competence-driven firm*’ in a similar way to Ove, but with the main function to argue that System Novelty has great people (line 2). He constructed an advantage position in that they have and have had talented people (lines 6, 8), thus without them they would not have been able to make it happen (line 5). In order to understand what “happen” aims at, we have to look at what was addressed prior to the extract. As stressed previously, in the extract Ove explained how they succeeded in “landing” this big customer. In this way he positioned an advantage in gaining a new customer through having the right competence. Thus, he explained that the technology of the system platform is so “tricky” and it would not have worked without the people (line 8). It is possible to state that Jonas categorised the employees as “the people” (lines 2, 6). But he uses vague formulations regarding who is included or not within this category of “people”. For example, does Jonas include himself as part of this category? Are the other founders or top management included? Is it the technicians who made the system who are the people?
Furthermore, the account of “these systems are so tricky it would not have worked otherwise” (line 8) can be seen as nominalisation, thus trying to make a natural and objective fact construct (cf. Potter, 1996) about the technology. There is no change in footing, thus positioning within the category of “we” (line 6). Thereby, spoke on behalf of the firm’s interest, not his own.

Extract 13 is an example of how the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ is drawn upon in the annual report, where the following appears:

**Extract 13**

1. We are a knowledge-based company and offering an attractive workplace is one of our foremost success factors. During the year, we participated for the first time in Great Place to Work’s annual assessment of Sweden’s best workplaces.
2. Following both an external review and an employee survey, in April (the year), we were awarded a very respectable place (in the top ten) among medium-sized Swedish Companies – an accolade that has been highly appreciated both internally and as well as among our customers.

The main function to draw upon the repertoire “we are a competence-driven firm” was to market System Novelty as an attractive workplace which is described as their foremost success (lines 1-2). By constructing this fact and the use of discursive devices such as categorisation of success, it could be interpreted that firms that do not have an attractive workplace are not successful. As previously stressed, categorisation is a powerful way to separate some actions from others and indicate who are included or not in the category (cf. Potter, 1996). The use of the repertoire comes out in the text from the annual report by positioning System Novelty as a knowledge-based firm (line 1), but also in accounting for opportunities and advantages in a different way than the previous extracts. Thus, it is possible to interpret that System Novelty position an opportunity in participating as a contestant in a Great Place to Work (lines 2-3). An advantage is positioned in being awarded as one of Sweden’s best workplaces (line 5), thus arguing that they ended up with a good top ten ranking, which is categorised as respectable (line 5), and describing it as an accolade for the firm (line 6). Furthermore, that this award has been “highly appreciated both internally as well as among our customers” (line 6-7). However, being vague in formulation on how the customers have appreciated it. Vagueness can be a way of providing enough information to sustain action, but without descriptive claims that can be undermined (Potter, 1996). When it
comes to the employees, it evokes claims of an attractive workplace (line 1); however, no claims are given regarding the customers.

Extract 14 is based on the accounts from Sebastian. Prior to the extract we had talked about regarding why they chose to pay a lower salary than average, but have a bonus system that compensates for the salary loss when the firm is doing well. Sebastian also told me that there have been hard times because of the recession. In this context, I said that everybody then might work together at such times and that there is a value in that (line 1). Sebastian responded to that in Extract 14 by the following:

Extract 14

1. L: There is some value in it?
2. S: Of course that’s the case↑. We have absorbed competence.
3. Competence attracts competence u:::m
4. I collaborate with a professor at KTH28(.) I have the greatest respect for what is involved in skills ,supply and competence training regarding technicians.
5. e:rm myself I am an economist.
6. I do not claim to know best on how to do that huh
7. E:::e so he provide us with good advice on ex-workers29 and how we should think formulate and tend to assure that the best students apply u:::m
8. To think of us when applying for ex-work and (. ) huh
9. L: okay
10. S: A kind of adviser in recruitment matters.
11. The best ones they of course want to keep for themselves as doctoral candidates
12. but if some of the very best do not want to become a doctoral candidate they usually come here.
13. L: You take them in as ex-workers and check them out?
14. S: Yes, yes we have employed about 90% of the ex-workers.

The main function for Sebastian to draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ can be interpreted as a way of legitimising his relationship with the professor at KTH (line 4). A relationship he positioned as an opportunity for him to gain several advantages from. The

28 KTH (Kungliga tekniska högskolan) in English is the Royal Institute of Technology.
29 ‘Ex-work’ is the terminology used for the project-work that students do at a firm, when they at the same time writing their thesis on a candidate or master-level, a common phenomenon in technology-based educations.
main competitive advantage can be seen in securing future recruitments by getting the best new graduates (line 14-15). By categorising himself as an “economist” (line 6), Sebastian separates himself from the people he is trying to recruit to System Novelty who are technicians (line 5). He stated, though, that he has the greatest respect for technicians and what is “involved in skills, supply and competence training” (line 5). Furthermore, through a stake confession construct a fact argument as to why he needed the advice of the professor, he does not claim “to know best on how to do” (line 7). As he stressed he is “an economist” (line 6). In this way Sebastian also positioned the professor within the category of adviser. One that “provide us with good advice” (line 8). The advice concerned how “we” should think on ex-workers (line 8), then shifting in footing from “I “, which implies that it is not only Sebastian who needs advice but System Novelty. The professor also helps to ensure that “the best students” apply to System Novelty for ex-work (line 9-10), by recommending those who are not interested in becoming doctoral candidates (lines 13-15). Sebastian uses externalisation to construct the fact that “the best ones”, KTH “of course want to keep for themselves as doctoral candidates (line 13). In this way he is trying to legitimise his fact construct of getting the best students. Sebastian also states that they have employed 90% of the ex-workers (line 17).

Extract 15 is built on accounts made by Eva as the Head of Customisation. At the end of the interview conversation and prior to the extract, I asked Eva if she would like to summarise what she thought was System Novelty’s strengths and weaknesses. She started by talking about strength as putting the customer first, having a very good and high technological product, and retaining that technology which has turned out well. Eva stressed it is hard to put forward any weaknesses, but it might be that System Novelty could have a clearer visionary leadership regarding their market; thus people tend to worry about whether this business idea will be able to grow even more. I then ask her about different possibilities of broadening the product portfolio by new products in other markets. The possibility of other markets was intimated on the firm’s website. She then stressed that they do not talk much about that. Thereafter the conversation developed into the following:

**Extract 15**

1. E: What one has been good at, it is also, (.) well yes (.) in some way be able to e:e adapt.
2. Well it is to adapt quickly towards, sort of to take these opportunities one has been agile, to take these opportunities outside ((gasping for air)) that sort of swooshed by .
The main function for Eva to draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ was to explain that their competence is the main strength of System Novelty (lines 4-5). It emerged that Eva was drawing upon the repertoire in several ways. For example, by arguing that System Novelty has been “very competent” (line 4), “deep technical competence”, and “a belief in its competence (line 11). But more importantly that System Novelty has dared to go for the opportunities because of their deep technical competence (lines 6-7). Eva positioned an opportunity in adapting quickly (line 2) and being agile (line 3). In this sense she is also drawing upon the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’. However, she uses vague formulation and nominalisation when she described what it is that the firm has to adapt and be agile towards. Thus, she says “take these opportunities that sort of swooshed by” (line 3). Furthermore, “inclined to take risks, but very, very, very competent” (line 4), in that repeated nominalisation. The opportunity can be interpreted as also including to dare to take on risks (lines 4, 6, 16-17). An advantage is mostly positioned in having a deep technical competence (lines 7, 18) and by the belief in that competence (line 11) and being able to sell things in advance (line 13). Eva also used vague formulation and nominalisation when describing the work in the firm, mostly by referring to “one has” (lines 1-2, 4, 6) in this way not being clear on who is behind the actions taken, in this way avoiding attribution of blame or responsibility (cf. Potter, 1992). She sometimes changed position by footing. The first time she does this is by “one has” (line 4) to
“I” (line 5), by a stake confession that this is what she thought were the strengths of System Novelty, inn this way discounting the significance of her thoughts, which can be a powerful way to build a fact construct (cf. Potter, 1992). The next occasion she used footing was by the member categorisation of “we” (line 13), in this way spoke on behalf of the firm.

Summary of repertoire 3
The third repertoire ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ was as with previous repertoires used by all sources in several different ways and for different functions so as to argue, marketing, legitimise and explain (see Table 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11 | Ove     | Argue System Novelty has a competence advantage in the people. | OP: hiring talented people, new technology, networks.  
AD: competence, reputation and choice of technology. | Categorisation, stake attribution, nominalisation, vagueness. |
| 12 | Jonas   | Argue System Novelty has great people.             | OP: a new big customer.  
AD: competent people. | Categorisation, nominalisation, vagueness. |
| 13 | Annual report | Marketing System Novelty as an attractive work place. | OP: participating in the contest Great Place to Work.  
AD: awarded as one of Swede’s best work places | Categorisation, vagueness. |
| 14 | Sebastian | Legitimise his relationship with a KTH professor. | OP: building a relationship with KTH.  
AD: securing future recruitments by getting the best students. | Categorisation, externalisation, footing, stake confession. |
| 15 | Eva     | Explain the competence is the main strength of System Novelty. | OP: respond and adapting quickly by being agile, and take risks.  

Table 10 - The use of repertoire 3 - ‘we are a competence driven firm’.

The repertoire was also used in conjunction with the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ in Extract 15. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire can be summarised as warranted by: having great people, a competence advantage by the
people, an attractive workplace, a relationship with KTH, and that competence is the strength of System Novelty. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, once again categorisation was the most frequently used discursive device. However, this repertoire showed a complex set of discursive devices in use to construct facts, for example, nominalisation, externalisation and footing, as well as stake confession and attribution are found. I have summarised how the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ in Table 10.

**Repertoire 4 – ‘we are independent’**

As with the previous three repertoires discussed, the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ is also frequently drawn upon. Nevertheless, mostly in documents, but also on some occasions by Sebastian, Ove, Jonas and Patrik. In other words, you find this repertoire among the top management, except for Patrik, who is responsible for sales. Furthermore, it can also be stressed that the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ is the repertoire that shows less variability. The participants had a tendency mostly to draw upon the repertoire in three ways 1) the independency of the technology platform, 2) financial independency, and 3) independency towards other market players i.e. being an independent actor. Therefore in order to show representability and difference in use, four extracts is enough.

Extract 16 is based on texts from the firm’s website and shows two types of independency. Firstly, the extract accounts for being an independent actor (line 3), then the independency of the technology (lines 8, 18). The following comes through in Extract 16:

**Extract 16**

1. System Novelty has a history of successful deliveries, and possesses in-depth
2. competence in its area of specialties. The fact that System Novelty offers niche
3. products as opposed to just consulting solutions, and is also an independent actor
4. – since System Novelty does not itself operate ((mentions the market they sell their
5. products to, which they are not part of themselves)).
6. – are considered to be major competitive advantages.
7. […]
8. Competitive advantage based on independent technology. The foundation of our
9. offering is our [(mentions the platform)], developed entirely in-house
10. We have been able to use this to establish ourselves as a strong supplier of powerful,
11. sophisticated and highly reliable system solutions. The platform enables us to minimise
12. lead times between ordering and delivery while allowing customers to adjust their
The main function to draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ can be interpreted as trying to market System Novelty as a strong supplier (line 10). The repertoire appears in several ways through category entitlement, for example, by the category of “an independent actor” (line 3) and the categorisation of “independent technology” (lines 8, 18). An advantage position is clearly constructed within the repertoire when claiming that System Novelty has a competitive advantage based on independent technology (line 8), which shows the use of nominalisation. Also vagueness is present, thus not give a detailed description of what they mean by being an independent technology provider. In this way, making fact constructs based upon broad claims. Furthermore, an advantage is positioned in being an independent actor (line 3), selling niche products (line 2), which is claimed as being a major competitive advantage (line 6). This time however, it appears that being an independent actor means that they do not themselves operate in the market they are selling their products to (lines 4-5).

An opportunity position also emerged in offering an in-house platform (line 9) of “mission critical solutions” (line 15), through a flexible technology that is changeable towards customer requirements (line 13), which is seen as being important in “today’s changing world” in meeting changing market requirements quickly (lines 18-20). Also nominalisation and vagueness appears by excluding human action and not being clear whose requirements they wish to meet. Is it the customer, or could it be other actors of interest they want to meet up with? By positioning an opportunity in flexible and changeable technology and with the advantage of meeting market requirements quickly, the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ is also drawn upon (lines 12, 18-20). Moreover, to let the customer adjust their requirements during the progress of the project is categorised as essential in achieving favourable results, in this way, suggesting that firms that do not allow this produce unfavourable results. In the extract, System Novelty’s platform offering represents an independent and flexible technology and this is a significant asset in our sales work. This is an important component in today’s changing world and allows our solutions to be adjusted quickly to changing market requirements.

13. requirement specifications during the progress of the project, which is often essential
14. in achieving favorable results in far-reaching and complex projects.
15. We are able to present a very solid reference list of mission-critical system solutions
16. based on [mentions the platform]], delivered on time, on budget and in accordance
17. with the customer’s specifications, and this is a significant asset in our sales work.
18. System Novelty’s platform offering represents an independent and flexible technology
19. This is an important component in today’s changing world and allows our solutions to
20. be adjusted quickly to changing market requirements.
Novelty is also positioned within the category of “strong supplier” (line 10).

Extract 17 is from the interview conversation with Patrik. Prior to the extract we had talked about his earlier work and that at this firm they had to take in venture capitalists to secure liquidity. In this context, Patrik expressed a concern for the venture capitalist view of long-term thinking as a three year engagement. I said that there are different definitions of what long-term means (line 1), and Patrik responded by drawing upon the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ in two ways; 1) independent ownership, and 2) financially independent:

Extract 17
1. L: Ha ha ha, there are different definitions of what long term means.
2. P: Yes and that (.) we usually express that our leading star is that we are independent that
3. we (.) there is actually two interpretations and both are equally right. One independent
4. is that we are not allied with anyone in the ((mentions the market)) we can deliver to
5. everybody, the other aspect is that we are financially independent.

The main function for Patrik to draw upon the repertoire ‘we are independent’ can be interpreted as explaining that System novelty is independent and what the categorisation of being independent means to System Novelty. Thus, speaking on behalf of the firm by the category entitlement of “we” and that they have two interpretations of independency (line 3). Patrik does not shift in footing; thus he spoke on behalf of the firm throughout the extract (lines, 2-5). In this way, withdraw any personal responsibility. An advantage position emerged in financial independency (line 5) and by being independent toward other actors i.e. that the firm is not allied with anyone (line 4). The position of an opportunity is more implicit, but can be interpreted as being able to deliver to everybody (lines 4-5), which is a fact construct based on vague formulation. What is included in the category of everybody is not clear, but it probably means every customer in their niche market.

Extract 18 is based on texts from the board presentation made by Sebastian, with the purpose of presenting an update to the board of the strategy of System Novelty e.g. its customers and market, strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities. The following appears in the extract:
Extract 18

2. Rivalry - [mentions the market] do not want to find themselves in competition with
3. the supplier of one of their strategic systems - Increasing important issue as
4. ((the market players)) consolidate.
5. System Novelty – an independent platform supplier.
6. Unlike most of its competitors, System Novelty’s ownership is independent of any
7. ((mentions the market players)) group - Proved to be a significant advantage in
8. winning recent business from ((mentions a specific market group)).

The main function for Patrik in using the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ was to present the competitive strengths of System Novelty (line 1) to the board. The extract is drawing on the repertoire by positioning an opportunity and an advantage in a similar way as the previous one by Patrik. However, this time the opportunity is rather positioned as “winning recent business” (line 8). The advantage is about System Novelty acquiring a better competitive strength from independence (line 1) which has proved to be an advantage in winning recent business on the market (line 7-8) by not consolidating as others do (line 4). By the use of the categorisation “independent ownership”, Sebastian is positioning System Novelty as “unlike most of its competitors”; thus, he categorised the firm as being different from its competitor (line 6). Suggesting that most of their competitors are owned by somebody that they are competing with when selling their products. Sebastian justified System Novelty’s independence by making a fact construct through vague formulation and nominalisation by addressing the market. He stressed that their market “does not want to find themselves in competition with the supplier of their strategic system” (lines 2-3), furthermore, that this issue is becoming increasingly important as the market tends to consolidate (lines 3-4).

Extract 19 is taken from a published press article in which Ove is interviewed and quoted. The question asked by the interviewer was about what the competitive advantages of System Novelty are and Ove stressed the following:

Extract 19

1. Q: What is System Novelty’s competitive advantage?
2. O: We have a good “track record”. You would not gain access to our type of customers
3. if you didn’t deliver quality.
The main function for Ove to draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ was to describe the competitive advantages of System Novelty. When doing so, he constructed several opportunity and advantage positions. For example, by the categorisation of a “good track record” (line 2) an advantage is positioned, an advantage that made it possible to gain access to the customer by delivering quality (lines 2-3), which can be interpreted as an opportunity position. The repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ appears in addressing System Novelty have a “partnership” with the customer and do anything to meet and outperform their requirements (lines 4-5). To have this partnership (line 4), and an “independent house of technology” (lines 6-7) is positioned as competitive advantages. In the extract Ove do not shift in footing, thus spoke on behalf of the firm by the category entitlement of “we” (lines 2, 4) and “our” (lines 2, 4). As such withdraw own responsibility.

Summary of repertoire 4
The repertoire of ‘we are independent’ is frequently drawn upon in documents, but also on some occasions by Sebastian, Ove, Jonas and Patrik. The function of using the repertoire has been to market, explain, present and describe (see Table 11). The repertoire was also used in conjunction with the repertoires of ‘we are agile and flexible’ in Extract 16 and ‘close interaction with the customers’ in Extract 19. The discursive practices of position opportunity and advantages within the repertoire were warranted by: being a strong supplier and independent, but also through competitive strength and advantages. It is possible to stress that this repertoire showed less variability, thus the repertoire was mainly used in three ways: 1) independent technology platform, 2) financial independency and 3) independent actor. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, it could be interpreted that a set of discursive devices was used to build fact constructs. The most frequently used discursive device was categorisation, closely followed by vagueness and nominalisation. In Table 11 I have summarised the results of how the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ was used.
A summary of repertoire 4 – ‘we are independent’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Patrik</td>
<td>Explain the firm is independent in two ways.</td>
<td>OP: able to deliver to everybody. AD: financially independent and independent actor.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Press article with Ove</td>
<td>Describe the competitive advantages of the firm.</td>
<td>OP: to gain access to the customer. AD: good track record, independent house of technology, partnership with the customer.</td>
<td>Categorisation, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 - The use of repertoire 4 - ‘we are independent’.

Repertoire 5 – ‘growth within profitability’

The use of the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ as a flexible resource comes through in several ways in the accounts made by the participants at System Novelty, and is exemplified by five different extracts. The repertoire is not, however, that explicitly drawn upon in the documents. Thus, growth and profitability is not explicitly co-constructed together as in the accounts from the participants. Both growth and profit are very much present on the firm’s websites, in annual reports and press-releases, but more or less separately. Therefore, the exemplifying extracts presented come from interview conversations. Furthermore, it is also possible to state that the repertoire is mostly used by participants positioned as top manager or as an owner. The repertoire is, however, occasionally used by middle management.

An example of this repertoire and its use comes through in Extract 20 from the second meeting with Sebastian, the CEO. The subject for discussion was the strategy presentation that I had received the first time we met. Prior to the extract I had asked him about the goals that were formulated in the strategy presentation, and whether he could explain what he meant in his own words. He stressed the following:
The main function for Sebastian in using the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ was to justify that both growth and profitability are needed (lines 6-8), even though growth precedes profit (lines 10-11). It is possible to state that Sebastian has positioned an opportunity in growth (line 10), more precisely regarding their customer base (line 13). An advantage is positioned in the necessity of becoming more independent (line 14), as such also draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are independent’. In other words, by enhancing their customer base they will not be as vulnerable if one customer decides to leave them (line 11). From the context of the extract as a whole, it is also emerges that to lose one customer will make System Novelt less profitable (line 8, 11).

When drawing upon the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ Sebastian tried to justify the firm’s and his actions with different fact constructs. For example, he used categorisation by positioning the owners in a category of their own (line 1), thereby separated himself from them and their interests. In doing so, it suggests there are different categories of people in the firm. But he did not address what category he belonged to, more than that it is secondary to the one the board are included in. Thus, he is positioning the board as “above” the category he belongs to (line 5). Categorisation is often used as a way to describe yourself and others, including responsibility and expectations (Edwards 1995). This is, for example, apparent in the use of stake attribution and the statement of “honestly” “the owners are not especially clear” (line 1). Furthermore, also in the next
categorisation Sebastian stated that “the board” is quite unclear when it comes to the matter of objectives (line 4), suggesting there are some expectations that are not being met by “the owners” and “the board”, which in turn can be interpreted as a sign of different interests between the two member categorisations. But also whether Sebastian, through the use of stake attribution and categorisation, is making a fact construct that he is not to blame for the objectives in the strategy presentation is not clear. This is by putting the blame on “the board” and “the owners” who are not clear on what they want from him (lines 1, 4-5). In this way he puts the responsibility for the objectives onto others. He also uses nominalisation as a discourse device in order to avoid the attribution of blame and responsibility for the activities, by describing “its vision” and “its long term objectives” (line 2). By nominalisation a person can avoid mentioning those who have performed the action (cf. Potter, 1996). Sebastian started by positioning himself in term of “I” (lines 1, 5-6) and “me” (line 5). But when addressing the goals of the firm in terms of growth and profit he shifts the member categorisation to “we” (lines 7, 11, 14). In other words, what he is saying is there are goals within the firm, but not for him. As stressed, member categorisation could be a way of withdraw responsibility and expectations (cf. Edwards, 1995).

Extract 21 is based on the interview conversation with Ove. When meeting up with Ove, one of the first things he asked me was how I became interested in System Novelty, and why I had chosen to contact them. I stated an interest in growth firms, and that I had found them on listings of rapid growth firms. Moreover, I said that there were some key words on their webpage and in annual reports etc. that had caught my attention, including their good profitability. In this way I brought the categories of both growth and profitability into the conversation. I did not, however, construct them together as Ove did, but still I was certainly part of evoking the use of the repertoire. After I had answered his question, Ove went quiet for about 20 seconds then stressed the following:

**Extract 21**

1. O:  Er:::m (.) to give you a comment already on that.
2.  
3. L: Growth has never been a goal for us.
4.  
5. L: It has not?
6. O:  No! It has been profitability
7. L:  "Oke:::y" (I sound hesitant))
8. O:  then the growth came by itself.
9.  
10. O: THATS way there is no disaster for us er:::m
The main function for Ove to use the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ was to persuade me that there is no meaning to growth if you are not profitable (line 31). However, he uses the repertoire in quite a different way from how Sebastian did in the previous extract. Thus, Ove tries to reposition System Novelty from “only” a growth firm to a firm whose goals are above all concerned with profitability (lines 4, 24, 27). Their position as a growth firm was given in press releases, growth listings, by me and by the person who gave System Novelty a prize for being that year’s fastest growing firm in Sweden (lines 18-20). In the extract growth is drawn upon several times (lines 2, 6, 13, 15, 20, 22, 31), as well as categories of profitability (lines 4, 13, 17, 24, 31) and money (lines 8, 11, 15, 17, 25, 28, 30). It is also possible from the extract to state that Ove has an interest in repositioning System Novelty from “only a growth” firm. Thus,
he was drawing heavily on profitability, downplaying accounts about growth. The view in society about growth firms are mostly described in positive terms, yet growth firms are also described in terms of their lack of profitability and liquidity. Regarding these aspects, and the extract as a whole, it is possible to detect that Ove does not want to be seen as a growth firm without profitability and cash equivalents. As I said Ove narrated that “there is no meaning to growth if you are not profitable” (line 31). This statement also shows that growth for Ove is not profitability i.e. growth in turnover or liquidity. Growth is something else, but exactly what growth is, are not expressed in this extract more than the fact that you need money to produce growth (line 15), in this way vague in formulation.

The opportunity within this repertoire is positioned mainly in having “plenty of money” which the firm themselves have created (line 25) and thereby having the advantage of being independent (lines 24), as such also draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are independent’. Ove stressed the importance of creating their money themselves (line 25), that no one else has contributed to and therefore can make demands (line 26). By the use of categorisation he constructed a category of “we” as System Novelty and the others “out there” who can come up with demands that System Novelty would be obligated to meet if they did not have good profitability. But more importantly he mentioned the liquidity to stay independent (line 24-25). Who those people “out there” are who can make demands is not clear (line 26). Thus, he used vague formulation and nominalisation. However, it is possible to interpret from the extract as a whole that he refers to different investment firms and venture capitalists.

When downplaying the importance of growth in the firm, Ove used discursive devices such as nominalisation, so when he argued that growth never has been a goal (line 27), and that profit is the focus (line 29) he stressed that “growth came by itself” (line 31). In this way he evades any responsibility for growth in the firm; it was more or less something that happened by itself without his or the firm’s involvement. Nominalisation is a tool for categorising actions and processes that allow the speaker to avoid endorsing a particular story about responsibility (Potter, 1996:182). In other words, Ove builds his accounts of growth on fact formulations where there is no agency. When starting to speak, Ove positioned himself in the category of “us” and “we” (lines 2, 7-8, 11, 18, 2-25, 28), which can be seen as the category entitlement of the firm members, but he did not make any distinction as to who is included or not. On three occasions Ove shifts in footing and spoke in terms of himself (lines 18-19, 22, 27). For example, when he said that System Novelty received a prize for being fast growing, he shifted to talk in terms of himself as the person who was on
stage to receive the price (line 18). But as soon as he has expressed an opinion he shifted back to speak on behalf of the firm (line 24). More interesting though is the shifting in footing from “we” (line 25) to “I” when expressed that this is a goal I will not give in to (line 27), regarding having a great deal of money that they themselves as a firm created (line 25). This time, Ove speaks for himself and not for the firm, as if he by himself has the executive power to make that decision, in that sense delimiting the power of the CEO and the other owners. It is possible that Ove draws upon his power as the largest owner of the firm.

Extract 22 is from the conversation with Karl, the Head of Sales. Prior to the extract we talked about the new product release and the development of the product that was not based on a customer need. Rather it was described as a proactive and a bit risky opportunity to take on. Karl stressed that they already had a customer on their way and the conversation then took the following direction:

Extract 22

1. L: Then you are on your way. It will be interesting to see ((mentions the product))
2. It is one of the major risks that you have been [taking] for a while?
3. K: [ yeah]
4. you can say that the alternative was fewer employees though we did not have work for everyone the alternative would have been [fewer employees ]
5. L: [ Yes absolutely]
6. K: Nobody was interested in that he he he
7. L: No
8. K: It was better to use the money we have earned. (.) We have made good profits on our deals we have done during previous years. It is symptomatic for System Novelty (...)
9. System Novelty has never taken on a business opportunity without making any money.
10. We have never said we take this even though we do not make any money
11. E:e have never done that.
12. L: No?
13. K: We rather let it be. There is another customer around the corner that will give us profitability.
14. L: M:::m
15. K: It is quite unusual but then you play it cool. (.) One can stress that many take on the deal just by its margins. It is okay one can say. You have the costs any way.
16. So what are the costs on the margins, not that much.
17. L: No
The main function for Karl to draw upon the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ was to argue that System Novelty does not take on customers that cannot pay full price (lines 11-12, 15-16, 18-19, 28-29). In the extract he positioned an opportunity for having good liquidity (lines 9-10) and that it was better to use the money they earned (line 9) and put the employees to work (lines 4-5, 7). An advantage position appears in not being forced to let employees go (lines 4-5), which nobody was interested in doing (line 7). The repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ is drawn upon in several ways in the extract. For example, Karl stated that System Novelty has never taken on a business opportunity without making any money (line 11). Furthermore, that System Novelty never have said “we take this” (line 12), which implies not prioritising growth through new customers over profitability. It also appears that growth in business is of interest but only if its profitable (line 11). Karl stated that there is another customer round the corner that will give them profitability (lines 15-16). This suggests an opportunity was positioned in wanting to grow the customer base, which is small (line 25), but only within the advantage position of profitability.

When positioning the firm within this repertoire, Karl categorised that what they do in the firm is “unusual”, which can be interpreted as other firms do not usually do this. Something he confirms as a fact construction with the help of vague formulations and nominalisation, when stressing that “many take on the deal just by its margins” (lines 18-19). Who these “many” are is not clear and does take away human action. In this way he avoids putting the blame on or discrediting anybody directly (cf. Potter, 1996). He also tried to justify why they never lower their price tag by arguing that they are 170 employees and only a small number of customers (line 22-23). Then through externalisation he constructs the fact that with this premises “then it has to come up to a large amount of money” (lines 24, 28). Karl positioning himself consequently within the member category
of “we” (lines 4, 9-10, 12, 15, 22-23, 25-26) and in this way spoke in behalf of the firm throughout the whole extract.

Extract 23 is taken from the interview conversation with Patrik. Prior to the extract I had asked him about his background and why he chosen to work at System Novelty. About seven minutes into the conversation, after telling me about his previous work place, he said that there were forty five people when he was started at System Novelty. The thought was that he should be appointed as the CEO for a new spin-off. Thus, at this time System Novelty had an idea not to let the firm grow to more than thirty to forty employees. Hence, when reaching that number of employees they considered starting a spin-off. However, the idea changed when they got this big order. Then the conversation took the following turn:

Extract 23

1. P: E::um but luckily you can say we got this big order from ((mentions a customer)) . e::e
2. The only way to cope with this was actually to gather our forces towards that delivery.
3. L: yes
4. P: To secure that delivery (...) e::he being of great importance I think for our growth.
5. L: M::m
6. P: Because we succeeded in building a capital base in the firm a, a body
7. that made, (,) with profitability, that made it possible to not be acting in the short term
8. or by external funding that, that are very fast in thinking about their exit.
9. L Yes this is usual.
10. P: Yeah, I have previous experience of this since I was working at ((mentions a firm name)),
11. where we grew in cash flow and had a strong balance-sheet. E:um we had no borrowed
12. money. But the cash flow became very strained during 1999 , and we got two big,
13. reputable owners. That was e:um venture capitalist that brought in capital.
14. E::e it gets a little bit, a bit strange e::um focus when you get an owner that’s
15. thinking long term, (,) we will at least be here for 3 years.
16. L: He he he there are different definitions of what long term means.
17. P: Yes and that, (,) we usually express that our lodestar is that we are independent.
18. There are actually two interpretations and both are equally right. One ’independent’
19. is that we are not allied with any in the ((mentions the market)) we can deliver to
20. everybody. The other aspect is that we are financially independent (,) obviously within
21. certain limits. (,) We have such a solid base that we can take on risk projects. We can
22. invest in a new area we believe in. And I very much think that this is a key question.
23. We can take a bad project. A project that bleeds for a couple of month. E::e give away
Patrik draws on the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ in a similar way as Ove, but for a different function. The main function for Patrik to use this repertoire can be interpreted as, his describing how System Novelty became financially independent. An opportunity is positioned in they gained a big order from a customer (line 1) which made them re-think their current strategy of spin-offs. Thus, they needed to gather their forces towards that delivery (line 2). Furthermore, the fact that they secured that delivery has been of great importance for their growth (line 4). He then shifted position by footing by stressing that it is what “I” think (line 4), thereby using stake attribution to construct facts. However, if we look at the extract as a whole, as well as line 20, there is another opportunity position that appears. An advantage position of being financially independent emerges (lines 20, 26), as an enabler for the opportunity of being able to take on risk projects and explore new areas. Thus, Patrik argued System Novelty had “such a solid base that we can take on risk projects” (line 21) and “invest in new areas we believe in” (line 22). Thereafter he again shifted in position to make a fact construct that he thinks this is a key question (line 22). Worth noticing is that the advantage position made by Patrik is also positioned within the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ and parts of this extract has also been analysed in Extract 17.

The repertoire ‘growth within profitability’ is drawn upon in several ways. For example, when Patrik described that his previous workplace had grown (line 11), but as such they became short on cash flow (line 12). Therefore, they needed funding from external venture capitalists (lines 12-13), who had a different view on long-term thinking (lines 14-15). If we put this in the context of the whole extract, we can interpret that, if the firm had grown and still been profitable with a good cash flow, they would not have lost their independence, in other words, positioning an opportunity in having growth within profitability, thus have the advantage of being financial independent (line 20). However, Patrik uses externalisation to construct the fact “obviously within certain limits” (lines 20-21).

Extract 24 is taken from the interview conversation with Stefan, who had earlier experience of working in a growth firm. Prior to the extract, about one hour into the conversation, Stefan argues that they had too few people in the marketing unit. I then stated that, except for product and marketing, sales is the major sources for acquiring new customers, and that
I guessed it would be prioritised. But Stefan states he did not have that experience. He explained that the growth firms he had worked for did not see it this way. Furthermore, that these firms have been so technology-intensive that it is the technology that is important. Then, Stefan starts to compare System Novelty to his old workplace, a fast growing firm that went from three to four hundred before they went bankrupt. In the extract Stefan said the following:

Extract 24

1. S: And technology focused so that everything sort of has to do with the technology. It is, is what's important. One forgets that it is the founders that are the really successful
2. salespersons, and they are technicians at heart, and they know this by their five fingers, and they do their selling, they are just sort of (...) as I understand it, Ove and
3. ((mentions the name of the previous CEO)) the drop-out founder, (...) those two in tandem were bloody cruel in a conference room.
4. To sell sort of technology and knowing commercial and
5. L: M::m
6. S: e:: e at ((mentions his previous workplace)) it was a founder who ((mentions a name)) referred to as the Finnish-man. I think everything he touches financially goes to hell
7. L: okay he he he ((sounds hesitant)).
8. S: E:::e but I have rarely seen and, and I have been on my way to physically push him out of my office, because we get along so-so. But, (...) we get a long, but I will never ever want to work with that [man = ]
9. L: [ no↑]
10. S: = again (...) but, but I can stop being fascinated. (...) I have never meet somebody who can own a whiteboard (...) and make people really believe that this is the right solution. Knowledge about the technology with a combination of some kind of inner conviction and, and, then (...)((mumbling)) just talented.
11. m:::m
12. He was really good at it, but was useless at finance and, and he also brought in (...) he succeed in getting high score on (...) He could also get business by totally folding in price negotiations and such. (...) Which this firm would never do.
13. L: no↑
14. E:::um this is the major difference. That System Novelty is profitable.

The main function for Stefan to use the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ is to explain that System Novelty would never take on new business by folding on prize (line 22-23) and therefore they are profitable (line 25).
He did this by describing his earlier experiences at his previous workplace and argued that System Novelty and this firm have similarities. But System Novelty does one thing that his previous firm did not do; they do not lower their price (line 22-23). Therefore System Novelty is profitable and successful, according to Stefan (lines 22-23, 25). The use of the repertoire is in many ways similar to how Patrik draws on the repertoire. However they construct opportunity and advantage positions in different ways. It can be interpreted that Stefan claims that there is an opportunity to get new business by folding on price (lines 22-23) which his former employer liked to act on. But that this is not something that System Novelty is engaged in; rather they see an opportunity in not cutting the price, with the advantage of profitability (lines 23, 25). In other words, System Novelty does not want to grow through new business if it is not profitable, in other words it’s about growth within profitability.

There is also several advantage positions expressed in the skill set of the founders (lines 2-7). For example that the founders are really good at selling (lines 2-7, 16-19), which implies growth in businesses and customers. But also in that the founders at System Novelty have financial and technological skills (21-23). By category entitlement he categorised the founders of System Novelty as “really successful salespersons” and “technicians” at heart (lines 2-3). He has also built a fact constructed by stake attribution, thus stated “as I understand it” (line 4) the two founders, Ove and the previous CEO were “bloody cruel in a conference room” (line 5) in selling and knowing the commercial side (line 7). But also, by discounting the position of the former founder he worked for (lines 9-10, 12-14) he contrived to build the fact construct that System Novelty would never do as he did. It is interesting to note that Stefan does not once speak on behalf of System Novelty, thus positioning himself as “I” (lines 4, 10, 12-13, 16).

Summary of repertoire 5
The repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ was mostly used as a flexible resource among top management to justify, persuade, argue, explain and describe (see Table 12). The discursive practices of positioning opportunity and advantages within the repertoire were warranted by: both growth and profit is needed; there is no meaning to grow if you are not profitable; not taking on customers that cannot pay full price; how System Novelty became financially independent; only take on new businesses that result in profitability. One interesting aspect worth noticing with this repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ is that it was used in conjunction with the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ in Extract 20, 21, and 23. Thus, an advantage is positioned by drawing upon this repertoire in all of these ex-
tracts. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, the most used discursive device was categorisation, used by all the participants. Thereafter nominalisation and stake attribution were used equally as a discursive device for fact constructions. Stake, footing, vagueness and externalisation are also used. In Table 12 I have summarised the results of how the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ has been used.

A summary of repertoire 5 – ‘growth within profitability’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Sebastian</td>
<td>Justify that both growth and profitability is needed</td>
<td>OP: growth through new customers. AD: becoming more independent.</td>
<td>Categorisation, stake attribution, nominalisation, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ove</td>
<td>Persuade there is no meaning to growth if you are not profitable</td>
<td>OP: making their money themselves. AD: financially independent.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing, vagueness, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>Argue they do not take on customers that cannot pay full price.</td>
<td>OP: use the money they earned by putting the employees to work on a new project. AD: strong liquidity and not having to terminate employees.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, externalisation, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Patrik</td>
<td>Describe how the firm became financially independent.</td>
<td>OP: a new big order, to take on risk projects and explore new areas. Growth within profitability. AD: financial independent.</td>
<td>Categorisation, stake attribution, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Stefan</td>
<td>Explain they only take on new businesses that ensure profitability.</td>
<td>OP: new businesses by not folding in price negotiations. AD: skills in economy, selling, and technology. Profitability.</td>
<td>Categorisation, stake attribution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 - The use of repertoire 5 - ‘growth within profitability’.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter I have analysed participants’ accounts of what they do in their work at System Novelty. The main focus has been on the construction work of each repertoire and the different functions of use. In the analysis I have used the analytical tool-box consisting of: interpreted repertoires, positioning and discursive devices addressed in Chapter 2 and 5. In analysing the discursive practices, it was possible to interpret at least five reper-
toires that participants draw upon: ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘close interaction with customers’, ‘we are a competence-driven firm’, ‘we are independent’ and ‘growth within profitability’. These repertoires were also in different ways fact constructs that accounted for the success of System Novelty, for example, in the annual reports and on the firm website, as well as by the participants. For example, through discursive devices of categorisation, nominalisation, externalisation and footing, the extracts showed how participants’ made fact constructs about System Novelty and their success, resulting in facts such as that successful firms are dynamic and flexible.

System Novelty is also categorised as unique in their work, in that they give the customer the option of change until it is time to put the system into operation. The repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ is the repertoire that is most frequently used, and appears at several occasions in conjunction with other repertoires, for example, with the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’, ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ and ‘we are independent’. The repertoire is also most commonly used to make different opportunity positions. Furthermore, through categorisation, fact constructs emerges by positioning that successful and responsible firms work in close interaction with their customers by treating them as partners. Through categorisation, the participants also positioned System Novelty as risk-takers, the importance of networks and having a good reputation. In this context, different aspects of marketing are downplayed and categorised as less important. Lastly, through the use of the repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ and categorisation it is also emerges that a successful firm has an attractive workplace for its people.

The competence and the people in the firm are positioned as one of the major competitive advantages. However, it is never clear who are included in the category of the “people”, as most participants used the discursive device of vague formulations. The competence is, however, mostly categorised “as a deep technical competence”. It is interesting that the repertoire of ‘we are independent’ is mostly used in documents and among top management. Furthermore, when using the repertoires of ‘we are independent’ and ‘we are agile and flexible’, the participants accounted for market determinism. Lastly, the use of the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ showed that opportunities were often positioned when drawing upon the repertoire of ‘we are independent’, for example, by the use of the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ the categorisation of “success” comes with the advantage position of financial independence in order to make it possible to engage in opportunities.
The extracts also showed how participants’ made fact constructs about System Novelty and their work with the help of different discursive devices such as categorisation, footing, vagueness, stake attribution, and externalisation. By analysing the discursive devices it is possible to say that categorisation is the most frequently used device and that it were used in all the extracts. The use of category entitlemen in text and talk emerged as a way of distinguishing what System Novelty are doing from what others are doing; as such it is possible to discern that categorisation is a device used by the participants to construct facts of what makes the firm unique and/or successful in their work. Vagueness is the secondly used discursive devices, closely followed by nominalisation. These devices is used to make fact constructs that may provide just enough material to sustain some action, but without providing too much of information or descriptive claims. But also as a way to avoid mentioning those who performed the action, as such avoided attribution of blame or responsibility.

Lastly, by analysing the discursive practices I have showed how the participants draw upon each repertoire as a flexible resource, not only to construct opportunity and advantage positions, but to accomplish certain actions such as blame, justify, explain, marketing, persuade, argue and so forth. I have identified the main function used in each repertoire of each extract that is analysed. However, it is important to note that within each repertoire there are on most occasions several actions or functions that derive from the use of the repertoire in an extract. For example, the main function could be to justify something in their work. But in order to do that the participants also performed actions such as apportioning blame by stake attribution and at the same time describing the work by categorisations. I have focused on the main functions in the summarised tables in this chapter, but have also addressed possible interpretations of other functions in the analysis of each extract.
In this chapter I discuss and analyse the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within a particular repertoire at PREM Food. I start by giving a historical description of PREM Food narrated in documents and in conversations with the participants. Also, specific contextual aspects will be presented that may be of importance in better understanding the accounts of the participants. Subsequently, I explore how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed, from the three analytical tools of: interpreted repertoires, positioning, and discourse devices. As in Chapter 6, each repertoire is presented under its own heading with extracts from the accounts analysed using the chosen analytical tools. The intention of putting each repertoire under its own heading is to be able to clearly show the construction work done by the participants. By discussing the content of each repertoire and the discursive practices I hope to show how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed within that particular repertoire. By studying different discursive devices I also analyse how each repertoire was built through different fact constructs. In this way, I try to show what the participants observably did with the repertoire, i.e. what they actually said and what they built their fact constructs on. As I have said, this is without making speculative assumptions about a participant’s state of mind or the discussing possible casual impact of text and talk. Lastly, I will sum up this chapter and discuss the results of the analysis. Later, in Chapter 8, these results as well as the results from System Novelty in Chapter 6 will be discussed in relation to each other. In this way I will again touch on the second stated research question from Chapter 1.

Background

In this section I will present some background information on PREM Food and its context. As I have said, within discourse psychology the context is of great importance and is needed in order to better understand the discursive practices. To retain the anonymity of each participant, as well as the firm, they are given fictive names. PREM Food had, at the time the interview conversations took place, two participants who could be considered as part of top management and who were included in this study. These were: Axel, the senior adviser and former CEO, and Mikael, the current CEO. The middle management consisted of six participants: Andreas, the CFO, Gunnar, the IT and Business Development Director, Thomas, the
Supply Chain Director, Maria, the Human Resource Director, Erik, the Marketing and Sales Director, and Per, the Production Director. As stated in Chapter 5, I also had interview conversations with a couple of the former CEOs and one of the former employees of PREM Food. These are Fredrik, the technician who was employed by the founder, Nils, Markus and Arvid who are former CEOs. However, as I said in Chapter 5, the function of these interview conversations has been to understand the history of PREM Food and they have not been used for the analysis of discursive practices by exploring opportunity and advantage positions. In Table 13, an overview and a short presentation is given of each participant that is part of the analysis where accounts of opportunity and advantage positions is explored.

**PREM Food**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axel</td>
<td>2000 - 2012</td>
<td>Axel was the previous CEO before Mikael and held his position for 10 years. In the last two years before retirement he worked as a senior adviser at PREM Food. Before he was employed as the CEO he worked with different aspects of management and financial control at Maximum, the owners of PREM Food. Axel said that his management of PREM Food had been more about maintaining than being entrepreneurial. Thus Maximum had an internationalisation strategy which most of the money went to. As such, it was only smaller investments that could be made at PREM Food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikael</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Mikael was positioned as the CEO and Sales Director, a position he held for twelve years. Before he started working at PREM Food, he had worked with sales and marketing in another niche of the food industry. As Marketing and Sales Director Mikael said he changed the organisation for how to manage this unit. For example, he changed the work procedures, came up with ideas for how to release new products and find new customers. At the time of the interview conversations, he had been CEO for about two years. As a CEO, Mikael talked a lot in...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
terms of finding strategies to support different aspects of innovation, finding new products and new markets to compete in.

Andreas was positioned the CFO and vice president 1991 Before Andreas was employed by PREM Food, he worked with accounting and as a manager. He said he had no previous experience of working with products and having a product focus. At PREM Food, he first started as the manager responsible for finance, personnel and data. He explained that the firm was too small at the time he started to work there to have a fully dedicated finance function as today. Andreas presented himself as a bearer of traditions at PREM Food.

Per was positioned as the Production Director 1978-2012 When Per came to PREM Food, he started to work as a product developer, but soon got moved to production to set up the requirements there. He had, prior to his employment at PREM Food, worked with production within another segment of the food industry. In 2012, Per decided to leave PREM Food and to take out his pension. A part of his work has been taken over by Thomas, and other parts have been developed into a new management position within the new organisation of Lead.

Gunnar was positioned as the IT and Business Development Director 1997 Gunnar was employed at PREM Food to maintain and further develop the current information system. Since then he has had several different roles. When the interview conversations took place, Gunnar was IT and Business Developer. He said that his knowledge and interest is concerned with the business as a whole than only the technical aspects of IT, rather how IT can support and develop the business. As such, he has also been working in the PREMIUM corporation to pursue these issues. He is also part of the steering-committee. Before PREM Food he worked as a university teacher and in a larger corporation. Gunnar has, with Andreas, been the driving force behind IT,
and the fact that PREM Food has been one of the first to take advantage of new IT solutions, internally as well as towards the customers.

**Erik** was positioned as the Marketing and Sales Director in 2000.

Erik has held different roles within sales at PREM Food. At the time of the interview conversation, he had been Market and Sales Director for 2 years. Erik has previous experience of working in the food industry in both larger and smaller firms. With only a high school diploma, PREMIUM corporation offered him the opportunity of gaining a 2 year university degree in business administration. He did this in conjunction with his work as a key account. Erik said he believed in balancing traditions with newness, e.g. he had been working to complement the current workforce with “new blood”. He also expressed a need to combine the production of profitable “traditional products” with the introduction of new ones.

**Maria** was positioned as the Human Resource Director in 2010.

Maria was the newest manager when the study was conducted. She had worked with HR in larger firms for many years before joining PREM Food. But she had also been running her own business for a couple of years, providing consultancy services within HR. It was in this way she acquired knowledge about PREM Food and decided to apply for the job. Maria has been closely involved in the development of the Lead project. She has also been working for better conditions for the short-term employees, and the possibility of becoming better at moving employees between the different facilities.

**Thomas** was positioned as the Supply Chain Manager in 1986.

Thomas has had many different roles in PREM Food e.g. as a packager, a foreman, coordinator, product planner and logistics manager. Thomas said that he went to PREM Food by chance asking for a job. He explained he had no education in any area of the food industry. As such, he has worked his way up in the firm. At the time of the interview conversation he was also part of the steering-committee.
Thomas said that PREM Food is decentralised, and that the firm is in spirit like a small firm. Thus, everybody knows each other and there is no hierarchy, and the different units work closely together.

Table 13 - A summary of the participants at PREM Food.

PREM Food was founded in Sweden in the 1950s. The firm was from the beginning a bakery owned by Nils, but it soon developed into a firm acting in a niche area of the food industry. Thus, it is explained that Nils and his colleague perceived an opportunity for repositioning the firm in a growing niche in the market segment of the food industry. They started on a small scale but soon grew to become the market leader in the immediate area. From the beginning they did everything by hand, but there was a vision of automating the manufacturing. There was a problem, however, because no such technology was available on the market. At that time there was no existing machinery developed for the type of product they were making, so they had to build their own machinery. As a result, at the beginning of the 1960s they had their first semi-automated production line. In a couple of years they grew in both employees and market shares to employ about forty people. Axel stated that:

PREM food has from the start-up experienced ‘growth-issues’ i.e. that the production has increased and the premises became too small.

A couple of years later PREM Food once again had to move to larger premises and by this move they also needed to invest in new machinery to be able to keep up with the request for their product and gain new market shares. This time they bought standardised machinery, but it had to be reworked to fit PREM Food and their production line. Fredrik was the one who worked internally as a technician to rework, and invent new solutions for the development of the machinery. The growth rate was high during these years. And Nils, as the founder, is described as the driving force, but also good at involving his employees in the process. In sum, the main strategy was to gain new market shares. As such, there was a focus on continuously expanding and come up with new ideas for new food recipes, how to cool down the food, transports, packaging and how to store the food, etc. Axel said that this was a period when operations became more and more rationalised and automated. In the late 1960s they also started to gain new market shares by the acquiring competitors’ businesses and shutting down their operations.
In the 1970s the founder, Nils, perceived a new opportunity in the food industry, as a new market niche began to emerge, and they decided to take advantage of this opportunity and expand their product offering to the customers. The initiative proved a success. At this time Nils also started a firm in another Scandinavian country that became successful. In sum, the strategy is expressed as a willingness to keep on growing through new product offerings as well as market shares in Sweden and in Scandinavia. In the late 1970s Nils, however, decided to sell PREM Food. Axel said that there was a lack of resources and sales-channels that contributed to the fact that Nils sold PREM Food to a well-known firm in the food industry. From the conversations with the management it emerged that PREM Food succeeded in keeping their independence of their buyer because they had such strong profitability. It was said they more or less could keep on going as they already had, but with the advantage of having the financial muscle and the sales-channels needed to further expand. A couple of years later their buyer sold to a large cooperation group in Scandinavia, namely Maximum.

In the 1980s the strategy was to keep on acquiring firms in both Sweden and Scandinavia. Arvid explained that some of the operations of the firms acquired were put down, while others were merged into the corporation. Moreover, they gained new market shares by an enhanced market need and extended marketing. But also, as Per argued, the firm who acquired PREM Food had businesses all over Sweden and as they were shut down, their production was taken over by PREM Food. In this way, the volume of what they had to produce went sky high. For the years following, the main strategy of PREM Food was in meeting volume requirements and developing the range, but mostly for brands other than their own. As a result, PREM Food once again had to expand production capacity and new premises were needed.

In the 1990s, PREM Food’s owners, Maximum and the Premium business area, to which PREM Food belonged, had been developed strongly throughout Europe, as a result of an internationalisation strategy at Maximum. The investments made at PREM Food at this time were mainly described as developing the organisation internally, with a focus on making the processes more efficient, for example by the setting up of a new organisational structure and a new salary system. As Per said:

Now it's much more structured, more professional, and we have finer tools to bring production forward.

It took some time, however, for the new structure to become established, but when it did PREM Food started to reap the benefits, and the second
half of the 1990s are described as one of the best periods yet. Not only for
the firm regarding profitability, but also for the employees who during this
period received what Axel and Per said was one of the best salaries in the
market. With the new marketing and sales manager, Mikael, the sales or-
ganisation was also renewed and restructured. He said that they reorgan-
ised the whole structure for sales and marketing, but also decided to
broaden their product range. However, this applied not only to what they
produced themselves, but also to their role as a distributor of other suppli-
ers’ products, thus becoming a complete provider. In this period PREM
Food also made some exclusive deals with distributors of their products.

During the twenty-first century, PREM Food received a prize for being
the best supplier of the year with a motivation connected to their innova-
tive product development. They had kept on growing in market share by,
for example, brand investments, broadening their product range, working
with concept development and finding new customer segments, especially
within areas of food services. But as Mikael, Thomas, Andreas, Gunnar
and Eric said, they also made investments in a new product-line of high-
quality products for the general dealer, for which they could charge the
customer a higher price. This strategy was a success. Mikael said the fol-
lowing:

We are trying to find news, new premium products [...], we have launched,
[...] find new products that attract the consumers. This strategy also drives
the overall market, the interest in what we and others are doing is increasing
when the market leader develops the market.

PREM Food also continued to work to find new customers or collabora-
tions with actors in the growing market of food services, with a focus on
chain stores or chain businesses. Also, through changes in the market, two
new sales-channels emerged that they took the opportunity to act on. At
this time the owners of PREM Food, Maximum Corporation, started to
reorganise. After several years of mergers and acquisitions, a decision was
made to unify and standardise parts of the corporation group’s business
areas and units around the world. This had an impact on PREM Food and
their organisation, for example by the implementation of a Lean-method
and a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Another decision
made by Maximum was that PREM Food needed to merge one of Maxi-
mum’s firms into their businesses. This merger is described as somewhat
problematic by several of the managers, for example regarding profitability
for PREM Food.
Specific context
It is possible to state that the ownership structure has become somewhat more complex over the years, and needs to be explained in order to understand what context PREM Food is acting in. When this study was conducted, PREM Food was part of a larger corporation group in Scandinavia who are the owners of the firm, i.e. Maximum. This corporation group has several areas of business, and each area is divided into different divisions. PREM Food belongs to the division of Premium. This division in turn is divided into business units that are localised in different countries. The business unit located in Sweden is PREM Food. Premium is not part of the study. Nevertheless, it needs to be addressed as they set some of the basic conditions for how PREM Food can act, for example regarding budget, different investments, and the premises for how to act through different strategy documents. The acting-space for Premium in turn is set by the corporation of Maximum. When the study was conducted, PREM Food pursued their business from three production facilities, each focusing on a specific niche of the food industry. Their headquarters was located in the facility where PREM Food was founded in the 1960s. This production facility is also said to be the largest and most profitable, and produces the products in which they are market leaders.

The specific context briefly is that Maximum distributes each year a certain amount of money to their divisions. Then the Premium division in turn distributes this money among their business units. As such, PREM Food receives their share to be divided among their three production facilities. Maximum and Premium also set some standards for their business units, for example, some main policies, values and strategies to follow. It is then, according to Mikael, up to each business unit to break down the main goals in the strategy and make them their own. Per, Gunnar, Andreas, Thomas and Mikael also said that to make larger investments is hard. Thus, they have to apply for money from Premium. In doing so they have to compete with every other business unit around the world for the possibility of acquiring the money for investment. Furthermore, it was said by, for example, Gunnar and Per that PREM Food has generated a profitability that would have ensured larger investments if they as a firm not had to give their profit to their owners.

The managers positioned PREM food as market leaders. A concern though, expressed by Per and Mikael, was how they should continue to grow, as they had taken most market shares in their niche. However, Mikael also argued that they were saying the same thing about ten years ago, and they have grown extensively since then. It was also described that PREM Food competes in a mature market, selling to the consumer market
as well as through business-to-business, and as such sometimes produces for other brands. In order to keep their customers satisfied with a broad product portfolio, they have over the last ten too fifteen years increasingly supplied products they do not themselves manufacture. Several times Axel also returned to the point that the food-industry has changed in many ways since the 1990s and by Sweden joining the European Union (EU), thus opening up the market to further completion. There have also been several changes in the specific niche PREM Food compete in. However, these changes are not described as being that rapid, but when they do occur they have been described as quite “dramatic” by Mikael and Axel. They also still need to address shifts in certain trends in order to maintain their competitive lead. Moreover, Mikael said that new market niches have developed over time within their area where they released both current and newly developed products. However, it is more about incremental product innovations, than radical innovations. As the current CEO, Mikael has also argued that he would like to implement a more structured approach to innovation, and that he is on his way to doing so. Innovation is also quite often drawn upon in the firm’s documents from the owners, Maximum, and the business area Premium. As well as by the participants such as Axel, Mikael, Gunnar, Maria, Per and Erik.

In several of the interview conversations, the new organisation of Lead as a method for doing their work is mentioned. When the study was conducted, Lead had started to show some effects, as it had been up and running for nearly two years after a test period of one year. Lead is an interpretation of the methods of Lean that have been used in the car industry for several decades. The decision to implement Lead came from Maximum as part of their strategy to gain better synergies between their different business areas and units. At PREM Food, there were several different views expressed about the benefits of implementing Lead. One was based on saving money through better efficiency and rationality through continuous improvements. Another was based on breaking down bureaucracy, enhancing knowledge sharing and giving employees the possibility of impacting on their own work processes. The implementation of Lead is also described as having resulted in quite a major change in PREM Food, especially regarding the structure of the organisation and the work processes in production.

Lastly, the organisation at PREM Food is described by Axel, Gunnar, Thomas, and Maria as decentralised and flat. For example, Thomas said there was good cooperation between the different units in the firm and that it was easy to go to the CEO and talk if necessary. The decision-making in the daily work is described as quick. Most of the managers also described
PREM Food as being a small firm in spirit even though they had grown and for several decades been owned by Maximum. Moreover, that the legacy of the founder and being entrepreneurs was still a central part in the firm.

**Exploring opportunity and advantage positions**

In this part of the thesis I will present a selection of exemplifying extracts from the participants’ accounts, based on the interview conversations and different text documents at PREM Food. These extracts will be analysed by exploring the discursive practices of how these participants draw upon particular repertoires when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. Each of these interpretative repertoires will, as previously said, be presented under its own heading. Then under each heading extracts are presented that are intended to show the discursive practices, positioning activities and the purpose of using the repertoire. With the help of discourse devices, the discursive practices used is discussed in detail by addressing how the participants make different fact constructs to support, for example, the different claims made. In this way I clearly anchor the interpretations of how I came to the conclusion that what is presented can be seen as a repertoire. As in Chapter 6, the selection of the exemplifying extracts under this heading is selected to show both representativeness, but also how the participants used the repertoire in different ways to construct opportunity and advantage positions.

**Repertoire 1 – ‘cooperation with customers’**

Several sources for opportunities and advantages were warranted by their positioning within the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’, both regarding the accounts from the participants themselves and in the text documents. From listening to the interview conversations, and reading and re-reading the transcribed texts it is possible to state that there were none of the participants who did not use this repertoire at least once. In most cases it was used several times and for different functions within the same interview conversation. It is even possible to state that this is the most frequently used repertoire in the firm, and it can be seen as dominant over other repertoires. As you will see throughout the analysis in this chapter, the repertoire is also frequently drawn upon in conjunction with other repertoires. When this is the case, it will be pointed out (cf. Juhila, 2012).

A total of five extracts has been used to exemplify the variations in discursive practices of construct opportunity and advantage positions within this repertoire. It is important to notice that I could have chosen to analyse
further extracts of this repertoire in order to show difference in use. However, I will return to this repertoire several times when analysing other repertoires. For this reason, I have chosen to keep the number of extract down to five examples that are not shown when used in conjunction with other repertoires.

In Extract 1, I explore how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed within the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ from firm documentation and the following is stated about the customers:

**Extract 1**

1. These are the building bricks we offer to improve our customers’ businesses:
2. - innovation & partnership - We solve any ((mentions the specific market))
3. challenge together with customers.
4. - Worldwide customer service - One-point-of-contact, global key account management, high level services.
5. Our innovation is largely customer-driven. The customer comes with an idea that we define, develop and realise on close cooperation with them. Our customers’ needs provide us with a number of challenges and constant inspiration. We are proud that we are able to bring these visions to life. Beyond that, we always have projects underway that are based on our own knowledge about trends – for instance, about ((mentions the market niche which PREM Food operate in)).
6. [...]  
7. In Sweden, PREM Food was named “((mentions the market niche)) supplier of the year” at the annual Swedish ((mentions the market niche)) awards. The award, which is given for creating great value to the ((mentions the market niche)) and convenience business, confirms that we have succeeded in introducing new ((mentions a product)) types to the relatively conservative (mentions the market niche)) by keeping a constant focus on product development and great partnerships with our customers.

The main function of the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ can be interpreted as a way to marketing how the business units within Premium have a great partnership with its customers. The use of the repertoire emerged in how they describe that they solve challenges together with the customer (lines 2-3) and have a “great partnership with our customers” (line19). But also in giving a “worldwide customer service” (line 4) and in that “innovation is largely customer-driven” (line 6); thus, the customer comes up with an idea which is defined, developed and realised in “close
cooperation” with the customer (lines 6-7). Opportunity positions are con-
structed on interaction with the customers, thus acquiring ideas from cus-
tomers for innovations (line 6) and thereby being able to introduce new
products onto the market (lines 16-17). Advantage positions in turn are
constructed in partnership with the customer (lines 2-3) by improving
“customer’s business” (line 1), “high level service” (line 5) and “one-point-
of contact” (line 4).

It is also possible to interpret an advantage position in having knowl-
edge about trends (lines 10-11). However, the fact construct of having
knowledge of trends shows the use of discursive vagueness. For example,
what does this knowledge consist of, or what use does the firm have of
such knowledge? The same goes for the statement of “constant focus on
product development” (line 18) that can be considered as vague in formul-
ation by not addressing how such a “constant focus” takes place. By the
use of category entitlement, the market is positioned as “conservative”, but
once again this is vague by not addressing how or why the market is con-
servative. Category entitlement was also used in order to categorise their
products as innovations (lines 6-11). Categorisation also emerges in posi-
tioning activities such as their products can be considered as successful.
Thus it is described that they “succeeded” in introducing new product
types by focusing on product development and partnership with the cus-
tomer (lines 16-19). This in turn suggests that firms that do not focus on
product development and partnership with their customers do not qualify
for the category of successful. Last, there is no shift in footing, because the
extract consistently draws on the membership categorisation of “we” (lines
1-2, 7-9, 16), “us” (line 8) and “our” (lines 6-7, 10, 19).

A couple of minutes before the exchange in Extract 2, I asked Mikael
the following: Do you think you have been proactive in trying to set
trends, or do you follow? He then stressed that it was a combination of
both, as they release new products that change the market as well as re-
sponding to customer requests. Moreover, as market leaders, Mikael ar-
gued they have a responsibility to drive the market forward. He then gave
a detailed example of how they, in his view, had raised the quality in the
industry, and the conversation continued in this way:

Extract 2

1. M: I do not know if that was the answer to your question?
2. L: yah
3. M: But I do not think we are trying to slide by
4. L: no
5. M: We try to be proactive and e:eh if you read a bit about (.)(mentions a large customer))
6. they are very good at telling the media about how well they have succeeded
7. L: yes
8. M: everything from sustainable development to the fact that they are successful
9. and so forth. They are, sometimes they are not humble enough, because I think that
10. when they talk about they have developed products
11. L: Yes
12. M: and it is about ((mentions a product)) it is we who have done it and nobody else.
13. L: no
14. M: We have developed, they have approved! Sometimes it sounds like they have come
15. here with a recipe and made something incredibly great, but it is not
16. L: Ha ha ha
17. M: so we have helped them succeed also
18. L: yes
19. M: and that's what a partnership (.) is based on, it is not just a negotiation of price and
20. other things but it is also (.) development projects together.
21. L: M:m
22. and we have had many with, for example, ((mentions a large customer) (...) and
23. we working with, we had ((mentions another large customer)) here
24. for about a week ago and they had a thought about, about a new product.
25. L: M:m
26. M: That we had been working on, and prepared, and presented to them and
27. then we sat in groups and discussed (.) and then it eventually leads to something.
28. L: So much of what you say (...) new products (...) concepts, thoughts and ideas,
29. most things you do do is in cooperation [ with ]
30. M: [yes it is]
31. If we get the opportunity, we do it in cooperation. It's the best way to succeed in
32. bringing the customer with you. Then you have a sure customer and it is also more
33. likely you are successful in the project. So gladly (.) joint customer projects.

The main function for Mikael in using the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ can be interpreted as a way of describing how PREM Food works in partnership with its customers. The use of the repertoire comes out in several ways in the extract. For example, by a partnership with the customer (line 19), product developed together with the customer (lines 20, 22-24, 31-33), cooperation (line 31) and joint customer projects (line 33). Mikael clearly position an opportunity in cooperation with the customer.
(line 31), with the advantage of having a secured customer (lines 31-32). Furthermore, that cooperation with customers enhances the possibility of succeeding with the project (line 32-33). If we look at the context of the extract as a whole, the project is about developing new products together with the customer. As such, it can be interpreted that there is an opportunity positioned in being able to create new products. Positioning customer development projects in the category of more successful (lines 31-33) suggests that firms that do not work in cooperation with the customer are less successful in product development. Moreover, Mikael categorised PREM Food and their work with the customer as a “partnership” (line 19) consisting of more than “price negotiation” (line 19), thus it includes “develop projects together” (line 20). This suggests that firms that do not develop projects together with their customers do not have a partnership. As I have said, categorisation can be a powerful way to separate one’s work from that of others (cf. Edwards 1995, Potter, 1996).

Mikael also made fact constructs by the use of categorisation, positioning PREM Food as “proactive” (line 5), a category first brought in by me to this context in my question. It is, however, interesting how Mikael justified that PREM Food is proactive, and in doing so draws upon the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’. For example, Mikael started the extract by positioning himself within the category of “I” (lines 1, 3), to change in footing to speak on behalf of the firm by the category entitlement of “we” (line 5) thereby stated that it is not he, but PREM Food, that is proactive, thereupon again shifting in footing to “I” (line 9) when addressing what he thought about the actions of their large customers, then quickly shifting back to “we” (lines, 12, 14, 17, 22-23, 27) when argued in the firm’s interest and not his own. In doing so, he categorised one of PREM Food’s larger customers as successful. Furthermore, by stake attribution he also stated “they are not humble enough” (line 9) by addressing that the customer does not mention PREM Foods’ involvement in their product development (lines 10, 14-15). Thus according to Mikael, PREM Food came up with the recipe (line 15) and the customer has approved it (line 14). As such he made fact constructs that downplay the actions of the customer and instead emphasises the actions of PREM Food. As Potter (1996) stresses, stake attribution is particularly used with regard to discounting the position of others.

Extract 3 is taken from the fourth interview conversation with Axel. Prior to the extract, Axel had talked about how PREM Food successfully launched a new product a couple of years ago. I then asked him when it was launched. As he gave me that information, he also stated that it took
couple of years before it was commercialised. Then the conversation took
the following turn:

Extract 3

1. A: very tiny, little knowledge or what to call detailed knowledge =
2. L: m m
3. A: = that is important and that you get through experience and work with this every year
4. and constantly working on improvements and that we (.) we do always and that’s
5. my approach! But it is not only my approach, to all the time work together
6. with our immediate customer. Because we e:eh in our rooms can NOT develop.
7. E:eh we are able to develop thoughts. But not reality.
8. L: no
9. A: Reality must always be made in cooperation all the way out.

The main function for Axel in using the repertoire of ‘cooperation with
customers’ can be interpreted as a statement about the importance
of working on improvements (line 4) with immediate customers (line 5-6).
The repertoire was mainly drawn upon in the narrated account of “all the
time work together with our immediate customer” (lines 5-6) and by “real-
ity must always be made in cooperation” (line 9). An opportunity position
emerges in “constantly working on improvements” (line 4) and working
together with the customer (lines 5-6). The advantage position is harder to
grasp, but if we look at the context of the extract as a whole, it is possible
to discern that an advantage position is constructed by working with the
customers. Thus, you get the advantage of knowing what is wanted in
reality. In other words, an advantage is positioned upon gaining knowledge
about reality (line 7, 9), thus not being able to develop ideas about the
reality themselves (line 7). To construct facts upon the use of categorisation
about “the reality” shows the use of vagueness, thus not addressing what
this “reality” contains. However, it can be interpreted that the reality is
reached through cooperation with the customer. Thus, Axel addressed the
cooperation aspect by working together with the customer (lines 5-6) and
that reality must always be made in cooperation (line 9). Moreover, the use
of categorisation suggests that firms that only develop ideas by themselves
(line 7) and not in cooperation with the customer do not develop (line 6)
reality (line 7). Axel also constructed facts by a shift in footing. He started
by positioning himself within the category of “we” (line 4) and talked in
behalf of the firm regarding working on improvements. Then he shift in
footing to state that this way of doing things is “my approach” (line 5), as
such taking credit or responsibility for what the firm were doing. However,
by stake attribution he downplayed the significance of his work by the statement “it is not only my approach” (line 5). In this way, he shifts back any possible credit for the work or responsibility to the firm.

Extract 4 is taken from the interview conversation with Andreas. About one hour into the conversation and prior to the extract, I asked him the following: Is there something else that you feel we have not raised yet, and that you think has been of importance to PREM Food over the years? As a response Andreas started to talk about the staff as a success factor, because they always get the products out. First he addressed the blue collar workers. In so doing, he stressed that the organisation at PREM Food is decentralised, as there are no top decisions at all made in the production; people decide when they close the lines and what work to do, etc. When he addressed the white collar workers the following transpires:

**Extract 4**

1. A: The white collar workers with sales staff that hold the entire market in
2. Sweden "in a very great way" is also a strength.
3. L: M:m
4. A: And the part of product development where we develop new products, and
5. to have the confidence from the market. I have to say that when we come up with a
6. new product, the customers know it is good, and they accept it.
7. They do not need to judge it themselves. Have we said we come up with a product
8. they take it in.
9. L: M:m
10. A: And it is also the same when we cooperate with our customers to develop
11. in different areas, we are also great at that. So it is eh (.)
12. no organisation is stronger than its staff.

The main function for Andreas in using the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ can be interpreted as a way of persuading me about the strengths of the staff. The use of the repertoire mainly came through in statements such as “we cooperate with our customers to develop” (line 10). But also because they already had a relationship with the customers, they accept new products of PREM Food as they are and do not need to judge them before they take them (lines 4-8) onto their product range. An opportunity position can be interpreted in cooperation with the customers to develop (line 10) and to come up with new products the customer knows are good (lines 5-6). The main advantage is constructed upon the staff. It emerges in the extract as a whole, but also in the statement that
“no organisation is stronger than its staff” (line 12). In saying this, Andreas categorised PREM Food as strong because of its staff (lines 11-12). He also categorised the sales staff into the category of strong, because they are able to hold the entire market in Sweden (lines 1-2). The same goes for the product developers of new products (lines 5-6). As I have said, categorisation is a powerful way to make fact constructs, in that it separates certain actions from others (cf. Potter, 1996). In line with this, it is possible to interpret this so that firms that do not qualify in these categories lacking in strength. Furthermore, he mostly speaks on behalf of the firm by the positioning within the category of “we” (lines 4-5, 7, 10-11). The only time Andreas shifted in footing was when he stated that “I have to say when we come up with a new product the customers know it is good” (line 6).

Extract 5 is taken from the interview conversation with Erik. At the beginning of the conversation I positioned myself as interested in growth firms. About eighteen minutes into the conversation he referred back to my interest in growth and stated the following:

Extract 5

1. E: If you asked the question from the beginning, how we have been able to grow so much.
2. L: M:m
3. E: Well I think we are, we are (...) e: erm how do you say, we are extremely loyal to our
customers, we are very loyal to our major customers. We, we got some really big
customers we have worked with for 20-25 years and when they sort of want things,
change things, we are very quick to help them.
4. L: yes
5. E: But this also comes with consequences. Like I describe that one becomes very
sprawling and we get, we have not, we get a lot more work, so to speak.
6. L: M:m
7. E: I think that is a basis for our growing a lot of sales and things like that huh
8. L: M:m
9. E: But I think there is a price for that too (...) that sometimes, sometimes you tire people
out. That’s the way it is. But that is sort of what we always do, we rarely say NO!
10. L: okay
11. E::rm partly because we want to help our customers, we have, we do have this,
like attitude somehow. Which I think is positive e::rm.
12. L: M:m
13. E: Then, we are always afraid of competitors.
The main function for Erik in using the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ can be interpreted as a way of justifying the need to be flexible towards big customers. The use of the repertoire emerges in several ways, but not with the exact phrasing of cooperation. Rather, the aspect of cooperation comes out in the extract as a whole and in the explanations given by Eric of how PREM Food interacts with the customer. He categorised PREM Food as a growth firm (lines 1, 12), by being loyal to big customers (lines 4-5), thus when they “want things” (line 6), “change things” (line 7), “we rarely say no” (line 15). This in turn puts the firm in a category of being flexible towards the customer. Thus, as I have said, according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary ‘being flexible’ is characterised by a ready capability to adapt to new, different or changing requirements. Furthermore he stressed “we are quick to help the customer” (line 8) and as such categorised PREM Food as helpful towards the customer. However, Erik also stated that this approach - of being loyal, helpful and flexible to the customers - comes with a price by categorising it as “sprawling”, “more work” (line 10) and “tire people out” (line 14). In doing so he spoke in terms of himself by saying “I describe” (line 9) and “I think” (line 14). This implies that this might only be a concern for Andreas and not the viewpoint of the firm.

Even though some negative aspects emerge, he justified the approach of PREM Food by the fact that they want to help the customer (lines 17-18), but also in that they are afraid of competitors (lines 20, 27, 29-32). Fur-
thermore, that it was these two reasons “that make one ... proactive” towards the customer and “want to help them at any price” (lines 34-35). The fact construct built on the category entitlement of “one” being proactive (lines 34-35) is vague in formulation, as it does not clearly address who is included in this category or not. Is for example Erik part of the category, or is it everybody in sales or everybody in the firm who can be considered as proactive? He started the extract by the speaking position within the category of “we” (line 1), thus speaking on behalf of the firm. However he quickly shifts in footing by the statement of “I think” (line 4), a position he held until saying that “we are afraid of competitors” (line 20), the position of speaking on behalf of the firm was then maintained throughout the rest of the extract.

From the analysis of the extract as a whole, a possible interpretation emerges in an opportunity position based on cooperating with customers, with the advantage position of being able to keep their competitive position and/or grow. Lastly, it is possible that Erik only categorised PREM Food as a growth firm as a response to the fact that at the beginning of the conversation I said I was interested in growth firms. However, it probably did not have that great an impact on the fact that Erik chose to draw on the repertoire of “cooperation with customers”. Thus, I did not introduce the categories of customers or cooperation into the conversation.

Summary of repertoire 1
If we look at the results from analysing the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’, this repertoire was used as a flexible resource by all of the participants, as well as in the text documents with the function to marketing, describe, explain, persuade, justify and state (see Table 14). The discursive practices of position opportunity and advantages within the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ were warranted by: partnership with customers, the staff is the strength of the firm, flexibility towards customers and developing improvements together with the customer. It is possible to stress that the repertoire was the most frequently used, and was drawn upon in text and talk at least once. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, it could be interpreted that a set of discursive devices was used to build fact constructs. The most frequently used discursive device was categorisation. Thereafter, footing and vagueness was the most used, followed by stake attribution. In Table 14 I have summarised the results of how the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ has been used. As in Chapter 6, ‘Ex’ is an acronym for Extract, ‘DD’ stands for discursive devices. ‘OP’ in turn stands for opportunity and ‘AD’ stands for advantage.
A summary of repertoire 1 – ‘cooperation with customers’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Firm documentation</td>
<td>Marketing how they have a great partnership with its customers.</td>
<td>OP: new ideas, innovations, products. AD: improving customers business, high level service, one-point-of contact with the customer, knowledge about trends.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mikael</td>
<td>Describe how they work in partnership with its customers.</td>
<td>OP: new products, partnership with the customer. AD: a secured customer, a successful project.</td>
<td>Categorisation, stake attribution, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Axel</td>
<td>State improvements should be developed with the customers.</td>
<td>OP: continuous improvements, work together with the customer. AD: knowledge about ‘reality’.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, footing, stake attribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andreas</td>
<td>Persuade that the staff is the strength of the firm.</td>
<td>OP: cooperation with customers, new products. AD: the staff, the customers’ accept a new product by PREM Food.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Erik</td>
<td>Justify the need to be flexible towards big customers.</td>
<td>OP: cooperation with customers. AD: keeping their competitive position and/or growing.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 - The use of repertoire 1 - ‘cooperation with customers’.

Repetoire 2 – ‘we are changeable’

Several sources to opportunities and advantages were warranted by the positioning within the repertoire of “we are changeable”, both regarding the accounts from the participants themselves, and in the text documents. As with the previous repertoire, it is possible to state that there were none of the participants who did not use this repertoire at least once. In most cases, it was used several times and for different functions within the same interview conversation. It is even possible to state that this is the second most frequently used repertoire in the firm and it can be seen as dominant.

The essence of the repertoire of “we are changeable” is based on aspects of flexibility towards the market and the customers, but also regarding how PREM Food worked within the firm. As you will see in the upcoming analysis of the repertoire, it is also used in conjunction with the previous repertoire of “cooperation with customers” and the upcoming two repertoires, discussed later. This means that the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ will be addressed on several occasions in this chapter. As such, I have
– as with the previous repertoire – chosen to keep the number of extracts down to five examples to show both representativeness and how the participants used the repertoire in different ways to construct opportunities and advantages.

First I am going to explore how opportunity and advantage positions were constructed from internal firm documentation within the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’. In Extract 6, the CEO of Premium presented the work in the business units in a repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ in the following way:

**Extract 6**

1. We will stand together to take on the challenges of a changing world and,
2. along with our customers, we are ready to unfold the opportunities
3. that appears in the new market scenarios.
4. [...] 
5. We do our best to keep our eyes wide open to be able to react quickly to
6. important trends and changes in the market. Flexibility is our trade mark, and I am sure that
7. this special ability will make us one of the winners in the ((mentions the niche of the market))
8. business. We are investing in the right development projects, which will
9. make us even stronger and more customer-driven, and my greatest worry is whether
10. we will be able to invest enough to match the demands of the markets.
11. ‘[...]
12. The focus on core business and profitability has impacted the product development
13. strategy of PREMIUM. From long-term, visionary projects we have had to redefine the
14. development strategy to focus more on short-term, tangible projects originating
15. from ideas and requirements of the customers.

The main function of using the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ can be interpreted as a way to justify the need of being flexible in order to cope with the challenges of a changing world. The use of the repertoire emerges in several ways in the extract by narratives such as “flexibility is our trade mark” (line 6), “take on the challenges of a changing world” (line 1) and to be ready for “market scenarios” (line 3), “react quickly” to trends and “changes in market” (lines 5-6). There is a clearly stated opportunity position in “unfold the opportunities” in new market scenarios (lines 2-3), brought on by changes (line 1). Another opportunity position could be interpreted in redefining the development strategy to become more short-termed (lines 13-14). The advantage positions in turn are mostly based on becoming more customer-driven (line 9), for example by means of a new
strategy that better supports the requirements of customers and their ideas (lines 12-15). When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire ‘we are changeable’ also parts of the repertoire ‘partnership through cooperation’ are drawn upon (lines 2, 9, 14-15).

The need to be changeable is justified by a fact construct built on nominalisation and vagueness, as seen in narrations about the “challenges of a changing world” (line 1), thereby partly shifting the responsibility for being changeable to the market (cf. Potter, 1996). Furthermore, what the challenges consist of is vague, and as such the statement is harder to undermine as a fact construct (cf. Potter, 1996). There is also a shift in footing from addressing the actions made by the category entitlement of “we” (lines 1, 5) and “our” (line 2) to “I” (line 6), in this way, constructed a fact that the CEO himself is sure that the special ability of being flexible will make them winners (lines 6-7). By the category entitlement that a winner is flexible, it suggests that there are losers and that they are inflexible. It can also be interpreted as his using stake confession to make the fact construct that if they do not become winners it is because he is worried they would not be able to invest enough to meet the demands of the market (lines 9-10). By this also narrated a market-determinism by categorising that the market makes demands. Constructing a fact that the market makes demands is also built on nominalisation, thus not accounting for human agency, which is a useful way to make a fact objective or natural (cf. Potter, 1996).

Extract 7 is from the interview conversation with Thomas. Prior to the extract, he had talked about how he often went around thinking about different ways to improve the organisation and he is said to be quite a thinker. I then stressed that this could be a good quality, and maybe a necessarily part of the job? Then the conversation took the following direction:

Extract 7

1. T: And that's what we talked about before, the changes, they are ongoing all the time
2. and logistics is (.) definitely no exception. Because if it is not us who change,
3. it's the customers that change and we have to, e:h you have to opt in and
4. be able to fend off all the time and try to find a slightly better solution somewhere.
5. Can you get on a board [ another]
6. L: [ m::m]
7. pallet or can you get another bag into the box e::h (...) It is tremendously,
8. both in money savings and environmental savings in the end e :: eh.
At the beginning of this conversation I did position myself as interested in growth and changes. Therefore, it is possible that I have influenced Thomas in talking about changes, as he frequently uses the category of “change” throughout the interview conversation. The extract is taken forty-three minutes into the conversation. The impact may be less as such, but still it is important to acknowledge it. The repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ is, however, also frequently used in documents as well as by the other participants. Nevertheless, the main function for Thomas to use the repertoire can be interpreted as an argument that change is ongoing all the time in PREM Food (line 1). Drawing upon the repertoire by narratives such as “if it is not us who change” (line 2), then we have to change because the customer does (line 3). Furthermore, Thomas categorised the logistics to be no exception (line 2) to ongoing changes (line 1) as you always need to find slightly better solutions somewhere (line 4). As such, it can be interpreted as there being an opportunity position in finding better logistic solutions (lines 4, 7), with the advantage position of saving money and the environment (line 8). He consequently positions himself within the category entitlement of “we”, and spoke on behalf of the firm; in so doing not taking responsibility for the actions of the firm.

Prior to Extract 8, Maria was talking about PREM Food and their work with a new salary system for the employees based on the Premium approach, which is based on the three overall values of ‘openness’, ‘power-of-action’ and ‘a comprehensive view’. The last question I asked before Extract 8 was a response to the fact that Maria had addressed two of the values and stated as followed – let’s see openness, power-of-action I now forgot the third one? In answering this question Maria talked for two minutes about what it meant to have “a comprehensive view”; an example given was to be able to shift employees between PREM Foods’ different facilities, as such resulting in the following discussion:

**Extract 8**

1. M: You have to do this with a bit of a careful hand.
2. We do not want to get into some kind of musical chairs (a metaphor for pulling away the chair for somebody so they don’t have anything to sit on))
3. No
4. Eh but still an opportunity to utilize the staff as flexibly as possible, and that everybody also get the opportunity to learn more and become even more knowledgeable.
5. M::m

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30 The metaphor used in Swedish “hela havet stormar”.

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The main function for Maria to use the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ can be interpreted as a way of justifying that the employees need to be more flexible. As I have said, being flexible is characterised by a ready ability to adapt to new, different or changing requirements. As you will see, it is possible to say that Maria has used the word in a similar way. The repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ comes out in a different way than in the previous two extracts. Thus she used the repertoire as a way to justify that PREM Food needed to become even more changeable than they have been and take the flexibility aspect a step forward (lines 8-9, 11-14, 16). Opportunity positions were explained by being able to utilize the staff as flexibly as possible (line 4) and to learn more (line 5). Advantage positions emerged in accounts as “become even more knowledgeable” (line 6), “get a more varied and fun job” and being able to shift employees between different facilities and work tasks (lines 12-14). Maria made fact constructs based on vagueness and category entitlement to build her claims that this approach would make PREM Food successful everywhere. She is vague in the accounts of “everywhere” (line 14), also in the account “move people from elsewhere” (line 13), thus not specifying what is included in the categories or not. However, if we take the context of the firm and the extract as a whole into consideration, it is possible to state that she referred to PREM Foods’ different production facilities and their different production lines. Furthermore, the categorisation of becoming successful can be interpreted as embracing being successful in all their facilities and production lines. Thus, Maria has argued for the flexibility to move employees between their different lines (line 12-13), and PREM Food owns three different facilities located in different areas. In other words, to be categorised as successful requires that a firm’s employees are flexible. Lastly, Maria took the speaking position of the firm by the category entitlement of “we” (line 11, 13), except for when she stated that the “word flexibility has existed but on a
very small scale, I’d say” (line 9). In this way, she shifts to speak on behalf of herself, not the firm, which suggests that the statement is not necessarily the collective view of the firm.

Extract 9 is taken from the interview conversation with Per that – prior to the extract – talked about how it had been harder to make investments at PREM Food, that you have to work hard to get the money needed for the new things you like to do. I then asked if it was not worth the fight? He then said he rather focuses on what you are allowed to do, and then the conversation turns into talking about Lead and the work with continuously improvements:

Extract 9

1. P: There are so many more things you have to be careful about today than before
2. and it is like all words that are called, for example consequence analysis and ‘stuff’
3. that takes a lot of time (...) “because it is much more formal today”.
4. L: *okay*
5. P: You need to describe this, no matter how small the change is, you must do
6. consequence analysis and such ‘stuff’, and they, it takes a huge time, well
7. administratively. It does, we currently work with continuous improvements.
8. L: Yes
9. P: And there is a question every day about this. Is there anything new (,)
10. that we have to do a consequence analysis on.
11. L: Yes
12. P: “and for the most part it is” I was about to say heh heh
13. L: Heh heh
14. P: Well, but there always happens something.
15. L: Okay (...)
16. P: So, so
17. L: do you especially think about the production line then, or?
18. P: Yes, or way to work.
19. L: Or way to work?
20. P: [gives a detailed example of how they work on continuous improvement in the
21. production line by cutting down minutes in work]
22. since we started working on improvements and we have been doing it for about
23. two years, one could say, since we started with improvement teams and such
24. L: Yes
25. P: So it is, it is worth its weight in gold to all of a sudden get 147 technicians in the
26. production that begins to understand what it is all about (,) more or less, so to speak.
The main function for Per to use the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ can be interpreted as a way of explaining how they work with small changes every day. He draws on the repertoire on several occasions, but mostly through aspects of working with continuously improvements (lines 7, 22-23) and in making small changes (line 5). It is also in the continuous improvements that an opportunity position is constructed (lines 7, 22-23). If we look at the context of the extract as a whole, it emerges that their “way to work” (line 19) in the production line is what is continually changing. An advantage position can be interpreted from the narratives of “it is worth its weight in gold to all of a sudden get 147 technicians in the production that begins to understand what it is all about” – suggesting an enhanced competence among the technicians (lines 25-26). In other words, since they started working with improvements two years ago (lines 22-23), the technician’s competence has been enhanced, which is described as “worth its weight in gold” (line 25). However, he is being vague in formulation about what the competence enhancement contains as he only addressed it as “begins to understand what it is all about”. Through categorisation, Per positioned the work on the production line (lines 17-18) as formal (line 3), as the way of working with improvements (lines 7, 22-23) comes with the job of doing consequence analysis every day (lines 9-10), and it takes a lot of time (lines 3, 6). To categorise their “way to work” (line 18) as working on continuous improvements (lines 7, 22-23) suggests that there are others that might not use this approach. In this way, he distinguishes their way of working from those who do not work with continuous change. Per shifted his speaking position on two occasions, as he starts by the category entitlement of “you” (lines 1, 5), then shifts to the category of “we” (lines 7-9), and for a short while uses the category of “I” (line 12), before shifting back to “we” (line 22). By the categorisation of “you”, Per is being vague about who is included in this category or not? Is, for example, Per part of this category, or is it only the technicians or the management? By the shift in footing to the category of “we”, it becomes a little clearer, as now he speaks in behalf of the firm, but he is still being vague as to who is included or not in the category of “we”. In this way, Per made fact constructs that avoid attribution of responsibility for the actions taken, but also in being vague it is harder to undermine his arguments (cf. Potter, 1996). Lastly, by avoiding attribution of responsibility, it emerges that Per also uses the device of nominalisation on several occasions, for example, by taking away human agency in the statements (line 18).

Extract 10 is taken from the interview conversation with Erik, who I, prior to the extract, asked whether he could tell me what he worked with,
and what he was doing in his job. He then started to talk about his quite new position as a Marketing and Sales Director, and sometimes it was hard to separate this from his previous position as a key-account. He also said that his staff sometimes were in a pressured situation, and it was important that they did not get burned out. Then the conversation took the following direction:

Extract 10

1. E: But it then, maybe then that the customers then demand very high demands on us to have finished products, we have to be ready for delivery, and one thing and another, and like actually disregard the deadlines that we have, because they want to get it out in their world and then you have to like, run faster=
2. L: = then you actually should do (.) and it is more of this than (.) then I might have thought when I started two years ago. (as a Sales and Marketing Director)
3. E: okay
4. L: okay
5. E: There are less, less strategy from our customers and more about short response-time. Then what I might have thought once upon a time. (.) So I have learned.
6. L: yes
7. E: Large customers who work very strategically at a European level or on world , that have restaurants for example all over the world
8. L: yes
9. E: ha (.) has very short response-time. We have a campaign on December 7, we want such and such (mention a product) ready, and (grasping for air)
10. normally you might have a cycle of six months to develop a new product.
11. L: M:\:m
12. E: =there are several different. E::e and this surprises me a little bit and makes enormous demands on our organisation in flexibility, on that you sort of can, well (...) yes
13. L: Do you feel that you have the flexibility=
14. E: = [ yes]
15. L: = [ as you need ]=
16. E: = Yes we do]
17. L: = In order to meet?
18. E: Yes, though it of course is to the detriment of the individual sometimes.
The main function for Erik to use the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ can be interpreted as a way to explain that the “big customers” often come up with a short response-time (lines 10, 15-17, 19). As such the customers made enormous demands on the organisation regarding flexibility (lines 21-22). As previously said, flexibility is closely connected to an ability to meet changes, in this context to meet the changing demands of the customers. In this way Eric draws upon the repertoire ‘we are changeable’ as a flexible resource in a slightly different way than in previous extracts. He also constructed an opportunity in new product development in cooperation with the customers (lines 1-2, 15-17). In this way, he also draws on the previously discussed repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’. The advantage position is not that explicit, but if we look at the extract as a whole, it can be interpreted as meeting customer demands (line 1). Fact constructs by categorisation emerge on several occasions. For example, from his own speaking position, he categorised the big customer as less strategic (line 9-10) than he first thought when he started as a Sales and Marketing Director two years ago (lines 6-7). To support his claims he uses externalisation by stressing that large customers who work very strategically at a European level (line 12) or all over the world (line 13), have a very short response time (line 15). In this way, he does not categorise “to be strategic” as having a short response-time, rather “to be strategic” for Erik is about long-term planning. Thus, he also categorised being “normal” as having about six months to develop a new product (lines 16-17), but now they have been given only three weeks (line 19). When this fact construct was made, he shifts back to the speaking position of the firm. Erik also categorised that the customers have their “world” (line 4), and that this world is not the same “world” that PREM Food lives in. However, vague in what separates the two “worlds”, more than different expectations on development and delivery time (lines 1-4, 15-17, 19).

Summary of repertoire 2
As with the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’, it is possible to state, that also the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ was used by all the sources of text and talk in this study. These two repertoires are also drawn upon in conjunction, see Extracts 7 and 10. Furthermore, the repertoire was drawn upon in different ways and for different functions to justify, explain and argue (see Table 15). The discursive practices of positioning opportunity and advantages within the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ were warranted by: flexibility to cope with a changing world, ongoing change, daily changes and a short response-time. The repertoire can be interpreted as the second most frequently used. When constructing oppor-
tunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, it could also be interpreted that a complex set of discursive devices was used to build fact constructs. The most frequently used discursive device was categorisation, used by all the participants. Then comes footing, mostly used to construct facts, followed by vagueness, stake confession, and nominalisation. A summary of the repertoire ‘we are changeable’ is presented in Table 15.

A summary of repertoire 2 – ‘we are changeable’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Firm documentation</td>
<td>Justify flexibility in coping with the challenges of a changing world.</td>
<td>OP: changes in market, redefine the development strategy. AD: new strategy that better met up with customer requirements.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing, stake confession, vagueness, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Argue that change is ongoing all the time.</td>
<td>OP: find better logistic solutions. AD: saving money and the environment.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Justify that the employees need to be more flexible.</td>
<td>OP: flexible employees, learning new work. AD: enhanced knowledge, a more varied and fun job, shift employees between different facilities and work tasks.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Explain how they work with small changes every day.</td>
<td>OP: continuous improvements. AD: enhanced competence, efficiency.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing, vagueness, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Erik</td>
<td>Explain that big customers often come up with a short response time.</td>
<td>OP: new product development AD: meeting customer demands.</td>
<td>Categorisation, externalisation, footing, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 - The use of repertoire 2 - ‘we are changeable’

**Repertoire 3 – ‘rational efficiency’**

Several sources of opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by the positioning within the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’, both regarding the accounts from the participants themselves, and in different documents of texts. Efficiency is closely related to rationalisation. In the Oxford English dictionary to rationalise is described as to make a company or industry more efficient by dispensing with superfluous personnel or equipment, and
to reorganise (a process or system) so as to make it more logical and consistent. Furthermore, in Merriam Webster Dictionary the following can be read: “rationalising is to apply the principles of scientific management to (as an industry or its operations) for a desired result (as increased efficiency)”. In other words it is possible to state that rationalisation is built on the idea of efficiency. This also comes through in the use of the repertoire ‘rational efficiency’. Especially in Extract 13, 14 and 15. Last, a total of five repertoires have been used to show representability and variation in the use of this repertoire. It is possible to state that the repertoire is well used, but not with as many variations as the previously discussed repertoires.

First I am going to explore how opportunity and advantage positions were constructed within the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ from firm documentation. In Extract 11 the following was stated:

**Extract 11**

1. Increasing efficiency and reducing costs have been recurring themes during the past year.
2. To respond to the rapid changes in the world around us we have strengthened the corporate supply chain organisation and the commercial organisation to be able to streamline the overall planning to gain synergy and economy of scale across borders.
3. [...] The pressure on raw material prices has continued through 2011 and into 2012.
4. Through professional and large-scale procurement we constantly work hard to harness the price increases while never compromising on quality and food safety.
5. Streamlining and optimisation of the production processes according to lean principles as well as a new ERP system have also contributed to stabilising the level of costs throughout the business. The drive for efficiency gains and cost reductions will continue in 2012.

The main function of using the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ can be interpreted as a way of arguing for the need to become more efficient. Thus, the repertoire emerges in narratives as “increasing efficiency” (line 1) and “cost reduction” (line 11), “streamline the overall planning” (lines 3-4), and “streamlining and optimisation” the production (lines 9-11). One of the synonyms suggested by tyda.se regarding “streamlining” is “rationalise” and “make more effective”. As said, the Oxford English dictionary states: “make (an organisation or system) more efficient and effective by employing faster or simpler working methods”. Opportunity positions were mainly constructed within the repertoire in responding to changes by streamlining (lines 3-4, 9) and optimisation of the production processes.
(line 9), doing large-scale procurement (line 7), implementing Lean principles (line 9) and a new ERP\textsuperscript{31} system (line 10), but also by strengthening their “supply chain organisation” and “commercial organisation” (lines 2-3). In doing so, they also positioned their work in the categorisation of “quality” and “food safety”, however, being vague and using nominalisation regarding how this is done. Furthermore, building fact constructs about streamlining on Lean and ERP, can be seen as using externalisation. Thus they construct legitimisation for their actions upon widely used principles and methods (cf. Muller & Whittle, 2011). Also the repertoire ‘\textit{we are changeable}’ was drawn upon, as well as narratives about market determinism (line 2). Several advantage positions emerged in accounts as “increasing efficiency” (line 1) and “reducing costs” (line 11), “overall planning to gain synergy economy of scale across borders” (line 4) and “harness the price increases” (line 8). In this way, they also narrated accounts about economy of scale. There is no shift in footing in the extract those consistently used the category entitlement of “we” (lines 2, 7).

Extract 12 is based on accounts from the third interview conversation with Axel. With an internal report as the basis for the conversation, aspects of entrepreneurship and decentralisation were brought up prior to the extract. I then asked Axel if he thought that these wordings in the document could be seen as only a new terminology for something that has been apparent in firms for a long time, for example, by ‘SAS Janne’ and his book \textit{Riv pyramidernat} \textsuperscript{32} I referred to this book, because Axel in previous conversations had talked about it. Nevertheless, by the question I indirectly brought in categories about service. In this way I influenced Axel to address whether PREM Food is to be considered as a service firm or industrial firm. Axel stated that they have more in common with the automation industry like Volvo, but that they might also be considered to be a service firm. The conversation then took the following direction:

\textsuperscript{31}ERP is an acronym for Enterprise Resource Planning, which is a type of information system (IS) that contains different integrated software modules for firms’ business management in areas such as development, sales, marketing, accounting, HR and so forth.

\textsuperscript{32} By ‘SAS Janne’ I refer to Jan Carlzon who was the CEO of SAS (Scandinavian Airlines System) in the 80s. In 1985 he wrote a book called \textit{Riv pyramidernat} (English: Moments of Truth, 1997), which was a huge success in Sweden but also internationally. The book discusses the importance of a flat organisational structure, delegation processes, empowerment of employees and the importance of services.
Extract 12

1. A: Our first guiding principle is secure delivery
2. L: M::m
3. A: Our first guiding principle is NOT profitability. Our first guiding principle is secure delivery. Because it creates profitability. Secure delivery gives efficiency.
4. L: M::m
5. A: Our first parameter is not efficiency. It is secure delivery.
6. L: M::m
7. A: It is secure delivery that creates efficiency. If you can’t get a flow it constantly (…)
8. interrupt (). Where are our deliveries? When is the truck coming?
9. A: They are not coming? Yah all the time
10. L: yes
11. A: It interferes with efficiency, efficiency that is disrupted, interferes with profitability!
12. L: M::m
13. A: So it is secure delivery and that is a service concept if you want yah.
14. L: M::m absolutely.
15. A: To be able to deliver.

The main function for Axel to use the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ can be interpreted as a way of persuading me that it is “secure delivery” that is the most important priority (lines 1, 4, 13, 15). The repertoire is drawn upon on several occasions in the extract. For example, with the help of nominalisation Axel constructs the fact that “secure delivery gives efficiency” (line 4), however the “first parameter is not efficiency” (line 5), thus It is “secure delivery that creates efficiency” (line 7). Furthermore, “it interferes with efficiency, efficiency that is disrupted, interferes with profitability” (line 11). As I have said, nominalisation can be seen as a way of removing human agency and thereby avoiding attribution of responsibility (cf. Potter, 1996), although the responsibility for the actions described can be seen as belonging to the firm, because there is no change in footing as Axel consequently categorised himself within the category of “our” (lines, 1, 3, 5), thereby spoke on behalf of the firm when made his fact constructs. It is more likely that Axel used nominalisation in order to present the fact constructs as objective or natural (cf. Potter, 1996). In other words, these ideas are rational and it is not only PREM Food that has these ideas about efficiency.

An opportunity position can be interpreted in a “secure delivery” (line 1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 15), a concept that can be seen as a service (line 13). However, Axel partly constructed the fact on vague formulation by not clarifying the content of the category entitlement of “secure delivery”, more than being
able to deliver (line 15). An advantage position mainly emerged by narrations about profitability (4), but also in being able to deliver (line 15) in time (lines 7-9). Thus secure delivery creates profitability (line 4).

Extract 13 is based on the first interview conversation with Mikael. About one hour into the conversation, when we were talking about growth in profitability and market shares, he went to his desk for some documents. When he came back, he started to explain the market and how the two niches that the main facility of PREM Food was producing for were functioning. My question, asked prior to the extract, was: Is the goal in some way fifty-fifty or, or? By fifty-fifty I was addressing whether the goal was to allocate resources equally to the two niches in the production lines. Mikael stressed they never expressed such a goal, but that one of the niche products is more profitable than the other. He also stated that, if it were fifty-fifty, they would have some problems as they are already going for maximum on one of these production lines. If they did not:

Extract 13

1. M: If we do not succeed even better, with what we said before
2. with efficiency improvements.
3. L: Yes
4. M: Reduce shrinkage and increase the speed of the machines,
5. with all of what we are working with.
6. L: M:m
7. And has done in a good way (...) e :: eh we have line 6 then, but the news (refers to new products)) often lands on line 4, so what we should do now is to become even more efficient so we get an additional 10 to 15 million (mention the product)
8. e :: eh (...) on existing work.
9. L: M:m
10. M: Then we raise the financial ratios significantly
11. M: M:m
12. M: and we still have the same staffing, the same number of production hours,
13. L: M:m
14. but still get out more from what we sell.
15. L: M:m
16. M: We've got quite high shrinkage ratio on certain products so it's them
17. we should focus on reducing.
18. 

The main function for Mikael to use the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ can be interpreted as a way of arguing that there are still some shrinking ratios that can be decreased in the production process (lines 17-18). The
A repertoire emerges in the extract as whole, but is anchored in narratives as “efficiency improvements” (line 2) and “to become even more efficient” (line 7), but also by position an opportunity of being able to make “efficiency improvements” by changing the speed of the machines (line 4). The main advantage position can be interpreted as constructed on larger volumes of products to sell (lines 8-10, 15), but also on reduced shrinkage (lines 4, 17-18) and an increase in financial ratios (line 12), thus having the same staffing and production hours (line 14) as before. Mikael categorised their work as reducing shrinkage and increasing the speed of the machines (line 4) as “done in a good way” (line 7). He also used nominalisation in order to build a fact construct of the importance of reducing shrinkage and increasing the speed of the machines, thus removing human agency and in this way making the construct more objective or natural (cf. Potter, 1996). It is also possible to interpret that making efficiency improvements (line 2) can be categorised as to “succeed” (line 1), in this way suggesting that those who are not part of this category are less successful. Mikael does not shift in footing, as he consequently categorised himself within “we” (lines 1, 4, 7-8, 12, 14, 17-18), as such spoke on behalf of the firm and in its interests.

Extract 14 is taken from the interview conversation with Andreas. At the end of the conversation he addressed the importance of deciding and setting the price. I then asked the following question:

**Extract 14**

1. L: How have you worked here? Around the idea of pricing?
2. A: ((cough)) e :: excuse me but it’s practically open calculations with certain customers
3. the large wholesalers.
4. L: yes
5. A: when it is open calculations then you have to account for (.) as far as we want
6. ourselves on the price increase requirements we have “so and”,
7. if we have the openness then we will also get the price increase on that part.
8. But there are never any margin reinforcements I can tell.
9. L: No?
10. A: On the contrary, the requirement of the customers is that we should rationalise, more.
11. L: Okay, how do you feel you are able to manage it? (...)
12. Have you had any particular strategy or thought?
13. A: Yes it’s an improvement work all the time on everything you do
14. we shall do it smarter, clearer, so (.) so that is many activities in That world.
15. L: yes
The main function for Andreas to use the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ can be interpreted as a way of explaining that there are never any margin reinforcements (line 8) and the customer wants them to rationalise (line 10). The use of the repertoire mainly emerges through rationalisation (line 10) and better efficiency by continuous improvements (line 13), to do things smarter and clearer (line 14). As such he also draws upon the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ in conjunction with ‘rational efficiency’, thus narrated “improvement work all the time” (line 13) which suggests there are continuous changes going on at PREM Food that they working with. Furthermore, it can also be interpreted there is an opportunity positioned in continuous improvements of the work (line 13), with the advantage of meeting up with customers’ requirements for rationalisation (line 10). To be able to make the fact construct that PREM Food needs to rationalise, Andreas used externalisation and spoke on behalf of its customers. An opportunity is also positioned in being open with the customers regarding the calculation of price setting (lines 5-7), with the advantage of getting the price increase (line 7) suggested by PREM Food. Moreover, Andreas started by speaking on behalf of the firm, thus categorised himself within the category of “we” (lines 5-7). However, with the statement that “there never are any margin reinforcements” he shifts in footing to “I can tell” (line 8). In this way he builds a fact construct that can possibly be separated from the firm. Nevertheless, he quickly shifts back to speak on behalf of the firm by the positioning within the category of “we” (lines 10, 14, 16, 18). In doing so he positioned “the many activities” (line 14) of “improvement work” (line 13) within the category of “Lead” (line 17) and the programmes connected to this approach (line 18). It is thus possible from interpreting the extract as a whole to state that what Andreas actually is saying is that improvement work leads to rationalisation.

Extract 15 is based on the interview conversation with Gunnar. Prior to the extract he talked about the fact that it had been hard over the years to make large investments. Furthermore, he said that it was impressive that they had grown with such great profitability without making these large investments that many firms do. I then asked the following question:
The main function for Gunnar to use the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ can be interpreted as a way of arguing that in order to stand up to the competition from low wage countries they have to become more automated in their production. The use of the repertoire emerged in narratives such as “rationalise (line 6), “less staffing in production” (line 16) and to “make it a little more automated” (line 17). It is also within these narratives that it is possible to see that an opportunity position is constructed in being more automated (line 17) and by making changes to the “warehouses” through rationalisation (line 6). When it comes to how an advantage position is constructed, we have to study the extract as a whole, which takes place in a context of enhanced competition (lines 3-4, 7, 13-14) and competition in price-setting (lines 7, 13). It is possible to discern that an opportunity to automate and rationalise will give the advantage of a lower price. However, Gunnar constructs his facts on vague formulations. He positioned those competitors from Poland within the category of “lower wages” (lines 3-4). It can be interpreted that Gunnar by externalisation builds a fact construct by bringing in a narrative about lower wage coun-
tries competing at a lower price. Nevertheless, he never explicitly said that it is about lower price, as he only said there is a risk they cannot stand up to the competition regarding price (line 7). Furthermore, if the price differs too much from the competitors (line 13) “finally one might back down” (line 14), which also suggests that PREM Food might have a higher price. The last account, “finally one might back down” (line 14), is also vague in formulation, as it uses the category entitlement of “you”, but is not clear on who is included or not in the category. Gunnar also categorise the quality as “great” (line 8) and “consistently fine” (line 11) which he in turn positioned as a strength (line 11), but is vague in formulation about whether it is the quality of the product and/or service or something else. Finally, he shifts in footing on line 19 by the category entitlement of “I”. Previously he had positioned himself within the category of “we” (lines 6-8, 11, 17), “our” and “us” (line 10), thereby spoke on behalf of the firm. By shift in footing he stressed that he had an interest in the firm becoming more automated (lines, 17, 19), in doing so distancing his interests from the interests of the firm.

Summary of repertoire 3
The third repertoire ‘rational efficiency’ was, as with previous repertoires, used by all the sources in different ways and for different functions such as to argue, persuade and explain (see Table 16). The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire can be summarised as warranted by: efficiency, automated production, secure delivery, shrinking ratios in the production process, no margin reinforcements, and rationalisation. The repertoire was also used in conjunction with the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ in Extract 11 and 12. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, categorisation was once again the most frequently used discursive device, followed by the use of vagueness, nominalisation, externalisation and footing to make different fact constructs. I have summarised the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ in Table 16.
**A summary of repertoire 3 – ‘rational efficiency’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Firm documenta-</td>
<td>Argue for the need to become more efficient.</td>
<td>OP: act on changes by streamlining and optimise. AD: increasing price and efficiency, reducing costs, economy of scale.</td>
<td>Categorisation, nominalisation, externalisation, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tion</td>
<td></td>
<td>OP: the service of secure delivery. AD: profitability, being able to deliver on time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Axel</td>
<td>Persuade that it is a secure delivery that is the most important priority.</td>
<td>OP: efficiency improvements AD: larger volume of products to sell, reduced shrinkage, better financial ratios.</td>
<td>Categorisation, nominalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mikael</td>
<td>Argue that there are still some shrinking ratios in the production.</td>
<td>OP: improvements, openness towards customers. AD: meeting customer requirements, increase in prices.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing, externalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Andreas</td>
<td>Explain there never are any margin reinforcements as customers’ want them to rationalise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gunnar</td>
<td>Argue they have to become more automated in production to stand up to the competition.</td>
<td>OP: more automated, rationalise. AD: better competitive position, lower price.</td>
<td>Categorisation, vagueness, footing, externalisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 16 - The use of repertoire 3 - ‘rational efficiency’**

**Reertoire 4 – ‘we are entrepreneurs’**

Several sources of opportunity and advantage positions were constructed by the use of the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’, both regarding the accounts from the participants themselves and in the different documents of texts. It is, however, possible to state that the exact rhetoric of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ is more often used in firm documentation, strategy documents and power point presentations, than by the participants. In documentation, the entrepreneurship aspect mostly comes through as an individual commitment and local initiative to make ideas come alive. Among the participants, however, the aspect of entrepreneurship emerges as both an individual initiative and as coming up with new ideas, as well as still being a small firm in spirit, in this way, narrated entrepreneurship as the
small firm or the entrepreneur as the one who starts a new firm. It is possible that the participants chose to draw on the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ because of presenting myself as interested in growth firms and entrepreneurship in established firms. In this way, I have introduced the category of entrepreneurship into the conversation. Nevertheless, as I have said, the repertoire is also present in different firm documents, which I have not been part of, which shows that the repertoire is also present in ‘normal’ everyday activities. Lastly, it is possible to say that this repertoire showed the least variation in use, mostly drawing upon the Premium way or the employers as entrepreneurs. As such, I will only present and analyse two extracts from documents and two extracts from the interview conversations. In this way, I exemplify representability as well as variation in use of the repertoire.

First I am going to explore how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed within the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ from firm documentation (see Extract 1). As I have said, PREM Food is the Swedish business unit within the Premium business area. In firm documentation, it emerges that all business units should embrace the Premium approach. In doing so, the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ is used in the following way:

**Extract 16**

1. The Premium approach
2. - We keep our promises to our customers, owners, employees and to the world around us.
3. - We keep it simple - Our mindset is uncomplicated, and so are our solutions
4. - We are entrepreneurs - With individual commitment and proactive initiatives
5. we make new ideas come alive.

The main function to draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ could be interpreted as a way of marketing the Premium approach to customers as well as to the different business units within Premium. Premium clearly position their business units by the category entitlement of “we are entrepreneurs” and by being entrepreneurs several opportunity and advantage positions could be interpreted. Thus, an opportunity position emerged in entrepreneurship, being proactive, and by individual commitment (line 4), with the advantage position of being able to come up with new ideas (line 5). Also an opportunity position could be interpreted in “keeping it simple” (line 3), and as such there is an advantage position in simple solutions (line 3). But it is also possible to discern that the Premium approach (line 1) gives the firm an advantage in keeping its promises to customers,
owners, employees and the world around (line 2). However, as it is vague
in the fact construct, it is not clear on how they intend to keep their prom-
ise. Furthermore, it is not clear regarding who is included or not in the
category of “the world around us” (line 2). There is no shift in footing, as
the member categorisation of “we” (lines 2-5) and “our” (lines 2-3) is con-
sistently used.

Extract 17 is from the PREM Food website where the following is
found:

Extract 17

1. The Premium approach is characterised by an entrepreneurial spirit
2. which calls each of us to take responsibility and try to do our job better and better every day.
3. We know that tomorrow will not look the same as today.
4. changes have made us a flexible organisation that can
5. frequent adapt to the development together with customers.

The main function to draw upon the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’
can be interpreted as a way to explain the Premium approach as a strategy
based on entrepreneurship. It is possible to say that when constructing
opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire of ‘we are en-
trepreneurs’, this is done in conjunction with the use of the repertoire of
‘we are changeable’. Thus, it can be seen that opportunity positions come
about through changes by being flexible (line 4) and by an entrepreneurial
spirit (line 1). As such, an advantage position emerged in adapting to
changes with the customers (line 5). Other possible advantage positions as
a result of the entrepreneurial spirit (line 1) are by being responsible and
doing the job better every day (line 2). The positioning of the firm in the
category entitlement of “entrepreneurial spirit” also suggests that there are
firms that do not have this spirit. Thus, as I have said earlier, category
entitlement is often used to include some people and their work, and ex-
clude others (cf. Potter, 1996). As such, it could be seen that firms that do
not embrace the “entrepreneurial spirit” are more irresponsible and do a
less of a good job. As in the previous extract, there is no change in footing,
because in the extract the category entitlement of “we” (line 3), “us” (lines
2, 4) and “our” (line 2) are used throughout.

Extract 18 is from the interview conversation with Maria, who often re-
ferred to the ‘spirit’ of PREM Food, which lead me to ask her the following
question:
The main function for Maria to use the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ can be seen as explaining that entrepreneurship is one of the firms value adding words. The use of the repertoire mainly comes out in statements as the entrepreneurial spirit from the start-up of the firm is still present (lines 9-10, 12-13), that entrepreneurship is one of the firm’s value words (lines 14, 16), by addressing the Premium approach (lines 18-21) and “you are an entrepreneur” (line 29). Opportunity positions can be interpreted in the
staff being creative, acting fast (line 19) and bringing the business forward (line 21). An advantage position in turn emerged in that the organisation is becoming less inert (lines 23-24, 26-29).

In the first part of the extract (lines 1-8) I tried to explain my question, saying that “spirit” does not have anything to do with education or what position somebody has. Maria then answered by making fact constructs that categorised PREM Food as a firm that has evolved (line 9-10) from one person (line 9) into a “huge industry” (line 12), but still keeps its “entrepreneurial spirit” (line 13). In making the fact construct that categorised PREM Food as having an entrepreneurial spirit, she is vague in formulation of what this category contains. A possible interpretation is that she refers back to being a small firm (line 9-10); later she also stresses that it might not be like this in other larger firms which are more inert (line 23-24). In this way she also categorised PREM Food as a larger firm, but said that their actions separate them from others in the category. Thus, larger firms are more inert than PREM Food, and the premium approach leaves “room to say what you think we should do” (lines 19-20), and by speaking on behalf of the firm stated that “we” want people who question and bring the business forward (lines 19-21). However, she also later pointed out that this “entrepreneurial spirit”, to be an entrepreneur, is realised in everyday life (lines 27-28). Lastly, she categorised entrepreneurship as part of strategy by addressing entrepreneurship as a value-added word (lines 14, 16), but also in categorising entrepreneurship within the Premium approach (line 18).

Extract 19 comes from the interview conversation with Gunnar. Prior to the extract he had talked about the ‘spirit’ of the firm a spirit he described as a family-firm where they do lots of things together. I then asked him the following question:

Extract 19

1. L: How would you say that (...) If you, when looking for an employee or something what
2. would you say that a person would be like to fit in here?
3. G: Well a person who is open, honest, ehhh (...) forceful (...) well like that*
4. L: yes
5. G: Do not really need to be the smartest guy rather it can be creative
6. L: yes
7. G: To create, to create relations “and so”.
8. L: We have not hired that many graduates OR so. I have to say.
9. L: No↑

I LINDA HÖGLUND Discursive Practices in Strategic Entrepreneurship
The main function for Gunnar to use the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ can be interpreted as a way of explaining that most of the staff are entrepreneurs (lines 8-12). He draws upon the repertoire by mostly establishing two categories to make his fact constructs, a category of the entrepreneur and a category of the graduate (line 10). Gunnar positioned himself as belonging to the graduates and also includes Andreas when doing so (line 11), the rest of the firm he said probably are “quite entrepreneurial”. However, as he is vague in formulating what it means to be entrepreneurial, I asked Gunnar what he saw as entrepreneurial (line 13). He then said that it meant that “you may not always rely on the theories” (line 14) and books (line 15), rather on entrepreneurial thinking (line 15). As such he builds his fact constructs on what entrepreneurial is not; it is not about theories and books, which can be interpreted as rather being part of the category “graduates”. Nevertheless, as he is still being vague in constructing the facts I once again asked a question about how I have interpreted him (line 16). I said if they could be seen as doers, “who do” and “feel their way” (lines 16, 18, 20). He confirmed this, but added that to be entrepreneurial also meant solidly thinking through things (line 21). If we look at the extract as a whole, it is possible to see that Gunnar positions an opportunity in hiring people that are entrepreneurs, with the advantage of getting somebody who has the ability to apply entrepreneurial thinking (line 15), be creative (line 5), forceful (line 3) and create relations (line 7). Lastly, through stake confession he tries to justify that they have not hired that many graduates (line 8). It is possible that he did that as a result of my having presented myself as a PhD student from Örebro University. It is also possible that that is why he chose to make the two opposite categories of entrepreneurs and graduates. However, it is also possible that these two
categories are part of the construction work regarding how the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ is actually used.

Summary of repertoire 4
The repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ was mostly used in strategy documents and presentations as a flexible resource, but also among participants with the main function of explaining and marketing (see Table 17).

A summary of repertoire 4 – ‘we are entrepreneurs’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Opportunity and Advantage Positions</th>
<th>DD used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Firm document</td>
<td>Marketing the Premium approach</td>
<td><strong>OP</strong>: in entrepreneurship, being proactive, individual commitment, keeping it simple.</td>
<td>Categorisation, Vagueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>AD</strong>: new ideas, keep a promise and simple solutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Firm website</td>
<td>Explain the Premium approach</td>
<td><strong>OP</strong>: changes, flexibility, and an entrepreneurial spirit.</td>
<td>Categorisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>as a strategy based on entrepreneurship.</td>
<td><strong>AD</strong>: responsible, doing the job better, adapt to changes with the customer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Explain that entrepreneurship</td>
<td><strong>OP</strong>: creative, acting fast, bringing the business forward.</td>
<td>Categorisation, footing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>is a value added word in the firm.</td>
<td><strong>AD</strong>: less inertia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Gunnar</td>
<td>Explain that most of the staff</td>
<td><strong>OP</strong>: hiring entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>Categorisation, stake confession, vagueness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>are entrepreneurs.</td>
<td><strong>AD</strong>: entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, forceful, relations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 - The use of repertoire 4 - ‘we are entrepreneurs’.

The discursive practices of position opportunity and advantages within the repertoire were warranted by: the Premium approach, the Premium approach a strategy based on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship as a value-adding word, and the staff are entrepreneurs. This repertoire was also the one that showed least variation in use. One interesting aspect worth noticing with this repertoire is that the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ is used in conjunction with ‘we are changeable’, see Extract 17 and 18. When constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire, the most frequently used discursive device was categorisation, used by all the participants. The vagueness is the most frequently used discourse device in making fact constructs, followed by footing and stake confession. I have
summarised the results of how the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ has been used by the participants in Table 17.

**Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter, I have analysed accounts at PREM Food, of what the participants do in their work, and as in Chapter 6 I have used the analytical tool-box consisting of: interpretative repertoires, positioning and discursive devices. Through this approach I have showed how the participants at PREM Food have constructed opportunity and advantage positions within specific repertoires. In analysing these discursive practices it was possible to discern at least four repertoires that participants draw upon: ‘cooperation with customers’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘we are entrepreneurs’. These repertoires were also in different ways accounted for as the success factors in firm documentation, press releases and firm website, as well as by the participants.

It is possible to say that the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ is the most used repertoire, and it also occurs in conjunction with other repertoires, for example ‘we are changeable’. The use of the repertoire also resulted in fact constructs such as that successful firms do their product development in cooperation with its customers, but also that firms that do not develop projects together with their customers do not have a partnership. The repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ is the secondly most used repertoire, and also the repertoire mostly used to construct different opportunity positions. Furthermore, ‘we are changeable’ is also the repertoire that is mostly drawn upon in conjunction with other repertoires. Hence the repertoire is also drawn upon within ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘we are entrepreneurs’. The need to be changeable is often narrated through fact constructs about the “challenges of a changing world” and by market determinism, with the help of discursive devices such as nominalisation and vagueness.

By drawing on the repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ and categorisation as a discursive device, it emerges that to make efficiency improvements can be categorised as a success. The improvement work at PREM Food is positioned within “Lead” and the applications connected to this approach. The repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ showed the least amount of variation, as it is mostly constructed on the Premium approach, which is said to help a firm to keep its promises to customers, owners, employees and the “world around”, an approach said to be a strategy based on entrepreneurship. Through category entitlement it could be interpreted that firms who do not embrace the “entrepreneurial spirit” are more irresponsible and do less of a job.
The extracts also showed how participants’ made fact constructs about PREM Food and their work with the help of different discursive devices such as categorisation, footing, vagueness, stake attribution, and externalisation. By analysing the discursive devices it is possible to say that categorisation is the most frequently used device and that it is used in all the extracts. The use of category entitlement in text and talk emerges as a way of distinguishing what PREM Food are doing from what others are doing; as such it is possible to discern that categorisation is a device used by the participants to construct facts of what makes the firm unique in their work. Footing is the second most used discursive device and addresses what speaking position the speaker takes such as ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘I’ and ‘you’. A majority of the extracts showed how a shift in footing occurred as a way of acknowledging the responsibility taken regarding the reported actions. Also, vagueness is frequently used as a way to make fact constructs that may provide just enough material to sustain some action, but without providing too much of information or descriptive claims.

Lastly, by analysing the discursive practices I have showed how the participants draw upon each repertoire as a flexible resource, not only to construct opportunity and advantage positions, but to accomplish certain actions such as blame, justify, explain, marketing, persuade, argue and so forth. As such, I have identified the main function for how each repertoire is used in each of the extracts analysed. However, as I said previously in Chapter 6, it is important to notice that within each repertoire there are often several functions that emerge in the use of a repertoire. For example, the main function could be to explain something in their work, but in order to do that the participants also performed actions such as to justify by externalisation and described their work by categorisations at the same time. I have, therefore, focused on the main functions in the summary tables in this chapter, but have also addressed possible interpretations of other functions in the analysis of the extracts.
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The aim of this chapter is to address the second stated research question: *How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed?* In line with the selected discursive psychology approach I will therefore concentrate on the organisation of discourses, its construction, function and possible consequences. In this way the discussion will mainly be anchored in the empirical findings from Chapter 6 and 7. In doing so, some similarities in how opportunity and advantage positions are produced and consumed by the participants within the two firms emerges, but also that the function for using the repertoires and discourses are multiple and vary in several ways. These similarities, as well as the variation in use of discourses, I argue could be explained with the help of discourse theory. By empirically identifying that opportunity and advantage positions emerge together in text and talk I also introduce a new language of strategic entrepreneurship practices. Thus, suggesting that opportunities and advantages are emergent in social interaction and co-constructed, not belonging to a particular individual or dual as addressed in previous research. Lastly, I address possible consequences of privileging some discourses over others in text and talk, as the consumption of discourses produces a particular version of what can be considered as the right way of doing things in a firm.

**How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed?**

As I have said in Chapter 2, the taking-up of a repertoire or discourse is influenced by what culturally available resources there are in an organisation (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Juhila, 2012). In this thesis, essential resources are those related to the professional work in a firm. I have studied the discursive resources where the positioning of opportunities and advantages emerged in a context of organising renewal. Discursive resources are the building blocks of the repertoires and discourses used, and are produced and consumed by people when accounting for their work in text and talk. By drawing upon Edley (2001), Juhila (2012) explains that repertoires and discourses are like books on the shelves of the public library, to be borrowed when needed. However, people do not have an unlimited freedom of choice as to which repertoire or discourse they may take up as the public library is not endless. I will in this chapter discuss the discursive practices of how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed in relation to how the partici-
pants produced and consumed repertoires and discourses when accounting for what they did in their work.

...through the use of local repertoires
From the results of the analysis in Chapter 6 and 7 it is possible to interpret that opportunity and advantage positions are constructed through the consumption and production of locally produced repertoires. From a total of forty-three extracts, I have analysed the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions, which resulted in nine interpretative repertoires of use in System Novelty and PREM Food. At System Novelty, the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions showed at least five possible repertoires of use, namely: ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘close interaction with customers’, ‘we are competence-driven firm’, ‘we are independent’ and ‘growth within profitability’. At PREM Food, the following four repertoires were interpreted: ‘cooperation with customers’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘we are entrepreneurs’. The results of the analysis showed that the function for using these repertoires were plenty and mostly quite varied. Hence, these repertoires were used as a flexible resource by the participants in the following ways in System Novelty:

1. The repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ was used by all participants as well as in the firm documentation with the main function of justifying, defending, explaining and persuading. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within the repertoire were warranted by: turning changes to a competitive advantage, how the market is constructed, flat organisational structure, changeable technology and strategic thinking. It is possible to say that this repertoire is dominant over other repertoires.

2. The repertoire of ‘close interaction with the customer’ was also used by all of the participants as well as in the firm documentation with the main function of justifying, explaining and emphasising. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: product development; how they work with the customer, how they put the customer in focus, and not using customer reference lists. This repertoire can be interpreted as the second most used repertoire.
3. The repertoire of ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ was also used by all of the participants and in the firm documentation with the main function of arguing, marketing, legitimise and explaining. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: having great people, a competence advantage by the people, an attractive workplace, a relationship with KTH, and the competence is the strength of System Novelty.

4. The repertoire of ‘we are independent’ was mostly used in the firm documentation and by top management with the main function of marketing, explaining, presenting and describing. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: being a strong supplier and independent, but also through competitive strength and advantages. This repertoire showed least variation in use.

5. The repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ is primarily made explicit through how the participants used the repertoire. Thus, in text documents profit and growth are mostly constructed separately. The main function of the repertoire was to justify, explain, persuade and describe. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: both growth and profit is needed; there is no point in growing if you are not profitable, not taking on customers that cannot pay full price, how System Novelty became financially independent, and only take on new businesses that result in profitability.

The analysis also resulted in four interpretative repertoires in PREM Food: ‘cooperation with customers’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘we are entrepreneurs’. These repertoires were used as a flexible resource by the managers in the following way:

1. The repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ was used by all of the participants as well as in the firm documentation with the main function of marketing, describing, explaining, persuading, justifying and stating. The discursive practices of constructing op-

33 KTH (kungliga tekniska högskolan), in English the Royal Institute of Technology.
portunity and advantage positions were warranted by: partnership with customers, the staff is the strength of the firm, flexibility towards customers and developing improvements together with the customer. It is possible to say that this repertoire is dominant over other repertoires.

2. The repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ was also used by all of the participants as well as in the firm documentation with the main function of justifying, explaining and arguing. The discursive practice of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: flexibility to cope with a changing world, ongoing change, daily changes and a short response-time. This repertoire can be interpreted as the second most used repertoire.

3. The repertoire of ‘rational efficiency’ was as well used by all of the participants and in the firm documentation with the main function of arguing, persuading and explaining. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: efficiency, automated production, secure delivery, shrinking ratios in the production process, no margin reinforcements, and rationalisation.

4. The repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ was mostly used in the firm documentation as strategy documents, but also among the management with the main function of explaining and marketing. The discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions were warranted by: the Premium approach, the Premium approach a strategy based on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship as a value-adding word, and the staff are entrepreneurs. This repertoire was also the one that showed least variation in use.

From a discursive psychology approach it is important to address that how the repertoires are consumed by the participants vary. I have in Chapter 6 and 7 showed in several ways how the participants draw upon each repertoire as a flexible resource, not only to construct opportunity and advantage positions, but to accomplish certain actions such as blame, justify, explain, marketing, persuade, argue and so forth (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987, Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). The results also showed that there is a variation regarding how a repertoire is used when the participants position different opportunity and advantage positions. There is,
nevertheless, possible to also discern that there, in the production of the repertoires are some similarities in how the participants produced the repertoires when warranting and constructing opportunity and advantage positions (see Table 18).

### Comparing how repertoires are produced in the two Firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Novelty</th>
<th>PREM Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘we are agile and flexible’ - turning changes into a competitive advantage, how the market is constructed, flat organisational structure, changeable technology and strategic thinking.</td>
<td>‘we are changeable’ - flexibility to cope with a changing world, ongoing change, daily changes, and a short response-time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘close interaction with customers’ - product development, how they work with the customer, how to put the customer in focus, and not using customer reference lists.</td>
<td>‘cooperation with customers’ - partnership with customers, the staff is the strength of the firm, flexibility towards customer, and developing improvements together with the customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘we are independent’ - a strong supplier, independent in two ways, a competitive strength, and a competitive advantage.</td>
<td>‘we are entrepreneurs’ - the Premium approach, the Premium approach is a strategy based on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship as a value-adding word, and the staff are entrepreneurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘growth within profitability’ - both growth and profit is needed, there is no point in growing if you are not profitable, not taking on customers that cannot pay full price, how System Novelty became financially independent, and only take on new businesses that result in profitability.</td>
<td>‘rational efficiency’ - efficiency, automated production, secure delivery, shrinking ratios in the production process, no margin reinforcements, and rationalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘we are a competence-driven firm’ – having great people, a competence advantage by the people, an attractive workplace, a relationship with the royal institute of technology, and the competence is the strength of System Novelty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 - Comparing how repertoires are produced in System Novelty and PREM Food.

For example the repertoires of ‘we are agile and flexible’ and ‘we are changeable’ could be said to draw on the same ideas about firms needing to be able to change as regards the market and its customers. The same goes for the two repertoires of ‘close interaction with customers’ and ‘cooperation with customers’, but within these repertoires also aspects of innovation is accounted for by responding to customers’ needs. With respect to the fact that these firms compete in quite different industries (the IT-
industry and the food-industry) and markets (young versus mature) it is interesting that these two firms share such similar repertoires. Moreover, that the repertoires of ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘close interaction with customers’ and ‘cooperation with customers’ are the dominant and most frequently used repertoires in these firms. I will return to these findings later on in this chapter by trying to understand the similarities in relation to discourse theory. But before I do that we need to take a closer look at the possible similarities in production of repertoires and how the repertoires are consumed by the participants in the firms to build a foundation for the findings discussed.

When it comes to how the repertoires are consumed and produced within the two firms it is possible to state that the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ in System Novelty was warranted by: turning changes into a competitive advantage, how the market is constructed, flat organisational structure, changeable technology and strategic thinking. By analysing the discursive practice it showed how the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ was consumed to construct, for example, an opportunity position in changes in market, technology and regulations. Another opportunity is positioned in a changeable and scalable system platform, while an advantage position is constructed in being able to responding quickly to changes. Similarly, at PREM Food the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ was warranted by: flexibility, a changing world, ongoing change, short response time and work with small changes every day. At PREM Food the analysis of discursive practices showed that within the repertoire of ‘we are changeable’ an opportunity is positioned by redefining the development strategy with the advantage of acquiring a new strategy that better meets customer requirements. An opportunity position is also constructed in developing new products, while an advantage position is constructed in being able to respond to customer demands.

At System Novelty the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ was warranted by: product development, how they work with the customer, how to put the customer in focus, and not using customer reference lists. Similarly, at PREM Food the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’ was warranted by: partnership with customers; the strength of the staff, flexibility, and developing improvements with the customer. More detailed examples of the discursive practices at System Novelty can be exemplified by the positioning of an opportunity in releasing new products. In order to make this fact construct, aspects of innovation were brought in by the account that within customer projects there will always be innovations. An advantage was positioned in customer-funded development. Another example is by the position of an opportunity in building a partner-
ship with the customer by being agile and flexible, with the advantage position of meeting customer expectations. The discursive practices at PREM Food can be exemplified by the construction of an opportunity position in continuous improvements and working together with the customer. The construction of the advantage position emerges in having knowledge about reality. Moreover, opportunity positions emerge in new ideas, innovations and products, with the advantage position of improving customers business, offering a high-level service and providing one point of contact with the customer. It is possible to state that accounts about market determinism, innovation and a changing world were produced within these two repertoires.

The two repertoires of ‘we are independent’ and ‘we are entrepreneurs’ do not have that much in common with each other at a first glance, but when addressing how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed within these repertoires there are some similarities that emerge in being changeable. Thus ‘we are independent’ was warranted by: a strong supplier, independent in two ways, a competitive strength, and a competitive advantage. However, opportunities in turn were positioned upon flexible and changeable technology, new businesses, deliver to everybody and gaining access to the customer. Advantages were positioned as having a good track record, outperform requirements, independent house of technology, financial independent and an independent actor. The discursive practices regarding ‘we are entrepreneurs’ were warranted by: the Premium approach, the Premium approach as a strategy based on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship as a value-adding word, and the staff are entrepreneurs. Interesting to note is that the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ mostly is constructed on strategic aspects when addressing the function for using the repertoire. The same goes for ‘we are independent’. However, when studying the positioning of opportunities and advantages, another picture emerges. Hence, there are several opportunity positions made in being creative, acting fast, bringing the business forward, changes, flexibility, and an entrepreneurial spirit. Advantage positions are discernible in new ideas, adapting to changes with the customer, entrepreneurial thinking, creativity and less inertia. It is possible to state that the work of constructing opportunity and advantage positions by the use of these two repertoires is built on accounts related to entrepreneurship by aspects of new businesses, flexibility and change, but also on cooperating with their customer. As with the previous comparison of repertoires between System Novelty and PREM Food, this is an interesting result I will return to later on in this chapter. These repertoires also showed the least variation in use.
When it comes to the final repertoires of ‘growth within profitability’ and ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘we are a competence-driven firm’, are produced and consumed it is possible to state that these repertoires mostly rely on strategic aspects. Aspects of entrepreneurship emerge in growth and the work with continuously improvements, but mostly in the discursive practices regarding opportunity positions such as adapting quickly by being agile, acting on changes, taking on risk projects in new areas, and new projects. Moreover, ‘growth within profitability’ was warranted by: both growth and profit is needed, there is no point in growing if you are not profitable, not taking on customers that cannot pay full price, how System Novelty became financially independent, only taking on new businesses that results in profitability. While ‘rational efficiency’ was warranted by: efficiency; automated production, secure delivery, shrinking ratios in the production process, no margin reinforcements, and rationalisation. Lastly, ‘we are a competence-driven firm’ was warranted by: having great people, a competence advantage in the people, an attractive workplace, a relationship with KTH, and the competence is the strength of System Novelty.

In sum, the results of analysing the discursive practices in Chapter 6 and 7 have showed how the participants used the identified repertoires as a flexible resource, not only to construct a variety of opportunity and advantage positions, but to accomplish certain functions such as blame, justify, explain, marketing, persuade, argue and so forth. A key result of the empirical analysis of the discursive practices is precisely the variation discussed (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Edwards, 2005). Hence, the repertoires are not anchored to given participants (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). When talking about their work, the participants take up different repertoires, and an opportunity is, for example, encountered in a flat organisational structure or responding to changes one moment and as an advantage the next (cf. Juhila, 2012). Nevertheless, despite variation in use of the repertoires it also emerges some similarities in how the repertoires are produced by the participants when warranting and constructing different opportunity and advantage positions. A result I will get back to when addressing how opportunity and advantage positions are constructed through the use of the enterprising discourse.

...through the use of discursive devices
It is possible to state that opportunity and advantage positions are constructed through the use of discursive devices. I have in Chapter 6 and 7 showed how the participants through the use of different discursive devices, made fact constructs of what they are doing in the firms. How the
participants themselves made sense, managed and understood descriptions and their facticity (Potter, 1996). In other words, how the participants made fact constructs within the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. Furthermore, how these descriptions of facts within the discursive practices were organised to make some versions seem e.g. credible and objective (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996). It is important once again to point out that interpretative repertoires do not belong to an individual. As Potter (1996) argues, it is easy to fall into thinking that the basic unit of this kind of analysis is the individual. Thus, descriptions can be treated as the product of individuals, but also as collectivities of various kinds (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992). Furthermore, the individuals who are speaking or writing are themselves established through processes of fact constructs (Potter, 1996), and the fact constructs in turn are constituted with the help of discourse devices (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996).

In other words, I have also sought to demonstrate the value of understanding the role of micro-linguistic practices, or discursive devices in the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. In doing so, the results of the study have shown that there is often a complex set of discursive devices in use in text and talk when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. All of the identified discursive devices discussed in Chapter 2 and 5 (categorisation, stake, footing, externalisation, nominalisation and vagueness) could be interpreted as having been used in text and talk. Some of the devices however, were used in all of the extracts while others were used only in a couple of the extracts. For example, it is possible to say that categorisation is the most frequently used device, as all of the extracts analysed use categorisation in some way. This may not be that surprising, as it is in line with Potter (1996), who states that categorisation is a central feature of any description. It is interesting though, that when categorisation is used, it is mostly as a way of distinguishing the firm’s actions from that of others by the categorisation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and what separates the firm’s or a specific individual’s work from that of others, but also through category entitlement of what is the successful way or not of doing things in the firm.

Talk is generally oriented towards many different functions, some more explicit then others. In the summary tables in Chapter 6 and 7, I did discuss the explicit main function for using a specific repertoire. However, as Potter and Wetherell (1987:33) state, the analysis of function cannot be seen as a simple matter of categorising pieces of speech, as it depends upon the analyst “reading” the context. They also address the idea that functions could be more of global self-presentation which can be archived with par-
ticular kinds of formulations emphasising either good or bad features, but these are often more implicit. It is possible that the function for using the repertoires for the participants was as a way of presenting the firm as more successful than others without saying this explicitly. The analysis of the discursive devices tends to suggest this, especially by excluding others from a particular category in their positioning work. However, it is important to note, as Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue, that functions involve constructions of versions and are demonstrated by language variations.

Moreover, categorisation is often used in conjunction with footing, which the results show is the second most frequently used device in this study. Footing relates to the range of relationships that speakers and writers have to the description they report. As Potter (1996) argues, footing is central when dealing with factual reports; it is through footing that speakers manage their personal or institutional accountability for such reports.

Except for categorisation and footing, discursive devices were used that are related to making fact constructs based on descriptions that are external and independent of the speaker or writer as a form of ‘out-there-ness’. This was mostly done through the device of vagueness, followed by nominalisation and at some occasions also externalisation. Moreover, these devices was used to describe an opportunity and/or advantage as a solution to external circumstances that exist ‘out there’, such as changes in the market regarding customer needs, competitors, behaviour, regulations or technological changes (cf. Muller & Whittle, 2011). Vagueness is related to making broad claims that are difficult to undermine, nominalisation in turn is about making fact constructs that are presented as objective and natural, while externalisation is about presenting a description as independent of the speaker doing the construction (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996).

Lastly, it is possible to state that stake is the least frequently used device. It is, for example, interesting to note that I could not interpret that stake inoculation was used in any of the extracts. This implies that it is not that common to deny or downplay the stake or vested interest the speaker has in a situation when constructing opportunity and advantage positions. When stake is used it is rather to make the fact constructs seem trustworthy by the confession to what stake or vested interest the participant had in the particular description given. However, stake attribution was also used to emphasise or downplay the position of another (cf. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996).
...through the use of the enterprise discourse

It is possible to state that opportunity and advantage positions are not only constructed through the use of local repertoires and discursive devices, but also through the use of the enterprise discourse. Hence, when using the analytical tool-box of repertoires, positioning and discursive devices on the empirical material of the two firms I started to note that the participants tended to draw on parts of what has been described in research as the ‘enterprise discourse’. This in order for the participants to make-sense of their work when accounting, explaining, justifying and so forth of what they thought worked with what they did in the organisation. In this way, I started to think about how social practices might have been part of the construction work made by the participants. But also how it was that the repertoires used by System Novelty and PREM Food showed such similarities in how they were produced by the participants, although the two firms are, as I have explained, so different in several ways.

Larson and Pearson (2012) state, for example, that the discourse of enterprise is popular and exalted, and likely shapes the positioning work of people in organisations as discourses are both constructive and constitutive. As Halford and Leonard (2006) argue, discursive practices are shown as powerful in shaping what people come to embody, and enact organisationally privileged modes that in turn achieve organisationally desired outcomes. Cohen and Musson (2000) conclude that the discourse of enterprise is diverse, appropriated and used by people in a variety of ways depending on their position, circumstances, and the economic/social/political world(s) in which they live. It is possible to state that this has also been the case in this thesis, thus the enterprise discourse was present in a variety of ways in the construction work made by the participants. Thus, they constructed opportunity and advantage positions typically associated with entrepreneurialism and the discourse of enterprise by producing accounts about the customer, market forces, independency, profit, being proactive, growth, flexibility, responding to the market, being changeable and so forth (cf. du Gay et al., 1996/2005; Hjorth, 2004; Larson & Pearson, 2012). Some participants also readily embraced the label “entrepreneur” to describe themselves, their own work or others in the organisation (cf. Larson & Pearson, 2012). Anderson and Warren (2011) concluded that to be positioned within the category of an entrepreneur or being entrepreneurial becomes a framework of the attributes and qualities deemed desirable in changing environments.

According to du Gay et al., (1996/2005), the discourse of enterprise is a common discursive resource for entrepreneurs and/or managers as well as many others in Western capitalist societies. Larson and Pearson (2012)
argue that the discourse of enterprise centres on the marketplace, and is ultimately driven by a desire to respond to the differing demands of customers. To respond to market changes and customer needs suggests that there is market determinism. This kind of market determinism emerges in the use of the repertoires of ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘cooperation with customers’, and ‘close interaction with customers’. These repertoires also produce the enterprise discourse in terms of speed, flexibility and innovativeness in organisations, all of which are attractive to management (cf. Hjorth, 2004). Innovation, in turn, mostly emerges in the discursive practice of constructing opportunity positions within the repertoires of ‘cooperation with customers’ and ‘close interaction with customers’. Hence, the participants accounted there were innovations to be created by interacting with their customers in different ways. The enterprising discourse also emerges by embodying values of efficiency, rationalisation and cost (cf. du Gay et al. 1996/2005) as the participants draw upon economic aspects such as the importance of profitability, having a cash flow and the effective use of resources. However, this was mostly within the repertoires of ‘growth within profitability’ and ‘rational efficiency’.

The enterprising discourse is described by du Gay et al. (1994; 1996/2005) as the challenge of bureaucracy, and they argue that bureaucratic organisations compete with discourses that emphasise the importance of people and organisations acquiring and exhibiting more ‘market-oriented’, ‘proactive’, ‘empowered’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ attitudes and capacities. By the use of the repertoires of ‘we are agile and flexible’ and ‘we are changeable’ the participants accounted for the need to have a decentralised organisational structure, and there were also opportunities and advantages positioned in not being too formalised or bureaucratic. Du Gay et al. (1996/2005) also address competence as an important part of the enterprising discourse, which emerges in the use of the repertoire of ‘we are a competence driven firm’.

In sum, similarly to the results of Anderson and Warren (2011), this study also found the emergence of the enterprising discourse in the rational manager, the entrepreneur as doing things differently and better, and the challenger of bureaucracy. This could be seen in System Novelty, but especially in PREM Food who readily embraced the terminology of the entrepreneur and the use of the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’.

Strategic entrepreneurship as part of the enterprising discourse
As I said in the introductory chapter, strategic entrepreneurship can be seen as part of the enterprising discourse that constructs and produces a certain managerial form of entrepreneurship (cf. Hjorth, 2004, 2012), that might
turn entrepreneurship into ‘economism’ and ‘managerialism’ (Steyaert & Katz, 2004). Hjorth and Johannisson (2003:77) argue the following:

[...] management knowledge, as part of the apparatus of managerialism, has been extremely successful in the decades after the Second World War. No other ‘literary genre’ has sold so well. Management knowledge has also become institutionalised, not least through the deregulation of markets, the privatisation of the public sector and the emergence of business schools, and achieved a status as ‘normal’ and ‘neutral’ in today’s society, indeed in customary knowledge.

With this quotation in mind, and with regard to the results discussed of the emergence of the enterprising discourse within the discursive practices studied in this thesis, I think it would be interesting to take a closer look at language use. This is because, when I did the analysis of the extracts in Chapter 6 and 7, I started to see a connection between language use and what was produced in the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions, and the language use among scholars in strategic entrepreneurship. Hence, discourses about customers, market forces, independence, profit, being proactive, growth, flexibility, responding to the market, being changeable, competitive advantage and so forth recur in the accounts and language used by the managers in the two firms, and by strategic entrepreneurship scholars (see Appendix B). In the table of Appendix B, I have on the right, and in the middle of the columns summarised all the accounts that construct the opportunity and advantage positions at System Novelty and PREM Food. On the left, I have, from the fifteen articles that have represented the scientific-discourse in Chapter 4, summarised some examples of the accounts and language use that are central in strategic entrepreneurship research.

If we compare the accounts and language use in the columns with each other, there emerge quite a lot of similarities between the two firms and parts of the strategic entrepreneurship discourse. For example, several aspects of the importance of being changeable and flexible emerges in the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions among the participants, as well as with regard to how scholars discursively construct strategic entrepreneurship. It is thus possible to state that there seems to be a repeating idea of there being a need to respond and adapt to change i.e. it shows market determinism. It is important to note that the accounts about change and flexibility also include aspects of the organisational structure, people, and technology. When it comes to innovation, this is mostly drawn upon among strategic entrepreneurship scholars with a broad view, but innovation also occurs in the two firms, mostly though
through new products and by being innovative or through creativity. In the strategic entrepreneurship literature growth is accounted as important in several ways e.g. in business, profit and sale. Similarly, in the two firms, growth is accounted through gaining more customers, growing in market share, profitability, growth in knowledge and competence, etc. Also, different aspects of gaining a competitively advantageous position reappear in the narratives, from the firms as well as in the literature. The participants in the two firms accounted the importance of partnership and different ways of cooperating with its customers. These accounts are also present in the strategic entrepreneurship literature but not as much, and when addressed, it often includes other stakeholders too.

Lastly, it is possible to state the fact that risk-taking emerges in all the columns. It is interesting to also note that PREM Food and the strategic entrepreneurship literature make fact constructs about the importance of being effective and efficiency, but this is not explicitly present at System Novelty. At System novelty, fact constructs about the importance of competence and skills rather emerge, which are not that central in PREM Food but are part of the strategic entrepreneurship discourse, even though not the most central aspect.

In other words, it is possible to state that parts of the scientific-discourse of strategic entrepreneurship are present in the accounts and the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. With regard to the fact that management literature has been so widely spread (cf. Hjorth & Johannisson, 2003), these results might not come as a surprise. Moreover, this kind of repetition that emerges in the use of discourses across different contexts can be explained by discourse theory, as the same discourses will be used by different people as a discursive resource that are available for people to use, but not necessarily in the same way (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Thus, it is important to recognise that, even though the immediate similarities emerge in the accounts from constructing opportunity and advantage positions with the exemplifying accounts from strategic entrepreneurship literature, the functions for drawing on these narratives vary. As I have said, variability is to be expected, because people can be expected to make use of different discourses to suite their current purposes in the interaction (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003). According to Edwards and Potter (1992), the function issue is concerned with the production of a specific version as “real” allows it to serve as an activity, and that is what factual accounts can be used for. The accounts of function, however, rarely perform a single unitary action, but rather attend to a
range of issues simultaneously. I will develop this further in the next paragraph.

From the discussion of the results in Appendix B it is feasible to interpret that the language of management knowledge is present in both strategic entrepreneurship literatures and the discursive practices of positioning opportunities and advantages. It is in other words possible to state that the findings in this chapter suggest that, whether we study entrepreneurship in established firms among practicing managers, or in strategic entrepreneurship literature, language use appears to be more or less the same, drawing on prevailing economic and managerial discourses that are part of the enterprising discourse. Hjorth and Johannisson (2003:77) state the following:

The telos of management knowledge is, and has always been, control. Control is often accomplished through appropriating a place as one’s own. This, in turn, is done through the use of intentional, deliberate strategy. A strategy creates a link between a sovereign interest, via an organisational structure, to individual action. Thus corporate strategic thinking and a globalised economy enforce each other and produce a global grammar of economy and managerialism. These are the ideas of one single language, one point of reference, one truth.

As argued in the introductory chapter of this thesis, strategic entrepreneurship could be seen as the new contribution to the enterprising discourse, and as such the results might not be that surprising but still interesting. Thus, it shows that there are several discourses at play, and the possibility emerges that people in firms use multiple discourses in order to make sense of what they are doing and why, as well as being able to perform different positioning activities (cf. Larson & Pearson, 2012). The results so far in this chapter indicate that social practices (at a societal-level) of enterprising discourse are present in the positioning work, as well as parts of the scientific discourse of strategic entrepreneurship, but also discursive practices by the use of local-repertoires (a meso-discourse belonging to the organisation), and the use of discursive devices in text and talk (at the micro-level of the subject). These are interesting findings in several ways and show the constructive as well as constitutive effects of discourses in organisations.

It becomes important, however, to note that there is nothing in the results that indicates that the taking up of a discourse is similar in use. Rather the results from analysing System Novelty and PREM Food in relation to previous empirical findings from a discourse approach, or by discourse theory, shows the variation in the use of discourses, no matter of what level of discourse they draw on. Thus, when participants used the enterprising discourse, parts of the strategic entrepreneurship discourse, as
well as the identified repertoires, it was appropriated, diverse and used for different functions by the participants in this study. This is in line with previous studies by, for example, Cohen and Musson (2000), Anderson and Warren (2011), and Larson and Pearson (2012). However, these studies took more of a constitutive and top-down approach drawing on Foucauldian ways of conducting discourse analysis. Nevertheless, a similar viewpoint emerges in discursive psychology. Hence, within discursive psychology an assumption made is that people actively draw on competing discourses in their positioning work, which includes acceptance, modification or resistance to specific discourses (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Burr, 2003; Edwards & Potter, 2005). As such, a discourse could be used in various ways that could not only be seen as contradictory, but also with no agreement of what a particular repertoire or discourse stands for. This variation in use is not in any way ‘strange’; rather it could be explained by discourse theory and the difference in use in regard to different functions of its use as addressed earlier (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Edwards & Potter, 2005).

Opportunities and advantages as emergent and co-constructed

As stated it is possible discern that opportunity and advantage positions are constructed through the use of local repertoires, discursive devices and the enterprising discourse. However, the construction of an opportunity and advantage position could also be considered as emergent and co-constructed, a statement based on the results discussed in Chapter 6 and 7 that showed how opportunity and advantage positions emerged in social interaction through text and talk. Hence, the results showed there was not an opportunity position constructed without also constructing an advantage position and vice versa. An opportunity and advantage is often presented as dual in the strategic entrepreneurship literature (see e.g. Ketchen et al., 2007) sometimes mutually exclusive processes, so that an opportunity is incompatible with an advantage (see the analysis in Chapter 4). These dual set-ups nevertheless do not appear in the organisations studied. Rather the study of the discursive practices shows that, in the two firms, the set-up is not an ‘either–or’ one, but a ‘both–and’ one (cf. Juhila, 2012). In other words, opportunity and advantage positions are not constructed as opposites or dual states by the participants in this study which is the most common way to address opportunities and advantages in the strategic entrepreneurship literature. I will return to this issue as we move along this chapter.
To use discursive devices and interpretative repertoires as an analytical tool produced a level of detail in the analysis of the two firms that is important because it is precisely “everyday conversations” that comprise a major part of the very “stuff” involved in constructing opportunities and advantages (cf. Muller & Whittle, 2011). Thus, talking about something as a new opportunity and/or advantage is a central part of making an opportunity and/or advantage come to life and/or to manifesting itself as an opportunity or advantage in the firm. Knowledge about how the discursive practices not only provides an understanding of the construction work that takes place in organisations. Hence, it also gives an idea of how these repertoires could be constitutive and the possible consequences the use of the repertoires bring to an organisation (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Muller & Whittle, 2011). It is in other words to discern that opportunities and advantages emerge and become manifested as they are conceptualised in text and talk (cf. Fletcher, 2006, 2007; Fletcher & Watson, 2007), and are developed by people in a firm through processes of social interaction.

Different worldviews, however, cause much ambiguity in the use and interpretation of the term emergence. Schindehutte and Morris (2009) argue that emergence is not growth, nor the appearance of resultant properties. Thus, emergence is not the result of the process of interaction. Rather, I draw on the idea that ‘emergence’ takes place during the process of social interaction (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Whether an opportunity or advantage ‘exists’ is a matter of how it emerge into existence, and how it is constructed tells us what it is. The formation of an opportunity and an advantage is intimately related to whether a collective identity is formed. The absence of such an identity would make an ‘opportunity’ or an ‘advantage’ into an artificial concept used as an individual promise. My point is that, without a “we” taking shape in relation to the idea of an opportunity or an advantage, an opportunity or advantage will not emerge into existence as a local reality, i.e., used for locating oneself, and relating to others and things in the world as lived (cf. Hjorth & Johannisson, 2003).

To focussing on social interaction has resulted in a view of entrepreneurship as a collective phenomenon. However, produced and reproduced by individuals, the knowledge of the environment is affected by the social context (see e.g. Gergen, 1999; Wenneberg, 2001; Burr, 2003). I have employed a level of analysis of the firm and the collective context from the study of individuals’ construction work of positioning opportunities and advantages. From a discursive psychology approach, it is possible to state that opportunities and advantages emerge and become manifested as they are conceptualised and developed by people in a firm through processes of social interaction. Moreover, a social interactional and collective view of
entrepreneurship does not view opportunities as an individual interpretation of a singular social and economic gap (see e.g. Fletcher, 2003; 2006; Sarason et al., 2006; Bjerke & Karlsson, 2011). Rather the formation of an opportunity or advantage is a collective process that contains the positioning of an opportunity and a possible advantage in interaction and communicating this within the firm, indicating that people create new interpretations of existing sets of relationships (cf. Sarason et al., 2006). However, traditional entrepreneurship research into opportunities, theories about recognition and discovery, typically present opportunity as separate and distinct from the entrepreneur or human action. Such a position suggests that opportunities are portrayed as a singular phenomenon, that is to say, that there is one opportunity that is the same for all individuals, although this is potentially interpreted differently (cf. Alvarez & Barney, 2007).

By reframing strategic entrepreneurship from a discursive psychology approach, I have understood strategic entrepreneurship: 1) by the study of the discursive practice of positioning opportunities and advantages within repertoires, not as opportunity and advantage-seeking behaviours and/or individual cognitions; 2) as a process of collective social interaction, not two competing processes (a dualist view) governed by individuals; and 3) as organising renewal within firms, not as a managerial tool for management to achieve growth, profit or a competitive advantageous position. Hence, I have viewed strategic entrepreneurship as a collective and interactional process of organising renewal through opportunity and advantage activities. This view results in a different understanding of strategic entrepreneurship and its practices, i.e. the practice of balancing between opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. Thus, scholars within strategic entrepreneurship tend to argue for the importance of incorporating both opportunity and advantage activities simultaneously (Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). However, as discussed in Chapter 4, in doing this previous models tend to draw on a dualist view (cf. Ireland et al., 2003; Ketchen et al., 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010), as such reinforcing the idea of opportunity and advantages as contrasting states.

I have viewed strategic entrepreneurship as one process, not two separate processes of opportunity and advantage activities, nor a linear process of identification of an opportunity that ends up in an advantage. As such, the selected frame of reference has resulted in a different understanding and language of strategic entrepreneurship practice, and the balancing act between activities related to opportunities and advantages beyond descriptive mapping or linear process models, an area that is still underdeveloped in strategic entrepreneurship. Furthermore, in previous models of strategic entrepreneurship practice (see e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb,
equilibrium is the expression of ‘balance’ in an inert, mechanical world of point-like existence (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009), while a discourse approach to balance is based on the interacting dynamics between opportunities and advantages, which has been explored in the extracts analysed in Chapter 6 and 7.

In some of the extracts – when constructing opportunity and advantage positions within a specific repertoire – there are plenty of opportunities positioned but only a couple of advantages, or vice versa. For example, when Ove at System Novelty uses the repertoire of ‘growth within profitability’ he is constructing several advantage positions of profit, but only a few positions towards the opportunity to grow through new projects. In the case of Sebastian and Jonas, the situation is reversed and there are several opportunity positions and fewer advantage positions. Another example is by the use of the repertoire ‘we are independent’. In the text documents, there was only one opportunity construction positioned by having a flexible and dynamic technology. While several advantage positions were constructed by being an independent actor and having independent technology, successful deliveries, in-depth competence and niche products. The use of the repertoire ‘we are agile and flexible’ in the text documents positioned several opportunities, such as changes in market, technology and regulations, responding to customer needs as well as coming up with their own products. While the advantage construction positioned was mainly based on gaining a competitive advantage by responding quickly to changes. Examples at PREEM Food can be addressed by the use of the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’, were there were more advantage positions produced than opportunities. For example, in the text documents opportunities emerge in new ideas, innovations and products, while the advantage positions of improving customers business, giving high-level service, one-point-of contact with the customer and knowledge about trends were positioned. In the documented texts the use of the repertoire of ‘we are entrepreneurs’ shows the opposite situation. Thus, opportunities are positioned in entrepreneurship, being proactive, individual commitment, and keeping it simple. While the advantages positions are constructed on new ideas, keeping a promise and simple solutions. As earlier stated, there has not been a case where an opportunity position has not been constructed in relation to at least one advantage position, and vice versa.

In sum, within a social interactional view of strategic entrepreneurship and its practices, opportunities and advantages emerges in text and talk not as two separate domains or processes, but rather as a process of co-construction. As such, the social interactional view of strategic entrepre-
neurship rejects the notion that the strategic entrepreneurship practice as a balancing act between opportunities and advantages can be understood separately from each other. Furthermore, this suggests an emergent process of opportunity and advantage wherein opportunities and advantages are developed over time rather than designed ex ante (beforehand). Thus, to understand opportunity and advantage positioning as social interaction indicates that the evaluation of an opportunity or advantage does not happen at a single point in time. Rather it is part of an ongoing process. Hence, an opportunity and advantage is constructed when that particular opportunity and advantage are communicated and drawn up by the people in the firm. However, depending on what is communicated through the process, it is likely that what was first expressed as an opportunity or advantage changes in the process of interaction. Thus, a different representation of the opportunity or advantage is communicated and tried out in competition with other possible representations.

Possible consequences of consuming particular discourses

In answering the stated research question I so far mainly have addressed the constructive aspect of discourses and how they are consumed and produce certain ways to understand things in organisations. I will, therefore, direct my attention to the possible consequences of drawing on the identified discourses (repertoires and the enterprising discourse) before the chapter is summarised. As I have already said, language constructs, are constitutive and action-oriented (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Edwards & Potter, 2005; Whittle et al., 2008; Whittle & Muller, 2011). The activities of talking and writing actively produce and reproduce organisational reality, and as such descriptions are constructive of their objects (Whittle et al., 2008). As a result, the way people talk about opportunities and advantage in a certain way becomes important, as it will open up or constrain people’s ability to consider what is an opportunity or an advantage, and constrain other possible meanings that might be used. According to Hjorth and Johannisson (2003), articulation would then be a way to “put things out there”, and negotiation would be part of cross-appropriation, as people translate what could become new in relation to local history. The retrieval of local repertoires and discourses is combined which the necessary language for discussing what we could become is provided through the gathering from dispersion. It is, however, important to note that there are always alternative descriptions available that compete with what may become the dominant one (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987;

In both of the firms, it was said that it is important to be proactive and lead the way. For example, at System Novelty there is an opportunity position constructed on not only responding to customer needs, but also coming up with their own products. Another example of opportunity positions based on a proactive approach is to release a product upon speculation, and to take on risk projects and explore new areas. At PREM Food there is an opportunity position constructed on being proactive, and on innovations. However, the repertoires used to construct opportunity and advantage positions show that the repertoires were constructed on aspects of fulfilling customer needs, meeting the demands of the market and responding to changes in the market. To respond to needs and act on changes is rather about being reactive in their approach. Hence, in Oxford dictionary it seems that being reactive is to “acting in response to a situation rather than creating or controlling it: a proactive rather than a reactive approach”. The most dominant and frequently used repertoires - ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘close interaction with customers’ and ‘cooperation with customers’ are all constructed on a reactive approach. As repertoires are constitutive, it is possible that the use of these repertoires in the two firms will conflict with their ‘idea’ of being proactive and leading the way. Thus, the results of analysing the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions show that being reactive is the dominant view within these organisations. People tend to make fact constructs that emphasise opportunity and advantage positions such as: flexible and changeable towards customer needs and requirements; respond and adapt quickly by being agile; gain a competitive advantage by responding quickly to changes; deliver exactly what the customer wants; act on changes by streamlining and optimise; the customers accept a new product from PREM Food; new strategy that better meets customer requirements; meeting customer demands, and so forth.

To construct opportunities on being reactive delimits some of the uncertainty that surrounds being proactive and can be associated with strategic thinking (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009; Luke et al., 2011). Furthermore, as I have said, the firms tend to position opportunities and advantages as a response to changes in the market by drawing on discourses about market determinism. Thus, their opportunity and advantage positions are constructed and organised around activities of being forced to respond to changes in the market in order to be successful. Shepherd (2006) says that this narrative of market determinism, where firms are depicted as being forced to respond to an increasingly competitive market-
place, is a powerful way of justifying technological innovation. At System Novelty, the repertoire of ‘close interaction with customers’ is mostly used to warrant technological innovation, and at PREM Food it is the repertoire of ‘cooperation with customers’.

In sum, by mainly drawing upon repertoires and discourses of enterprise it creates a specific version of the world, and what is the preferred way to act or not in a firm, which gives priority over other possible versions of how to think and act. By producing discourses about market determinism and responding to customer demands it means that a reactive approach is privileged. This could be a concern if a firm intend to be proactive.

**Summary of the chapter**

I have in this chapter addressed the second stated research question: *How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed?* With the discourse approach taken in this thesis the summarised answer would be that: 1) Opportunity and advantage positions are constructed by the use of multiple discourses, on different levels of discourse and for different functions. 2) The construction of opportunity and advantage positions emerge in social interaction and are co-constructed. These two main findings should also have applicability in other organisational contexts. I will develop this further below.

The use of the enterprise discourse in constructing opportunity and advantage positions indicate that the enterprising discourse might have become a legitimising frame of reference when constructing entrepreneurial meaning (cf. Anderson & Warren, 2011). With the help of discourse theory, it is possible to assume that the discourse of enterprise probably has influenced the position work of people at System Novelty and PREM Food (cf. Larson & Pearson, 2012). Although the exact interpretative repertoires identified in this thesis may not have broad applicability in other contexts, they do suggest an essential relationship between locale-specific practices (repertoires as a meso discourse), broader societal practices (the enterprising discourse as a societal discourse) and positioning activities (discourse devices used on an individual level in text and talk). In other words it suggests that multiple discourses are used by people in firms to make sense through different fact constructs of their work, and that this is done on different levels of discourse (the individual/micro, organisational/meso, societal/macro). This in turn point to the fact that to understand the construction work of positioning activities in particular organisational contexts is also to understand how broader discourses related to enterprising
intersecting with locale-specific repertoires tied to context of place. Halford and Leonard (2006:658) state:

While generic discourses of enterprise, profession, gender or age may be important, they are received and interpreted in the particular and complex contexts that individuals move through in their everyday lives.

As the quotation suggests there is often a presence of societal discourses in organisations, for example as the enterprise discourse, however this does not suggest the use of the discourse is monolithic (homogeneous). Rather than a monolithic discourse of enterprise, it emerges that the discourse of enterprise is diverse, appropriated and used by people in a variety of ways, dependent on context (Cohen & Musson, 2000; Anderson & Warren, 2011; Larson & Pearson, 2012). Hence, the findings showed there is a variation regarding the specific function of use of a repertoire or discourse in a particular context (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987, Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). It is also possible to state that people actively draw on competing discourses in order to construct a range of positions in relation to organising renewal, including acceptance, modification or resistance to specific discourses (including local repertoires as a meso-discourse) (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Cohen & Musson, 2000; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Edwards & Potter, 2005; Halford & Leonard, 2006; Larson & Pearson, 2012).

By addressing the stated research question I have also introduced a new language for how to understand strategic entrepreneurship and its practices. Thus, in previous models of strategic entrepreneurship practice (see e.g. Ireland et al, 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011) equilibrium is the expression of ‘balance’ (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009), while a discourse approach to balance is based on an interacting dynamic between opportunities and advantages. As such, it rejects the idea that opportunities and advantages can be understood as being separate from each other. In that way, the idea of co-construction is suggested, where opportunity and advantage positions emerge in social interaction over time rather than designed ex ante (beforehand). This way of understanding strategic entrepreneurship practices has a broad applicable in other contexts.
CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding chapter I will focus on drawing together the thesis by presenting a concluding discussion and possible implications for the study conducted. I will also discuss how this thesis has contributed to enhancing our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms and the activities labelled strategic entrepreneurship. In this way, I will address how I have met up with the stated purpose in the introductory chapter of this thesis. The contributions are based on the discussions of results and the findings that have emerged in answering the two stated research questions. The first research question was addressed and the results discussed in Chapter 4 by answering: What discourses have been privileged in strategic entrepreneurship, and what other discourses can be considered? The second research question was addressed and the results discussed in Chapter 8 by answering: How are opportunity and advantage positions constructed? Moreover, some ideas and suggestions are presented for further research of the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. Lastly, some possible practical implications are discussed.

Concluding discussion and implications

In this thesis I have argued for recognising the importance of what, in theory, is labelled strategic entrepreneurship, but also that previous research has some limitations. I have carried out an enhanced literature review of the discursive practices of how scholars position their work within strategic entrepreneurship, which has resulted in the emergence of ten prevailing discourses. The ten discourses were the following: 1) strategic entrepreneurship a new concept, 2) it is all about the management, 3) the established larger firm, 4) entrepreneurship and strategy for growth and competitiveness, 5) a resource based view (RBV), 6) renewal through innovations, 7) entrepreneurship as a part of strategy, 8) the entrepreneurial firm, 9) opportunity recognition and/or discovery, and 10) entrepreneurship as part of strategic management. More importantly, through the literature review and a complementary close analysis of fifteen articles, it was possible to draw a conclusion that there is a discursive exclusion of at least three areas of potential research: a view of social phenomena as socially constructed, qualitative-features and a practice-based approach.

In contrast, this thesis has applied a discourse approach, by drawing on a frame of reference inspired by discursive psychology and European entrepreneurship research building on the linguistic turn. In this way I have
tried to challenge the theoretical conceptualisation of dualism regarding opportunities and advantages, and the view of opportunities as objects or belonging to particular individuals. I have further argued that not only new perspectives are called upon regarding strategic entrepreneurship, but also a new language for how to describe opportunity and advantages in established firms would be as a collective process of social interaction. Moreover, by employing a discursive psychology approach and the analytical tools of interpretative repertoires, positioning and discursive devices, I have studied the discursive practices of constructing opportunity and advantage positions within two firms. In doing so, addressing the production and consumption of how people use specific repertoires and what discursive devices were used when making fact constructs. Using this form of systematic constructionism to study strategic entrepreneurship offers a number of advantages presented below.

Firstly, it has enabled a detailed focus on the discursive practices that take place within two firms in a context of organising renewal. The close-range analysis of documents and the participants’ accounts have also made it possible to state that opportunities and advantages could be considered as emergent and co-constructed, thus the analysis showed how opportunity and advantage positions emerged together in social interaction through text and talk. To separating opportunities from advantages by treating them as dual processes is the most common view within research on strategic entrepreneurship. I will discuss this further in the contribution part of this chapter.

Secondly, it has enhanced our understanding of repertoires as organised rhetorically in order to perform specific functions in firms i.e. it is action-oriented. How these repertoires were used as a flexible resource by the practitioners’ when constructing opportunity and advantage positions is shown in detail in Chapter 6 and 7, but also discussed in Chapter 8. The analysis resulted in five interpretative repertoires in System Novelty: ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘close interaction with customers’, ‘we are a competence-driven firm’, ‘growth within profitability’ and ‘we are independent’. It also resulted in four interpretative repertoires in PREM Food: ‘cooperation with customers’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘we are entrepreneurs’.

Thirdly, it has the advantage that it emphasises the importance of grounding the positioning of opportunities and advantages in their interpretative context. During the analysis, it was also discussed how I may have been positioned by some of the interview participants as a PhD student interested in different aspects of growth, entrepreneurship and strategy. This may have caused them to emphasise the importance of account-
ing for these aspects in relation to opportunities and advantages, when accounting for what works with their work as subordinate to the business processes. In that way, they may try to support me with the “right” answers that they assumed I was interested in hearing from them. Rather than dismissing this as a form of bias, I have, in line with discursive psychology, reflected on how I might have been positioned by participants when conducting interviews (cf. Potter & Wiggins, 2008).

Fourthly, the frame of reference and the analytical tools chosen enabled me to move between different levels of discourses, mainly the micro- (text and talk in the context of the individual) and the meso- (discursive practices in the context of the collective organisation), but also in some respects the macro-level (social practices in a societal context). Hence in Chapter 8 I discuss the fact that the enterprise discourse emerges as a flexible discursive resource that the participants used when positioning opportunities and advantages. The enterprising discourse emerged in the participants’ text and talk through narratives about market determinism, bureaucracy, innovation, profit, being changeable, flexible and so forth (cf. Cohen & Musson, 2000; Shepherd, 2006; Larson & Pearson, 2012).

It is also important to recognise the potential limitations of this study. Firstly, the primarily focus of discursive psychology is on what people do with discourse. This is why it is often referred to as a performative or an action-oriented approach as opposed to focusing on what discourses do to people (following the Foucauldian approach). This defines not only its strengths but also its limitations. As Muller and Whittle (2011) argue, to draw upon methods of conversational analysis tends to focus too heavily on the immediate context of previous utterances to the neglect of broader cultural concerns. I have, however, been drawing upon a particular strand of discursive psychology of interpretative repertoires that are concerned with the broader context of the organisation without neglecting the micro-linguistic practices. Thus, I have also sought to demonstrate the value of understanding the role of micro-linguistic practices, or discursive devices involved in the construction work of positioning opportunities and advantages in two firms. To have analysed discourse devices in these firms does, of course, mean trading off some breadth of analysis (i.e. analysing the findings of the whole study) in order to gain depth of analysis (i.e. analysing in detail a couple of accounts). However, discursive psychology is not simply about studying supposedly trivial features of mundane interactions (Muller & Whittle, 2011). It is through these micro-interactions, I argue, that the construction of opportunity and advantages occurs. To dismiss discursive devices as ‘surface babble’ is to miss the fact that discursive devices comprise a key method through which the construction work of op-
opportunities and advantages takes place and emerges, whether successfully manifested or not.

Secondly, the analysis carried out does not explicitly discuss the issue of power. Nevertheless, when I conducted the analysis of the accounts, it is possible to see what this kind of discourse analytical approach adds to our understanding of power. For example, by drawing upon the repertoires of - ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘close interaction with customers’ and ‘cooperation with customers’ - aspects of being reactive emerge through the use of discourses about market determinism. As a result, activities connected to being proactive are undermined in a firm especially as these repertoires are also the dominant ones in use among the participants in the study as well as in the text documents. The use of the enterprising discourse in constructing opportunity and advantage positions also gives us an idea of power relations and its possible constitutive effects. Furthermore, the literature review and the analysis of fifteen articles in Chapter 4, shows that there are discourses that are privileged in strategic entrepreneurship. As a result, scholars has in their work excluded micro-aspects of people’s actions in the strategic entrepreneurship practice (cf. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012).

Thirdly, the frame of reference used towards understanding strategic entrepreneurship practices has been criticised for its relativist position. However, I have argued my way towards an epistemological constructionism approach, which focuses upon the dynamism of social interaction itself. This approach is based on the work of Edwards and Potters (see e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Edwards & Potter, 2005), and is particularly useful in that it is not anti-ontological (e.g. asserting that social rules or cognitive entities do not really exist), nor is it ontologically relativistic (i.e. asserting that everything is simply discursive) (cf. Korbov, 2010). Discourses are, in the first instance, drawn upon interactively in particular contexts, resisted in particular contexts, and amended or mitigated in particular contexts for particular purposes. They are indexed and occasioned as a result of the way the social interaction is ordered, made relevant, and attended to as an ongoing and active accomplishment of persons in conversation (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996; Edwards & Potter, 2005; Jørgensen & Phillips; 2002).

Lastly, accepting that rhetoric is never-ending (cf. Billig, 1996) does not diminish the claims put forward in this thesis, or my ability to engage in practical debates. What it does is to prevent me from claiming that the interpretations made of the data presented here, or the accounts of strategic entrepreneurship practices, should be treated as definitive. The idea that it is possible to step outside rhetoric is only tenable from a realist perspec-
tive (Burr, 2003). One of the strengths of discursive psychology, as presented in this thesis, is that it encourages researchers to reflect upon how the data collected was constituted and is constitutive of the research participants. Throughout this thesis, I have tried to do this in a number of ways: by highlighting how the organisation of the interviews produced various argumentative contexts, and by explaining how these may have influenced the interpretative repertoires produced; by not only discussing how the research participants positioned themselves and others, but also by discussing how I positioned myself and might have been positioned by others during the interviews; by reflecting here upon how my philosophical commitments affect the claims I am able to make; and by considering how this text is organised in order to support the merits of a social constructionism and discursive understanding of strategic entrepreneurship.

Contributions
The main purpose of this thesis is to enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms, and the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. I stated an aim of addressing this purpose by an enhanced literature review of strategic entrepreneurship, but also from empirical work by means of the study of the discursive practices in two firms, and by comparing the findings in the two studied firms and putting these in relation to discourse theory. It is now time to discuss what such an approach has contributed to.

Firstly, this thesis have enhanced our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms by promoting social constructionism ideas as an alternative approach to studying the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. More specifically, social constructionism ideas within discursive psychology have provided a theory of knowledge about the becomingness of social reality (cf. Burr, 2003). But also these ideas provided the possibility of working with a non-dualist epistemology, focusing on interaction and relations (see Fletcher, 2006; Sarason et al, 2006; Edwards 1997; Edwards & Potter 1992, 2005; Potter 1996; Burr, 2003; Potter & Edwards 2005 among many others). Social constructionism ideas based on discursive psychology move us beyond determinist understandings of social practice to instead focus on interaction in practice. These theories also move us from over-privileging agency and its singular role in social construction processes (Korobov, 2010). This is because the theoretical starting point is the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than the individual and private space of particular individuals (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards 1997; Edwards & Potter 1992, 2005; Potter 1996; Potter & Edwards 2005). Thus, scholars are then encouraged to see modes of
description, explanation and representation as derived from interaction among people. People, structures, the physical world, culture, language, words, concepts, and images gain their meaning from relatedness to each other and not to representations of how the world ‘really is’ or to the meanings that inhere in peoples’ minds (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards 1997; Edwards & Potter 1992, 2005; Potter 1996; Burr, 2003; Potter & Edwards 2005).

Secondly, this thesis have enhanced our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms through a literature review of how scholars position their work as strategic entrepreneurship research, in this way giving a very much needed overview of how scholars have so far addressed different issues of concern in the field. The arguments for doing this kind of analysis are based on the fact that there is still a lot of confusion regarding the concept of strategic entrepreneurship and its constructions (cf. Kuratko & Audresch, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009; Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). From the literature review it emerges that scholars tend to position strategic entrepreneurship within three different areas of strategic entrepreneurship research: 1) strategic entrepreneurship within corporate entrepreneurship, 2) strategic entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship and strategic management, and 3) strategic entrepreneurship as opportunity- and advantage-seeking behaviour. It is important to note that the border between these perspectives is not sharply defined, and that they are not mutually exclusive of one or the other. This means that some scholars’ work can be seen within two or more of these areas. When addressing strategic entrepreneurship within these three areas, and through a close analysis of fifteen articles that have represented the scientific-discourse of strategic entrepreneurship, it was possible to interpret a discursive exclusion. Part of this exclusion could be interpreted as a consequence of the fact that there is a fundamental mutual view that permeates most of the research in the field, that is the positivistic assumption. The economic school of thought is also noticeable in almost all of the prevailing discourses, as well as there is a tendency to incorporate entrepreneurship within the domain of strategy research i.e. within strategic management. Thus, there are discourses that entrepreneurship is part of strategy or part of strategic management, and the resource-based view is the most often used theory. In other words, scholars tend to borrow the style of doing research from strategic management, and as such treat entrepreneurship more or less as a managerial tool in order to gain a better competitive position and profitability.

Thirdly, this thesis have enhanced our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms by expanding the meaning of the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. This has been achieved by introducing a
frame of reference that builds on the linguistic turn, including research within discursive psychology and European entrepreneurship research that takes on a social constructionism view and are concerned with discourses. Plenty of researchers state that, at this stage of development, it is important to embrace a diverse view of strategic entrepreneurship (cf. Meyer et al., 2002; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009; Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). Hence my selected approach could be seen as meeting this call as the frame of reference used introduces a different view of strategic entrepreneurship not only by reducing it to an economic discourse and/or a managerial function. Thus, I have reframed strategic entrepreneurship as a collective and interactional process of organising renewal through opportunity and advantage activities. By applying the frame of reference on two firms, the results in Chapter 8 suggest that opportunity- and advantage positions are not seen as opposites or dual states by practitioners. Scholars such as Ireland and Webb (2007), Kyrgidou and Hughes (2010), and Foss and Lyngsie (20012) indirectly draw upon the idea when talking about the balancing act of opportunity and advantage activities as simultaneous action. Anyway, previous models of strategic entrepreneurship practice (see e.g. Ireland et al, 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Luke et al., 2011) are based on dualism, and equilibrium is the expression of ‘balance’ (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). A discourse approach to balance is rather based on the interacting dynamic between opportunities and advantages, which has been thoroughly explored in Chapter 6, 7 and 8. As a result, I have showed that opportunity- and advantage positions are constructed in relation to each other. This suggests the idea of co-construction rather than of opposite and contradicting forces of dualism. Furthermore, that opportunities and advantages are emergent in social interaction as they are produced and reproduces in text and talk. What I suggest is that an opportunity and an advantage emerge in text and talk through processes of social interaction. However as I have said, emergence in this context is not the result of the process of interactions. Rather, the emergence of opportunities and advantages takes place during the process of interaction (cf. Schindehutte & Morris, 2009). By addressing opportunities and advantages as emergent and co-constructed I have also contributed to the field of strategic entrepreneurship with a new language of how to write and talk about strategic entrepreneurship practices.

Fourthly, the understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms have also been enhanced by the selected approach of discursive psychology, which comes in a package that takes on a purely epistemological constructionism view of social phenomenon as socially constructed. Hence, the package includes a set of analytical tools and methods based on qualitative
features not previous used in the field of strategic entrepreneurship. Nor is it commonly used in entrepreneurship research in general. In this way, the selected analytical tools and methods could be seen as a contribution to the field of entrepreneurship research. Hence, I have analysed the discursive practices with the help of the analytical toolkit of interpreted repertoires, positioning and discursive devices. With this approach it was possible to study not only what practitioners observably were doing with repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips; 2002), but how the participants actually used the repertoires as a flexible resource by analysing the discursive practice of constructing opportunity and advantage positions. Moreover, what the function was for drawing upon that particular repertoire and possible consequences of using a specific repertoire. In this way, the selected approach of discursive psychology also met up with the discursive exclusion of viewing social phenomenon as socially constructed, qualitative features and a practice-based approach (see Chapter 4). The approach taken is described in Chapter 2, but more importantly how it was used and applied on the empirical material is described in greater detail in Chapter 5. This makes it possible for other entrepreneurship scholars also to use the same analytical tools.

Fifthly, this thesis have contributed to enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms by focusing on the micro dynamics of how opportunities and advantages are constructed in a context of organising renewal. Scholars as Foss and Lyngsie (2012) have made a call for research in strategic entrepreneurship that focus on the micro-aspects in an organisation. There has also been a call for discourse approaches within the European school of entrepreneurship research (see e.g. Fletcher, 2006). What is missing from the entrepreneurship literature in general is a sophisticated set of concepts to understand the detailed micro-level interactions (see e.g. Foss & Lyngsie, 2012). Existing work on entrepreneurship has highlighted the importance of ‘narrative’ (see e.g. Fletcher, 2007; Fletcher & Watson, 2007; Berglund & Wigren, 2012) and ‘discourses’ (see e.g. Hjorth et al., 2003; Fletcher, 2003, 2006; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Hjorth, 2005; Berglund, 2007). These studies have contributed to important understandings that I have intend to further enhance by offering a detailed analysis of how discourses are deployed in interaction. As such, I have complemented these studies by studying the micro-level of interaction in text and talk, which has not to my knowledge been done before, by analysing the discursive practices, positioning activities and the use of discursive devices. The analysis of discursive devices is also predicated on the assumption that it is the skilled use of such devices that allow ‘social life’, including the construction work of positioning opportunities and advantages, ‘to
proceed’ within organisations. These discursive devices, I suggest, comprise a key element of the ‘discursive practices’ that is crucial but also poorly understood, the behind-the-scenes element of the positioning of opportunities and advantages within organisations. Similarly to Muller and Whittle (2011), I agree that the distinction between talk and action is both overdrawn and analytically unhelpful. Thus, talking about a new opportunity and/or advantage is a central part of making the new opportunity and/or advantage come to life, as opportunities and advantages get constructed during the flux of everyday conversations, debates and stories told in organisations.

Sixthly, I have by the choice of frame of reference and methods used enhanced our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms by contributing rich empirical descriptions of people’s accounts of their work. Rich descriptions are given of organisation context where people in practice construct opportunity and advantage positions, and how opportunity and advantage positions are co-constructed and emerges in social interaction. By doing this it is possible to learn more about different firms and how they in practice develop what we in research tend to label as strategic entrepreneurship. Thereby, I have also made an empirical contribution to strategic entrepreneurship, which there has been a call for among several scholars, for example Ireland et al. (2003), Kuratko (2007), Kyridgou and Hughes (2010), Kyrgidou and Petridou (2011), Luke et al. (2012) and Foss and Lyngsie (2012). It is also possible to state that the field of European entrepreneurship research also would benefit from the empirical descriptions, thus as previously said there is few that have focused on the micro dynamics of social interaction. The empirical descriptions and the analysis also show how the enterprising discourse is established in the extract and within the repertoires, thereby also contributing to research within enterprising itself. Thus as, Cohen and Musson (2002) argue, it is not enough to examine organisations and what people are doing in a business context simply from the perspective of academics and policy-makers; what is equally important is the understanding of the ways in which the enterprise discourse is seen as meaningful to people who, on a day-to-day basis “do enterprise”. It is here through a discursive psychology approach that I have contributed to the understanding of how people construct meaning of what they do in practice with the help of the enterprising discourse, and how the consume and produce the enterprise discourse in relation to other discourses. Moreover, how people draw upon discourses to make fact constructs of their work (cf. Potter, 1996). As such, it emerges that what people say and how they say it matters (cf. Muller & Whittle, 2011). To position an opportunity that the “market demands something” or to position
an opportunity in “new technology”, makes a difference. Even if other people in the organisation do not readily accept a particular position, that position has still been made, and therefore still matters and is competing with other articulated positions about what is an opportunity or not. The same goes for what is an advantage or not.

Lastly, I have enhanced our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms by concluding that people use multiple discourses when trying to make sense of their work. As I have said, I have focused on analysing the discursive practices in two firms by studying how people draw upon discourses. In so doing, I have also identified that the participants draw upon societal discourses as the enterprise discourse and locally produced repertoires. This is an interesting finding that is in line with research carried out by scholars interested in discourses and identity work. For example, Larsson and Pearson (2012) argue that there is a need for a closer understanding of the identity work in entrepreneurial processes that requires more complex consideration of the many discursive resources that shape identity, which I have been able to contribute to. Hence, as I said in Chapter 2, a discursive orientation approaches the question of identity by way of positioning, where positions are ways of describing the force of certain discursive actions in the establishment of a sense of self and others, or of a relational constellation. By addressing interpretative repertoires and positioning activities made by people in a context of organising renewal I have shown also how multiple discourses are consumed and produced at different levels of discourse. Hence the participants constructed opportunity and advantage positions through the use of discourse devices (micro), local repertoires (meso) and the enterprising discourse (macro). As with the work of Larsson and Pearson (2012), this research suggests that, as people attempt to manage the multiple discourses available to them for their positioning work, they make choices about which discourses to use, given the affordances those discourses provide to integrate other aspects of self and the organisation in the construction work of a preferred narrated position. Choosing to use a particular repertoire or discourse inevitably provides affordances to privilege certain aspects of what to be directly identified with and to undermine other parts indirectly. It is, therefore, possible to state that this thesis has added to our scholarly understanding as to how arrays of discourses are organised and made meaningful in a context of organising renewal and the discursive practices of positioning opportunity and advantages.
Further research

There are plenty of interesting approaches and theories that have the possibility to further enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship in established firms, and the activities labelled as strategic entrepreneurship. However, in line with the results of the discursive exclusion identified in this thesis, I have found two areas of further research to be the most interesting. Firstly there is the possibility of focusing on practice-theories in order to further study entrepreneurship and strategy from a collective, interactional and processual view. Secondly, there is the possibility of further understanding the duality of entrepreneurship and strategy through structuration theories. Lastly, I will also address the constitutive effects of discourses as an area for further research, as the results of the empirical study have shown the emergence of the enterprising discourse in their discursive practices.

As I have said, there is a growing interest among strategic entrepreneurship scholars in practice that makes it possible to take the idea of practice a step further to study what practitioners observably are doing with mind and body, not only with discourses, as in this thesis. Johannisson (2011) states a strong belief that practice theory offers a view that is able to deal with the challenges of entrepreneurship, and that this view has emerged to replace the linguistic turn in organisation studies in general and the European entrepreneurship studies in particular. Drawing upon the concept of ‘entrepreneuring’, first introduced by Steyaert (2007), Johannisson (2011) further enhances the concept of how such a practice theory of entrepreneuring could be developed. As I have said in Chapter 4, the concept of entrepreneuring takes up on viewing entrepreneurship as a verb i.e. as something we do and that is action-oriented. As strategic entrepreneurship is concerned with aspects of both entrepreneurship and strategy, it might be interesting to relate the concept of ‘entrepreneuring’ with the growing field of strategy as practice is a research area that focuses on “the doing of strategy; who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use, and what implications this has for shaping strategy” (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69). According to this view, strategy, could be understood as something people do (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). The field has grown from the dissatisfaction with conventional strategy research, which tends to leave out the actions of people. Strategy as practice takes a perspective of strategy that opens up for an alternative view on strategic entrepreneurship, as it does not focus on the discourses of economics. Rather, both the concept of entrepreneuring, as well as strategy as practice, focus on the interactional context and what people do in practice, and tries to understand it with the help of practice theories. Thus,
strategy as practice as well as entrepreneuring can be seen as activity-based views of strategy and entrepreneurship that focus on the detailed processes and practices which construct and constitute the day-to-day activities of organisational life. They are about a close understanding of the myriad of micro-activities that take place. According to Johnson et al. (2003:5) strategy as practice:

[...] goes inside organizations, their strategies and their processes, to investigate what is actually done and by whom.

Johannisson (2011:147) in turn states the following:

It plays down entrepreneuring by associating it with everyday life and not with heroic achievements, only to re-establish it as a fundamental human activity, central in man’s ongoing quest for identity and meaning of life.

In sum, with the help of practice theories, both aspects of entrepreneurship and strategy can be studied as situated doings in the day-to-day activities of organisational life.

Structuration theories in turn give us the possibility to address the idea of co-construction regarding opportunities and advantages suggested in this thesis, but from a perspective other than discourses. Drawing on structuration theories within entrepreneurship studies, Sarason et al. (2006:289) stress the following:

A duality, as opposed to a dualism, presents two constructs that cannot exist, or be understood separate from each other.

As the quotation indicates, the choice of terminology can be important to consider in the further conceptual development of strategic entrepreneurship. If scholars are still interested in portraying the strategic entrepreneurship process as a balancing act, I suggest that the duality term is a better description of what is going on in practice. However, if the balancing act is diminished, I rather see that the idea of co-construction emerges and how it takes place in practice. Because, the terminology of duality still in many ways draws one’s attention to interpreting opportunities and advantages as separated from each other. Thus, the status quo for strategic entrepreneurship research is the presentation of the relationship as a dualism that views opportunities as separate and distinct from advantages. In summary, in this thesis I have presented a frame of reference that puts strategic entrepreneurship in a different nexus of entrepreneurship (opportunity) and strategy (advantage). This difference is fundamentally due to understanding this relationship as a duality (co-construction) or as a dualism (the traditional view of strategic entrepreneurship). I would therefore like to see further
research in this area, and for all the reasons discussed in the contribution part of this thesis.

Last, I would like to see some further research on governmentality and the enterprising self. This is not something that is a result of the literature review or the analysis of the strategic entrepreneurship discourse, but rather a result of the empirical findings that showed the emergence of the enterprising discourse in the construction work made by the people in the two organisations studied. As I adopted an approach based on discursive psychology, it has been the discursive practices of constructing opportunities and advantages within particular repertoires that have been the main focus. This means that I have only addressed potential constitutive aspects regarding the repertoires; as such the constitutive effects of the enterprising discourse upon firms have not been addressed. However, this would be most interesting, and could be done with the help of theories about governmentality and the concept of the enterprising self that has its historical roots within a Foucauldian approach to discourses, that take more of a top-down perspective than in discursive psychology (see Chapter 2). As Larson and Pearson (2012) argue, broad societal discourses such as the discourse of enterprise are largely influential in shaping the occupational identities of people in the entrepreneurial process. It could be, for example, through media (see e.g. Anderson & Warren, 2011), the literature genre of management knowledge (Hjorth & Johannisson, 2003), and/or the context of a particular city, embedded in a state and region, (see e.g. Larson & Pearson, 2012) that provided the discursive resources to participants in this study when they took up a specific position in accounting for opportunities and advantages. Another possibility to consider is business schools, and as shown in this study are the possible constitutive effects of research that help to produce the managerial discourse (cf. Hjorth & Johannisson, 2003). Hjorth (2004) addresses the question a little differently, by arguing that the managerialism, as part of the enterprising discourse, could be defined as a form of governmental rationality in organisations, and studying how the managerial discourse operates through making up governable employees.

**Thoughts on practical implications**

As I have stated, repertoires are constructed because they assemble linguistic building blocks (i.e. words), and are constructive because these assemblages construct a particular version of the world (Muller & Whittle, 2011). As a practitioner, it could be essential to have knowledge of what repertoires are frequently drawn upon in an organisation, as the discussion of results in Chapter 8 indicated, there are potential consequences attached
to the use of particular repertoires. Thus, the use of specific repertoires undermines the use of other repertoires, as repertoires are always in a flux and in competition. For example, the use of the repertoire of ‘we are agile and flexible’ showed there is a potential for System Novelty to become too focused upon fulfilling customer needs and responding to market change (technology and regulations), that the firm in the long run becomes reactive. System Novelty has rather expressed an ambition to be proactive. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the repertoires’ possible constructive and constitutive effect. Similarly, in PREM Food the repertoire of ‘co-operation with customers’ is a repertoire constructed on meeting customer demands and requirements, which have a tendency to undermine repertoires about driving the market, which is expressed among the participants as part of the responsibility for a market-leading firm as PREM Food. Moreover, it is stated both in text and talk, that they want to have a strategy for innovation based upon both customer-driven projects and their own product development.

The results of the analysis also indicate that there is a value for firms of today to be positioned within the enterprising discourse. Thus, both firms in this study wanted to portray themselves as entrepreneurs and/or that they had the ability to be entrepreneurial. It emerges in several of the repertoires used when constructing opportunity and advantage positions in the interview conversations as well as in the in texts such as annual reports, press articles and firm websites. For example, repertoires of ‘we are agile and flexible’, ‘we are changeable’, ‘we are independent’, and ‘we are entrepreneurs’ draw on the enterprise discourse. Also repertoires of ‘rational efficiency’ and ‘growth within profitability’ draw on aspects of this discourse, drawing both on economic aspects of entrepreneurship and managerialism through strategy and strategic thinking. It is possible to stress that, at least for the firms in this study, it is obviously important and seen as favourable to be associated with entrepreneurship and the enterprising discourse, but also in constructing facts and making sense of their work in the organisation.

From the analysis it also emerges in most situations that repertoires of entrepreneurship are privileged over repertoires about strategy, even though they are also present and regarded as important. It is also possible to discern that firms’ with people who think of themselves and others in the firm as entrepreneurial, consume and produce repertoires of entrepreneurship, and the firm therefore also becomes more entrepreneurial. As I have said, repertoires are seen as an important form of social action that have an impact on the ways opportunities and advantages are perceived and constructed in a firm by its people. Therefore, it is not just “talk” (cf.
Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Thus, repertoires are action-driven and intend to perform things, and repertoires construct a particular version of the world. As Whittle et al. (2008) stress, activities of talking and writing are understood to actively constitute and reconstitute organisational reality. By drawing on repertoires of entrepreneurship in text and talk, it probably enhances the possibility of acting entrepreneurially, and vice versa. But, as shown in this study, it also has the possibility of prioritising a typical kind of entrepreneurship based on being reactive, rather than proactive.

Lastly, drawing on repertoires that are constructed on the enterprising discourse means that specific kinds of discourses or repertoires are privileged in organisations. This means in turn that other discourses and repertoires have been undermined or have taken a less privileged position. As I see it, this could be of great importance for practitioners to acknowledge i.e. what kinds of discourses and repertoires are manifested in an organisation and how they are constructive as well as constitutive. Hence, this make it possible for practitioners not only to understand where they are today, but also what other discourses and repertoires have been set aside, and the possible consequences of such actions for the future ahead. For example, what are the possible consequences of privileging to draw upon the enterprise discourse and repertoires that prioritise entrepreneurship over other options? Every choice in privileging some repertoires or discourses over others has consequences, and there is always an alternative choice that is left out.
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<td>Strategic Entrepreneurship (SE) as</td>
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<td>View on Strategy &amp; Entrepreneurship.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial strategies.</td>
<td>Strategically develop new resources through an entrepreneurial process.</td>
<td>An entrepreneurship process to be balanced with a strategic process.</td>
<td>Unclear.</td>
<td>One interelated system.</td>
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<td>Method</td>
<td>Hypotes testing. Survey with 1,975 managers &amp; staff in 110 departments.</td>
<td>Hypotes testing (chi2). Published documents of 127 CEOs of new ventures.</td>
<td>Hypotes testing (chi2). Previous literature.</td>
<td>Hypotes testing (chi2). 238 buyouts was studied through 3 databases.</td>
<td>Conceptual. Previous literature.</td>
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<td>Reason for the article</td>
<td>Open up the black-box of organisation by the study of firm members reactions to entrepreneurial strategies.</td>
<td>To show the relevance of agency theory in SE context.</td>
<td>SE is proposed as a means via which decision makers can manage uncertainty, which is stated to be a crucial capability.</td>
<td>Develop the complementarity between agency theory and strategic entrepreneurship perspectives.</td>
<td>Five areas are identified wherein more development might enhance the current model of SE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Lachmannian insights into strategic entrepreneurship: resources, activities and routines in a disequilibrium world.</td>
<td>Knowledge spillovers and strategic entrepreneurship.</td>
<td>Strategic entrepreneurship: origins, core elements and research directions.</td>
<td>Developing a conceptual framework of strategic entrepreneurship.</td>
<td>The effect of competence exploration and competence exploitation on strategic entrepreneurship.</td>
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<td><strong>Country of Study</strong></td>
<td>No specific country. 2010</td>
<td>Exemples from USA. 2010</td>
<td>No specific country. 2010</td>
<td>New Zealand. 2011</td>
<td>Greece. 2012</td>
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<td><strong>View on Strategy &amp; Entrepreneurship.</strong></td>
<td>A process of how entrepreneurs reach and make strategic decisions.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial action with a strategic perspective.</td>
<td>An iterative process of entrepreneurial and strategic activities.</td>
<td>An entrepreneurship process to be balanced with a strategic process.</td>
<td>A linear process which a firm iterates from entrepreneurial to strategic activity.</td>
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<td><strong>Data source</strong></td>
<td>Previous literature.</td>
<td>Previous literature.</td>
<td>Previous literature.</td>
<td>Documents, observation, and interviews with executives</td>
<td>Survey with 144 CEO in medium-to-large-sized firms.</td>
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<td><strong>Theory/Perspective</strong></td>
<td>RBV, Porter, Lachmannian.</td>
<td>Knowledge spillovers and SE have largely been considered separately rather than in conjunction with each other.</td>
<td>Little consensus exists over the meaning of the concept of SE, its constituents and its operation.</td>
<td>To develop a conceptual framework of strategic entrepreneurship from theory and practice.</td>
<td>Important gaps exist in our understanding of the ways in which firms can achieve SE.</td>
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<td><strong>Reason for the Article</strong></td>
<td>To offering a framework for discussing the SE dynamics of the firm in a thoroughly Lachmannian spirit.</td>
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<td>System Novelty</td>
<td>Opportunity positions</td>
<td>Reoccurring accounts</td>
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<td>Opportunity positions</td>
<td>– changes in market – technology and regulations – responding to customer needs as well as coming up with their own products – growing the customer base – flat organisation structure – take on more customers – a changeable and scalable system platform – fits different business models – introducing long-term thinking – building a partnership with the customer by being agile and flexible – creating the foundation for the system platform – innovate and release new functionality within customer projects – releasing a product upon speculation – personal references from existing customers – flexible and changeable towards customer needs and requirements – hiring talented people – new technology – networks – a new big customer – participating in the contest Great Place to Work – building a relationship with KTH – responding and adapting quickly by being agile – take risks – flexible and changeable technology – able to deliver to everybody – new businesses – to gain access to the cus-</td>
<td>– new ideas – innovations – products – new products – partnership with the customer – continuous improvements – work together with the customer – cooperation with customers – new products – cooperation with customers – changes in market – redefine the development strategy – find better logistical solutions – flexible employees – learning new work – continuous improvements – new product development – act on changes by streamlining and optimising – the service of secure delivery – efficiency improvements – larger volume of products to sell – reduced shrinkage – better financial ratios – improvements – openness towards customers – more automated – rationalise – in entrepreneurship – being proactive – individual commitment – keeping it simple – changes – flexibility – entrepreneurial spirit – creative – acting fast – bringing the business forward – hiring entrepreneurs</td>
<td>– create change (nos 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15) – innovation (nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15) – entrepreneurial mindset (nos 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 13, 15) – ability to change (nos 6, 8, 15) – flexibility (nos 6, 8, 15) – creativity (nos 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 15) – creating newness (nos 4, 8, 9, 10, 13) – agile individuals (no. 3) – collaborative innovation (no. 3) – agility, flexibility, creativity, and continuous innovation (no. 5) – continuous streams of innovation (nos 3, 4) – both effectiveness and efficiency-oriented forms of newness (no. 4) – risk-taking (nos 4, 5, 13) – absorb risk and uncertainty (no. 8) – responding to change (nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15) – respond to customer needs (nos 2, 4) – adapt to technology changes (no. 1) – not know in advance the responses needed of the firm (no. 3) – change posed by the competitive environment (nos 3, 4, 5, 8, 14) – effectively and efficiently meet demand (nos 3, 4) – flatten organisational structures in responding to changes (no. 4)</td>
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APPENDIX B

| Tomer – growth through new customers |
| – making their money themselves |
| – use the money they have earned by putting the employees to work on a new project |
| – a new big order |
| – to take on risk projects and explore new areas |
| – growth within profitability |
| – new businesses by not folding in price negotiations |

**Advantage positions**

- gain a competitive advantage by responding quickly to changes
- becoming less dependent on specific customers
- becoming less bureaucratic
- hierarchical and immobile
- delivers what nobody else can and on time
- plan and budget
- stability for the employees
- meeting customer expectations
- customer-funded development
- credibility towards potentially new customers
- deliver exactly what the customer wants
- competence
- reputation
- choice of technology
- competent people
- awarded as one of Swede’s best work places
- securing future recruitments by getting the best students
- a deep technical competence
- sell things in advance
- independent actor and technology
- successful deliveries
- in–depth competence, niche products
- financially independent
- independent actor

| Advantage positions |
| – improving customers business |
| – high level service |
| – one point–of contact with the customer |
| – knowledge about trends |
| – a secured customer |
| – a successful project |
| – knowledge about ‘reality’ |
| – the staff |
| – the customers’ accept a new product by PREM Food |
| – keeping their competitive position and/or growing |
| – new strategy that better meet up with customer requirements |
| – saving money and the environment |
| – enhanced knowledge |
| – a more varied and interesting job |
| – shift employees between different facilities and work tasks |
| – enhanced competence |
| – efficiency |
| – meeting customer demands |
| – increasing price |
| – efficiency, reducing costs |
| – economy of scale |
| – profitability |
| – being able to deliver on time |

- rational response to the environment (no. 15)
- adapt to change (nos 4, 8, 10, 11, 13)
- creating competitive advantages (nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15)
- profitability (nos 1, 2, 4, 9, 12, 13, 14)
- create value for shareholders (nos 4, 15)
- wealth creation (nos 1, 3, 10, 13, 14)
- effective SE strategies (no. 6, 15)
- competing in a global environment (nos 3, 4, 12)
- earn above–average returns (no. 1, 8, 10)
- sales growth rate (no. 6)
- aspects of growth (nos 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14)
- entrepreneurial growth (no. 9)
- growth accompanied by bureaucratic procedures, complex structures, and rigid cultures (no. 3)
- personnel mobility (no. 12)
- the risk of financial loss (no. 5)
- businesses growth and become profitable (no. 6)
- decentralization supports entrepreneurial behaviour (no. 4, 8)
- flexibility and autonomy are facilitated with decentralized hierarchies (no. 8)
- autonomy, flexibility and collaboration (no. 13)
- maximize employee retention (no 6)
- an effective producer (nos 3, 4)
- efficient and effective resource management (nos 5, 8, 13, 15)
- efficient in operations (nos 3, 4, 13)
- improve operational efficiency (no. 5)
- efficiency enhancing (no. 9)
- collaborative network (nos 1,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent ownership</th>
<th>Meeting customer requirements</th>
<th>2, 4)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Independent technology</td>
<td>Increase in prices</td>
<td>– search for partners with complementary capabilities (no. 1)</td>
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<td>Good track record</td>
<td>Better competitive position</td>
<td>– customer relationships and partnership (nos 1, 9)</td>
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<td>Independent house of technology</td>
<td>Lower price</td>
<td>– create wealth for customers (no. 4)</td>
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<td>Partnership with the customer</td>
<td>New ideas</td>
<td>– new product or business by collaboration (nos 3, 9)</td>
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<td>Becoming more independent</td>
<td>Keep a promise</td>
<td>– integrate new and existing knowledge (nos 3, 4, 15)</td>
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<td>Financially independent</td>
<td>Simple solutions</td>
<td>– enhanced competence by acquire new knowledge and skills (no. 15)</td>
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<td>Strong liquidity</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>– demand for skilled and talented labour (no. 12)</td>
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<td>Not having to terminate employees</td>
<td>Doing the job better</td>
<td>– leverage on core skills (no. 14)</td>
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<td>Skills in economy, selling, and technology</td>
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Publications in the series
Örebro Studies in Business Dissertations


